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*for* LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION



# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

VOLUME 1: SITE HISTORY, EXISTING CONDITIONS, AND ANALYSIS







# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

*"[I hold] dearly  
cherished memories  
about...the fine garden  
grounds full of trees and  
bushes and flowers that  
my wife and father-in-  
law planted – fine  
things from every land."*

## Volume I:

### INTRODUCTION

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### SITE HISTORY

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### EXISTING CONDITIONS

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### ANALYSIS

By Jeffrey Killion  
Historical Landscape Architect  
With Mark Davison  
Historical Landscape Architect

The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation promotes the stewardship of significant landscapes through research, planning, and sustainable preservation maintenance. The Center accomplishes its mission in collaboration with a network of partners including national parks, universities, government agencies, and private nonprofit organizations. Techniques and principles of preservation practice are made available through training and publications.

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Cover Photo: John Muir at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch in Martinez, CA, date unknown. (John Muir National Historic Site archives).



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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) serves the National Park Service (NPS) in both documenting the history and significance of cultural landscapes and providing guidance for both day- to- day and long- term management and interpretation. To this end, this CLR for the John Muir National Historic Site (NHS) consists of a narration of landscape history, an inventory and analysis of existing conditions and landscape significance, and treatment recommendations and actions consistent with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The park's "General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (GMP/EA)," updated in 1991, sets forth the basic management philosophy for the landscape. The report calls for the integration of the newly acquired lands into the operations of the site and expansion of the park's visitor and protection use programs to include emphasis on the cultural and natural aspects of the added lands. Based on the recommendations made in the GMP/EA and from a treatment workshop held in July 2003, the CLR will document the history and significance of the John Muir landscape and prescribe short- and long- term landscape management and protection strategies.

### **PROJECT SETTING**

The John Muir National Historic Site is located in Martinez, California, approximately thirty- five miles northeast of San Francisco (Figure 0.1). The park includes the residence of John Muir, America's most famous and influential naturalist and conservationist. As a wilderness explorer, he is renowned for his lone excursions in California's Sierra Nevada region, among Alaska's glaciers, and numerous worldwide travels. As a writer, he has taught the people of his time and ours the importance of experiencing and protecting our natural heritage.

Through his writing and dynamic personal influence, John Muir focused the attention of leaders and citizens of the United States on the value of wilderness and the need for conservation of natural resources. He was a catalyst who transformed these popular concerns into practical action. During his lifetime he was, at times, student, teacher, inventor, scientist, explorer, wilderness Rambler, businessman/rancher, guide, writer, and storyteller. He is often quoted in

conservation and wilderness management policies today, and his books are still widely read.

Dr. John Strentzel, a noted horticulturist, was the original owner of the Muir residence, building the house in 1882. Muir became a frequent visitor to the Strentzel fruit ranch before eventually marrying Strentzel's daughter Louie. The Muir family took up residence in 1890 and John Muir lived there until his death in 1914. While living in Martinez, Muir accomplished many things: he maintained and improved the ranch established by his father-in-law; battled (unsuccessfully) to prevent Yosemite National Park's Hetchy Valley from being dammed; served as the first president and one of the founders of the Sierra Club; played a role in the creation of several national parks; and wrote many articles and several books expounding on the virtues of conservation and the natural world.

The John Muir NHS is composed of three separate land units (Figure 0.2). In August 1964, in advance of suburban development, the NPS acquired 8.9 acres of land that included the Muir House, the 1849 Martinez Adobe, and remnant orchard and vineyard spaces Muir farmed. In 1993, the NPS purchased an additional 326 acres that was once part of the Strentzel-Muir Ranch. Muir named the highest peak on this piece of land Mt. Wanda after his oldest daughter who often walked with him amongst the forest and grassland covered hillsides overlooking the Alhambra Valley. Recently, the park acquired a 1.3-acre parcel containing a remnant pear orchard and a small family burial area that includes the gravesite of John Muir. Together, these lands preserve important pieces of the property that originally encompassed approximately 2300 acres.

The park is a designated National Historic Landmark (December 29, 1962) and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (October 16, 1966, updated May 22, 1978).

## **METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF WORK**

### **OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT**

The objectives of this CLR are to document the significance of the landscape at John Muir NHS and provide a preservation strategy for its treatment and management. To achieve these goals, the CLR is organized into two volumes that describe the site's history, provide an inventory and analysis of existing conditions and landscape significance, and recommend treatment actions

consistent with historic preservation principles. The CLR is organized into the following two volumes:

### **Volume 1: Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis**

#### *Chapters 1- 5*

Through a chronological narrative, the site history documents the history of the John Muir NHS landscape and all significant characteristics and features. The text is based on primary and secondary historical documents with supporting material to illustrate the physical character, attributes, features, and materials that represent the landscape. The site history is organized into five chapters that correspond to distinct periods in the development of the property: settlement and agriculture, prior to 1874; the Strentzel Ranch and John Muir, 1874- 1890; ranching and writing, 1890- 1914; subdivision and preservation, 1915- 1964; and NPS stewardship, 1964- present. Period plans illustrate the appearance of the landscape at the ends of each period based on documentary sources and physical evidence.

#### *Chapter 6*

This chapter describes existing landscape conditions and includes documentation of landscape characteristics such as land use, vegetation, circulation, and structures. It is based on site research, existing surveys, and field reconnaissance, and includes contemporary site functions and visitor services to the extent that they affect the landscape. In addition to the narrative descriptions, existing conditions plans of the John Muir NHS landscape are provided.

#### *Chapters 7- 8*

The two analysis chapters compare findings from the site history and existing conditions to identify and describe the historical context and investigate how the landscape contributes to the site's significance and if the landscape is significant in its own right. An analysis of landscape characteristics and features is organized according to landscape character areas and feature zones. Historic integrity is evaluated to determine if the characteristics and features that defined the landscape during the period of significance are present and reflect the earlier appearance.

#### *Appendices*

Five appendices include an abridged landscape chronology; selected historical diary entries and letters; descriptions of NPS- directed orchard projects at the park; information and photographs of missing historical features; and a summary analysis chart of the park's landscape characteristics and features.

**Volume 2: Treatment**

Based on historical research, existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation, Volume 2 identifies an overall treatment strategy for the John Muir NHS landscape. The report provides park management with narrative guidelines and recommendations and graphic plans for short- term and long- term management of the landscape. It is based on the GMP/EA and results from a treatment charrette held at the park in July 2003. The premise of the treatment plan is that the park should be managed to improve the condition of landscape features and historic character so that the site's rich history can be interpreted and understood.

**LEVEL OF INVESTIGATION**

The John Muir NHS consists of three discontinuous areas that have been acquired over time. The House Unit, the original 8.9- acre parcel was established in 1964, includes the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and orchards and vineyards that represent the crops grown during Muir's time at the fruit ranch. Acquisition of the 326- acre Mt. Wanda Unit and 1.3- acre Gravesite Unit were finalized later, in 1993 and 2000, respectively. Although the recent additions are historically associated with John Muir, they possess fewer historical and cultural resources compared to the House Unit.

The extent, accessibility, and evaluated relevance of primary and secondary source material has allowed for a greater documentation and detail for the House Unit for such landscape characteristics as topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings, and structures. Historical information and documentation associated with Mt. Wanda and the gravesite has been less comprehensive. As such, only the major historic landscape features and other pertinent information available on existing surveys are considered for Mt. Wanda and the gravesite.

**RESEARCH MATERIALS**

Research in the preparation of the CLR has focused on local sources in the San Francisco area, including park archives and files, the Contra Costa County Historical Society, the NPS Pacific Great Basin Support Office, California Historical Society, and the Sierra Club. In addition, libraries at the University of California- Berkeley (Bancroft Library, Earth- Science Library, and Geoscience Library) and the University of the Pacific in Stockton (Holt- Atherton Library) were consulted.

Several sources have provided invaluable information regarding the park's landscape during the Strentzel- Muir period, namely correspondences, letters,



and diary entries between John Muir and his family, and interviews with former ranch employees, neighbors, and family members by park staff over the years. Although few of the references mention specific locations of features, they nonetheless paint a broad picture of the land and its use.

#### **PLACE NAMES AND NOMENCLATURE**

The park's land use history is complicated in part by the use of place names that describe the same area of land. Table o.1 below provides an overview of how specific place names correspond to the three units of the park.

Table o.1: Historical Place Names at John Muir NHS			
	House Unit	Gravesite Unit	Mt. Wanda Unit
Rancho El Pinole	x	x	x
Cañada del Hambre /Alhambra Valley	x	x	x
Redfern Place	x		

When using historic names, the dominant historic name is used “Redfern Place” was also known as the “Other Place” or the “Franklin Place.” Where there is no known historic or contemporary name for a feature, a name has been created for this CLR. Examples include: “main farm road” and “carriage drive- loop.” Historic and contemporary names are capitalized (“Muir House,” “Woodshed Road,” “Visitor Center”) while names created for this report are not (“main farm road” and “Visitor Center parking area”).

The land is integrally linked to agricultural and non- agricultural uses. To clarify vegetation references in the text, the *agricultural landscape* is discussed in terms of “crops” which includes lands devoted to orchards, vineyards, pastures, and other farm fields. Other lands are generally part of the *non- agricultural landscape* and are referred to as “plantings” that address riparian plants, masses and groupings, and specific trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. In addition, “plantings” at the House Unit are generally discussed as two groups: those proximate to the Muir House and those in other areas of the property such around the creeks, farm roads, and the Martinez Adobe.

#### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

##### **SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE, PRIOR TO 1874**

Long before the major Spanish incursions in the late eighteenth century, Ohlone tribelets coexisted with a bountiful and watery landscape around the San Francisco Bay. It was a time when humans were far outnumbered by herds of animals roaming valleys and hillsides; thousands of waterfowl hidden amongst marshes and wetlands; and countless fish and shellfish harbored in rivers and

bays. The Ohlones lived simply here, relying on the land's resources for food, shelter, and clothing.

The Spanish missions ended the Ohlone way of life through assimilation, disease, and cultural shock. Many became laborers in the mission ranch lands, cultivating vines and fruits and tending livestock. The missions system collapsed in 1834 when Mexico gained independence from Spain, and the Native Americans were left to survive as best they could. Meanwhile, the old mission ranches were folded into even larger land grants awarded to prominent Mexican citizens and military personnel. One such grant, called the Rancho El Pinole, was held rather precariously by Don Ignacio Martinez, for whom the City of Martinez is named. By the mid 1800s, his ranch encompassed over 17,000 acres.

When Don Ignacio died in 1848, the massive ranch was divided and his son Vicente inherited a 1660- acre parcel on the eastern end of the ranch, named the Cañada del Hambre, in what today is referred to as the Alhambra Valley. Here among hilly grasslands and woodlands and fertile valleys Vicente Martinez grazed cattle and raised crops, and in 1849 constructed a two- story adobe and other outbuildings between a small creek and the road leading to the town named after his father. The Martinez Adobe, as it is now called, still stands today.

The pastoral landscape, however, soon changed with the discovery of gold in northern California and a sudden influx of prospectors and settlers. Vicente mortgaged the adobe and the Cañada del Hambre to Edward Franklin in the 1850s, for which Franklin Creek and Franklin Canyon are named. From this point on, the 1660- acre property was subdivided and sold countless times. One such purchaser was a Polish immigrant doctor named John Strentzel, who in 1853 settled down on twenty fertile acres next to the Arroyo del Hambre to start a fruit ranch. In 1874, Dr. Strentzel purchased a 244- acre farm from Thomas Redfern that included the Martinez Adobe.

#### **THE STRENTZEL RANCH AND JOHN MUIR, 1874-1890**

The determination and fortitude of the gold rush era pioneers was well represented in Dr. Strentzel who, along with his brother, experimented with many imported and native fruits and vines to learn which varieties would grow best in the Alhambra Valley. One of Strentzel's first plantings was a pear orchard near the family gravesite on the Arroyo del Hambre creek. The root stock of the orchard still exists today, making it the one of the oldest surviving commercial orchards in central California.'

Strentzel acquired additional lands in the following years and in addition to the pears produced apples, cherries, figs, olives, oranges, peaches, pecans, plums, quinces, and walnuts. The ranch grew vegetables and hay, raised cattle and hogs, and produced California's first Muscat grapes and raisins. Strentzel helped establish a wharf at Martinez, and from here produce was shipped to local and eastern markets using his innovative shipping techniques. In the gentlemen farmer tradition, Dr. Strentzel promoted the benefits of fruit growing to his fellow farmers and often gave away cuttings and advice to get them started.

In 1874, the same year the Redfern Farm was acquired, Dr. Strentzel, his wife, and daughter Louie met John Muir at the home of a mutual friend. Although he was invited to the ranch that day, it was not until three years later that Muir arrived at the Martinez wharf to pay the family a visit. Muir developed a close friendship with the Strentzels, and John and Louie corresponded frequently during his travels. In 1880 the couple married and settled down with the Strentzels in their first Alhambra ranch house. With the blessing of his wife, Muir embarked on a trip to Alaska in the spring of 1881, soon after the birth of their first child, Wanda. However, the declining health of Dr. Strentzel and his own family's financial needs called him back to the vineyards and orchards where he toiled the better part of the next ten years.

In 1882, Dr. Strentzel constructed his second home in the southern portion of the Redfern Farm called the Redfern Place. Situated on a knoll east of the Martinez Adobe, the two-story, Italianate-style house featured fourteen rooms, porches, an attic, and a cupola that offered sweeping views of the vast Alhambra Valley spread out below. The house was accessed by a curving carriage drive-loop and surrounded by walkways and masses of shrubs and trees.

Muir had entered into financial partnership with Dr. Strentzel by this time, buying, selling, and leasing lands throughout the valley and beyond; by 1885, the Strentzel-Muir Ranch totaled over 2300 acres. He had also taken over the responsibilities of running the fruit ranch in 1881, and soon began focusing less on experimental fruits and vines and more on proven varieties – such as Bartlett pears and late season table grapes – that commanded the highest market prices. Although more lands were brought into fruit and vine production, Muir consciously chose to leave the upper slopes of the hills south of the new house, later called Mt. Wanda, in their natural state. The decision did not affect the success of the ranch, however; by the early 1890s, Muir had amassed enough profits to gradually relinquish his ranch management role.

The Martinez Adobe served as ranch headquarters and was surrounded by a complex of barns, packing sheds, corrals, and living quarters. A network of farm roads connected the various fields to the Strentzel House and adobe, while Franklin Canyon Road provided direct access to the shipping facilities at the Martinez wharf. Other landscape features included wells, windmills, cisterns, a woodshed, and a fish pond at the base of the knoll. The lush rows of fruits and vines were complemented by plantings and windbreaks around the Strentzel House, many of which still survive today. Some of the plants were brought back by Muir from his travels around the country.

In 1886 daughter Helen was born but suffered from poor health as a child. By the late 1880s, Muir's worries about Helen and the years of labor and toil in the fields were beginning to affect his health. Well aware of her husband's love of the wilderness and his role in preserving it, Louie successfully convinced him to begin writing and traveling again. To help fund this venture, the couple began to sell and lease much of the ranch lands. In late 1890, Dr. Strentzel died and the estate – including the Strentzel House and Martinez Adobe – passed to his wife and daughter. Some of Strentzel- Muir Ranch lands were also sold and leased, and combined with the ranch profits earned from adept management, allowed Muir to save enough money to retire at the age of 51 and pursue writing and traveling for the balance of his life.

#### **RANCHING AND WRITING, 1890-1914**

The Muir family moved to the Strentzel House (now the Muir House) at the Redfern Place soon after Dr. Strentzel's death to care for Mrs. Strentzel. One of the upstairs bedrooms became Muir's "scribble den" where he produced some of his most famous works. However, with two young children running and playing about, he often fled to San Francisco when project deadlines loomed. Not all was work for Muir, though; he loved rambling on Mt. Wanda with his family, friends, and colleagues for picnics and botanical excursions.

By 1891, Muir had passed on the responsibilities of running the fruit ranch to various family members. For the next fifteen years, the types of crops produced at the ranch remained more or less the same as in previous years, probably because Strentzel and Muir had built such a successful and proven business. Some of the improvements at the Redfern Farm during this period included a new windmill and well on the east side of the house, a new road on the south side of the knoll, and construction of a carriage house next to the fish pond. Although now immersed in travel and writing, Muir maintained his connection to the

ranch through letters and occasional work in the fields when he was in between projects and travel.

Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, more trees, shrubs, and flowers were planted around the Muir House, creating a lush and beautiful scene that included a variety of palms, true cedars, eucalyptus, and a vegetable garden. Planting was a family affair enjoyed by all, and was not confined to the house area: fruit trees, shade trees, and roses were planted at the Martinez Adobe and flowers and shrubs adorned the family gravesite.

The turn of the century was a turning point for both the fruit ranch and John Muir. For the ranch, Muir's donation of land for a new railroad viaduct and tunnel south of the Muir House and Martinez Adobe was the first sign of dramatic changes about to sweep through the Alhambra Valley. For Muir, this time brought influential meetings with US presidents, rave reviews for his book *Our National Parks* and the beginning of a prolific writing period, and the start of perhaps his most famous and frustrating conservation battle, the proposed damming at Hetch Hetchy.

Louie Muir died in 1905 and left her shares of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch to daughters Wanda and Helen. Devastated by her loss, Muir retreated to the deserts of Arizona where Helen had been convalescing from pneumonia. There, the forests of petrified trees nearby provided a welcomed distraction and his subsequent research eventually led to their preservation. Muir returned to Martinez in between travels to write; however, despite changes and improvements to the house after the 1906 earthquake, his life there was never the same after Louie's passing.

That same year, Wanda married a fellow student from University of California-Berkeley named Tom Hanna, and the couple remodeled the Martinez Adobe for use as their first home. Hanna assumed the responsibilities of the ranch, and his most significant change was expansion of livestock operations, namely raising hogs and grazing cattle on the hills to the west and south, including Mt. Wanda. During this time, Muir traveled extensively throughout the US and the world; at one point he was away for over a year. The plantings around the Muir House were meticulously maintained by the ranch laborers and continued to thrive, so much so that some of the larger conifers had to be removed because of overcrowding.

In 1912, Muir returned to write for hours on end and visit with Wanda and her family at the adobe. The battle for Hetch Hetchy also continued, but in 1913 it was lost with the passage of the Raker Act. It was one of Muir's few defeats, and it was an especially hard one for him to take.

In 1914, perhaps in an effort to convince his daughters to return to the house, Muir suddenly remodeled the structure with new carpets, paint, and even electricity. In December, after writing a long letter to Helen to pitch his case, he packed up his working manuscript of *Travels in Alaska* and headed for Arizona for a visit. On the train ride he caught a cold, which in quick measure turned to pneumonia. In Los Angeles on Christmas Eve, he died at the age of seventy- six. Muir was buried next to Louie at the family gravesite next to the pear orchard and under the spreading branches of a eucalyptus tree he had once admired.

#### **SUBDIVISION AND PRESERVATION, 1915-1964**

The remaining lands of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch passed to Wanda and Helen following their father's death. When the estate was subdivided, the Hannas assumed ownership of the gravesite and most of the ranch lands, including Mt. Wanda. The house and 4.83 acres of surrounding land became known as the Muir Homestead and stayed in the family until 1919 when it was sold to the Irish family. The Martinez Adobe and about forty acres of land surrounding the Muir Homestead were sold to the Pond family in 1915. A period of complicated property transfers involving the both properties followed until 1921 when ownership finally stabilized.

Soon after Muir's death, heavy industry arrived in the Martinez area and brought with it new residents. Now, land once filled with productive orchards was more valuable when occupied with houses, especially in the northern part of the Alhambra Valley near the town. This new land use pushed south toward the old Redfern Place, but it was a gradual process. In the meantime, existing roads were improved and new roads were constructed, and alongside rows of fruit trees and vines developed an urban geometry that would eventually attract more homes and businesses. One of the new roads passed just south of the Martinez Adobe and Muir House and would later become the six- lane State Route 4.

From 1921 to 1955, the Martinez Adobe was owned by a tailor named Daniel Parsowith, who remodeled the structure and added new walkways, walls, driveways, patios, and landscaped with shrubs and flowers. The front of the adobe was heavily shaded for most of this period by black locust trees. Some outbuildings associated with the Strentzel- Muir Ranch were retained while

others were removed, and former vineyards and orchards were maintained and even expanded.

Across the creek, the new owners of the Muir Homestead, the Curry family, thinned out some of the understory plantings around the Muir House and generally kept the grounds in order. However, when Mr. Curry died, the house and landscape took on a neglected appearance until it was rented to the Kreiss family, who eventually purchased the property. The Kreisses made repairs, relocated the carriage house to the east side of the house, removed the woodshed and dilapidated Franklin Creek windmill, and planted a rose garden in the oval of the loop driveway.

In 1955, the Stein family purchased the Martinez Adobe property, which had been subdivided into a 3.8- acre parcel by this time, and the Sax family purchased the Muir Homestead. Both owners fixed up their properties and opened them up to the public on a limited basis. Concurrent with this activity was a growing interest in memorializing John Muir, which was fueled in part by the rapidly advancing march of the suburbs. Both Sax and Stein expressed their support of such an effort.

Commemorations of Muir had actually been going on for some time through occasional ceremonies at the gravesite organized by the Sierra Club, and it was assumed that a memorial to Muir would be erected there. However, the Muir House had long been the prize for some in the Sierra Club, who had unsuccessfully lobbied the State of California to purchase the house as part of the state park system, beginning in 1952. When Sax acquired the Muir Homestead and expressed his interest in a memorial, the focus shifted to the house. In 1958, a proposal to include both the Muir House and Martinez Adobe in a county park was announced, but it too failed.

By 1960, preservation and commemoration efforts focused on federal acquisition and administration. The following year, Stein purchased the small vineyard/orchard between the Muir Homestead and Martinez Adobe properties to prevent the owner of that parcel from developing the land and severing the connection between the last remaining structures associated with the Strentzel-Muir Ranch. Representative John Baldwin of California introduced a bill for the creation of the John Muir National Historic Site – which included the Muir Homestead and the Martinez Adobe parcel but not the small orchard property – in 1962 and 1963. On both occasions, a decision was delayed pending the completion of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and a



“Feasibility Study.” The latter report included the vineyard parcel and urged immediate federal acquisition before the area was compromised by new developments and upgrades of the adjacent highway.

#### **NPS STEWARDSHIP, 1964 TO PRESENT**

On August 31, 1964, the John Muir National Historic Site was authorized “as a public national memorial to John Muir in recognition of his efforts as a conservationist and a crusader for national parks and reservations.”<sup>2</sup> The site included the Muir House, the Martinez Adobe, and the small vineyard/orchard parcel, which together comprised almost nine acres of the original 2300- acre ranch. The establishment of the park at this time was fortunate – most of the land surrounding the park was developed, or soon to be developed, with homes, businesses, and roads.

Many of the proposals introduced in the Feasibility Study were expanded in the park’s 1965 “Master Plan.” The report identified basic management and interpretive strategies aimed at conveying the spirit and setting in which Muir lived and wrote while at the ranch. Among the proposals were to restore the Muir House and Martinez Adobe to the 1906- 1914 period and, through a historic planting plan completed in 1968/69, to restore the orchards, vineyards, and other plantings to represent the historic scene as it may have appeared during Muir’s time. Other major goals at this time included relocating the carriage house to its historic location and reconstructing the Franklin Creek windmill.

The park’s current visitor facilities were established in the early years, such as the visitor center, parking area, and circulation system. Proposals were made in subsequent planning reports to expand all three of these features, but to date few have been implemented. However, many of the park’s interpretive goals aimed at restoring the historic ranch setting were accomplished, including interior and exterior restoration of the Muir House and Martinez Adobe, relocation of the carriage house, reconstruction of the Franklin Creek windmill, and replanting orchard and vineyard spaces.

Other changes and improvements at the park have come about in response to external needs and concerns, such as flood abatement and weed removal projects along Franklin Creek to reduce downstream flooding, and installation of buffer plantings to protect the park’s historic setting. A 1980 feasibility study for preservation of the gravesite was a response to increased development and traffic around the park and throughout the southern part of the Alhambra Valley.

In 1984, twenty years of experience in maintaining and managing the park's agricultural landscape was compiled in the park's first Orchard Management and Integrated Pest Management Plan. The plan was implemented in 1986 to manage the historically representative orchards and vineyards and has been updated frequently ever since. Today, much of the plan can be found on the web. In 2002, much of the equipment needed to maintain the grounds was finally consolidated in a new maintenance facility.

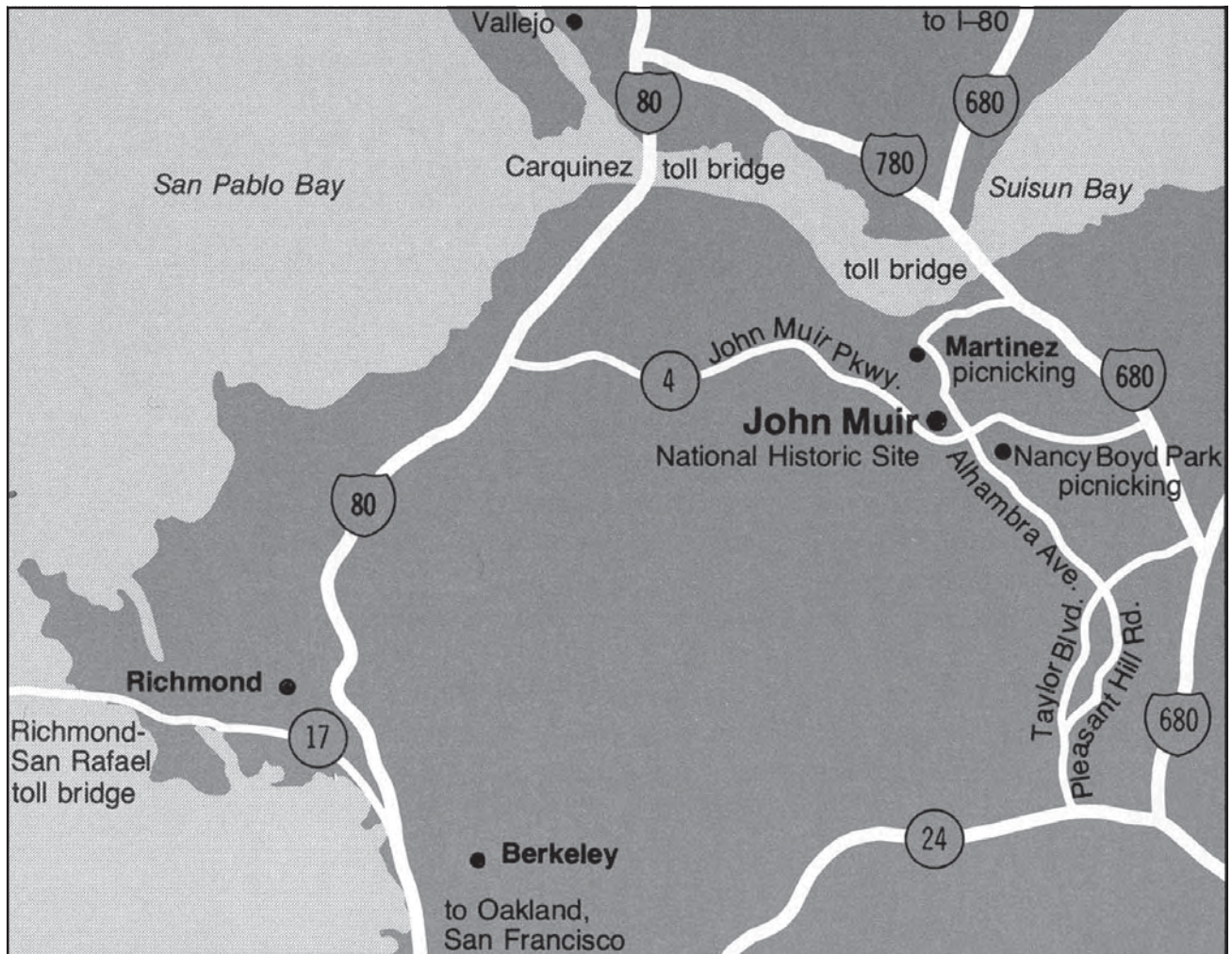
Beginning in 1988, the park negotiated to purchase 326 acres on Mt. Wanda, south of the park. These lands were important because of their historical association with Muir and because they were one of the few places left to offer an unimpaired view from the park and to represent the Alhambra Valley when it was fruit growing area. The Mt. Wanda area was seen as contributing to the quality of the visitor experience of what conditions may have been like in Muir's time. In 1993, the park acquired this property with the intent of retaining its natural character as part of the historic scene, and in 2000, the park acquired the 1.3- acre gravesite parcel to manage as a low- use historic area. The 2300- acre fruit ranch had long since passed, but its essence and spirit was now well- represented.

#### **ENDNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION**

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, "Feasibility Study, John Muir Gravesite, Contra Costa County, California: Draft." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, May 1980: 2; Statement of Margaret Plummer, long time Alhambra Valley resident and granddaughter of John Muir's closest associate and friend, John Swett (Cited in P.J. Ryan, "The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979: 1).

<sup>2</sup> Section 2, Public Law 88- 547, 31 August 1964. National Park Service, "General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment." Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: Appendix 1.





**Figure 0.1: Location of the John Muir National Historic Site. (Brochure, John Muir National Historic Site - hereafter JOMU - General Printing Office, 1998).**

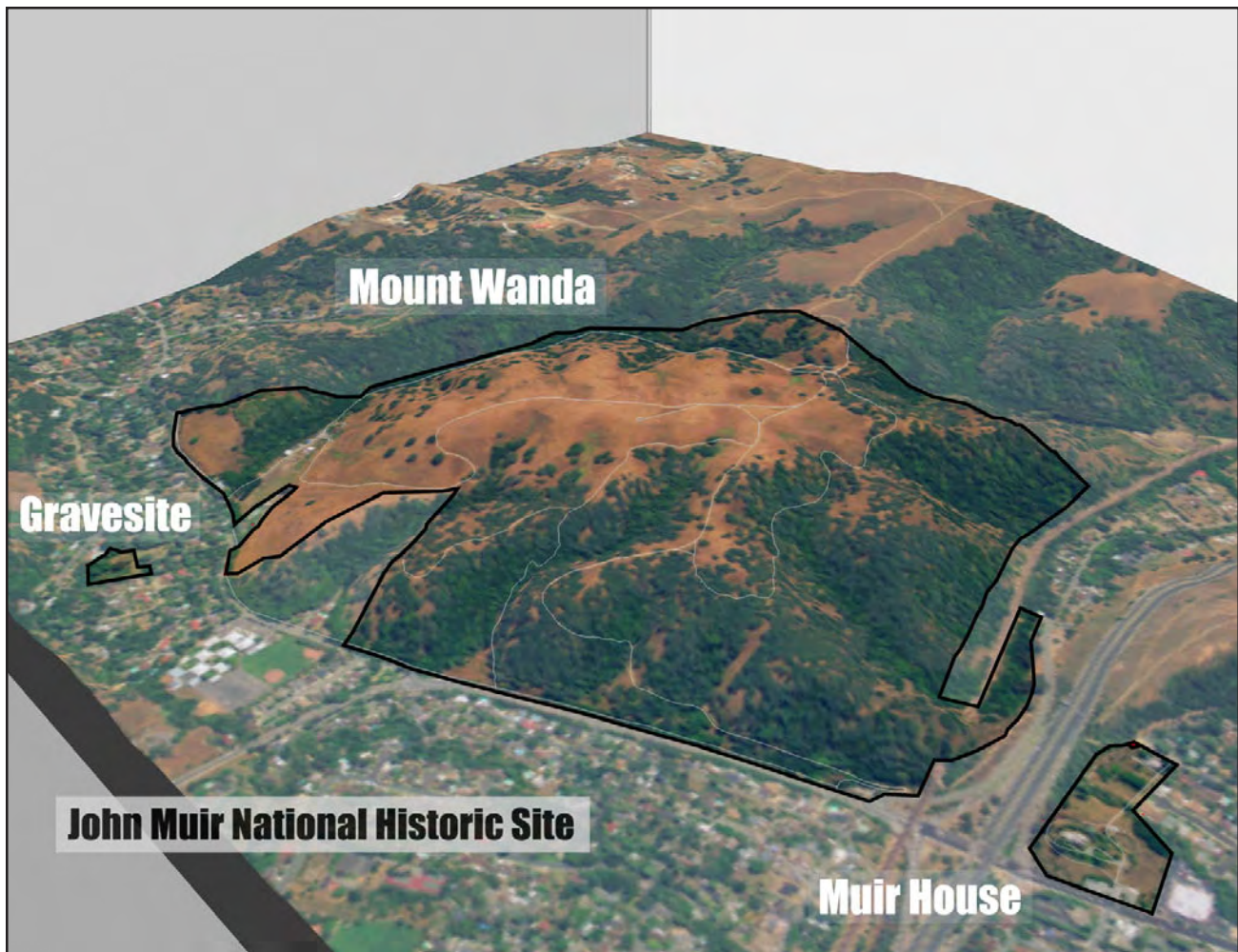


Figure 0.2: Three-dimensional topographic map showing the three units of the park. (JOMU geographic information system. Adapted by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation - hereafter OCLP - 2003).

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE, PRIOR TO 1874**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the use and character of the park's landscape from the time of Native American settlement up to the purchase of the Redfern ranch by Dr. John Strentzel, John Muir's future father-in-law, in 1874. The landscape was dramatically transformed during this period, passing from a land abundant in natural resources for hunting and gathering, to massive mission and ranch lands dedicated to widespread grazing, and finally to new settlements and smaller farms devoted to grains, fruits, and vines. By 1874, Dr. Strentzel had acquired the lands that now comprise two of the park's three units.

#### **THE OHLONE TRIBELETS**

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in the last half of the eighteenth century, Central California had the largest Native American population anywhere north of Mexico. Over 10,000 people lived in an area stretching from Point Sur north to the San Francisco Bay area. The Ohlones, as they called themselves, belonged to about forty different groups, or tribelets, each of which numbered around 250 people. The tribelets sometimes associated with each other through trade and marriage, but each remained more or less independent with their own territory, chief, and language (Figure 1.1).<sup>1</sup>

The landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area was vastly different in the time of the Ohlones. Thick oak-bay and redwood forests cloaked much of the hills while tall, sometimes shoulder-high stands of native bunchgrasses covered the lowland meadows and savannahs. Tule marshes and cordgrass swamps on the fringes of the bay and in the river valleys spread over thousands of acres. In these days, water was virtually everywhere, particularly in the flat lands in the winter and spring.<sup>2</sup>

According to the writings of early explorers, missionaries, and traders, these environments supported an incredible variety of animal life. "There is not any country in the world which more abounds in fish and game of every description," wrote one sea captain.<sup>3</sup> There were mussels, oysters, clams, albalones, sea otters, and sea lions in profusion while gray whales swam and spouted in the San Francisco and Monterey bays. Marshes encircling the bays harbored thousands of waterfowl while streams and rivers teemed with perch, salmon, and



stickleback.<sup>4</sup> Tall bunchgrass in valleys and low hillsides concealed herds of antelope and deer, elk described as “monsters with tremendous horns,” and grizzly bears characterized as “...horrible, fierce, large, and fat.”<sup>5</sup> Trees were host to great horned owls, red shafted flickers, downy woodpeckers, goldfinches, and yellow billed magpies.<sup>6</sup>

The Ohlones lived among these abundant resources and built their settlements with materials at hand. Along the water and in the lowlands and valleys the Ohlones constructed six to twenty- foot diameter dome- shaped houses of bundled or woven mats of tule rushes. In hills and mountains near redwoods, houses were made of redwood bark laid against a conical- shaped wood frame. Sweat lodges and ceremonial houses of earth and brush were constructed low into the ground (Figure 1.2).<sup>7</sup>

The natural world was sacred to the Ohlones, and as such they managed their resources carefully. Controlled burns helped fell trees, dry grains for easier gathering, and promote grassland growth. Extensive irrigation ditches and diversion channels were dug by hand to inundate fields with river water. Animals and plants provided food and clothing; feathers, otter, and rabbit skins served as capes for men and boys while women and girls wore skirts of deerskin, tule rushes, and shredded bark. Shellbeads, abalone pendants, and bone wood became necklaces and earrings. In addition to hunted animals, the Ohlone diet consisted of grass seed, tule, wild roots, bulbs, greens, and especially acorns.<sup>8</sup>

Taken as a whole, these practices contributed to changes in the natural ecosystem through the cutting of wood, redistribution of seeds and plant materials, altering of the composition of grasslands, and soil compaction around growing settlement areas.<sup>9</sup>

#### **THE KARKINS**

The tribelet inhabiting the northernmost part of the Ohlone territory, on the Straits of Carquinez between San Pablo Bay and Suisun Bay, were called the Karkins. As described by Father Pedro Font in c.1776, they used tule boats to bring in enormous salmon runs:

“Today we met twenty- two heathen loaded with these fish, and from carrying four apiece they were almost exhausted. At the village which we passed there were so many that it seemed impossible that its residents could eat them, and yet part of the inhabitants were in their little tule boats engaged in catching more.”<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the other Ohlone tribes, salmon was probably considered the staple food for this group, more in line with Indian nations further north." Their time in this area is now embodied in the name, Carquinez Straits.

### **THE SPANISH MISSIONS**

Despite occasional incursions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was not until around 1769 that major Spanish expeditions into the Bay Area began. Following the contours of the bays and valleys, the diarist Father Juan Crespi observed in 1772 that the place was something special, reporting that "within its harborage could be housed all of the navies of Europe."<sup>2</sup> Subsequent expeditions would set forth a series of dramatic changes for the Ohlones and the Bay Area landscape.

In short order the Spanish established several presidios and pueblos to protect and serve new settlers while Franciscan monks accompanying the expeditions eventually founded missions in the Ohlone territory (Figure 1.3). According to Malcolm Margolin in *The Ohlone Way*, the intent was to establish the perfect Christian community of which the Native Americans were to be the beneficiaries. However, the assimilation of the Ohlones and other groups into the missions separated them from their families, traditions, and ways of life and exposed them to disease and cultural shock.

Six missions were established between 1770 and 1797 in the Bay Area and most Ohlone villages, including five in the Martinez area seen by earlier travelers, were apparently gone by the early 1840s.<sup>3</sup> There were pockets of Native Americans resistance but most uprisings were subdued. According to one traveler, the role of a landscape rich in resources had changed:

[The] death- like stillness of these beautiful fields is broken only by the wild animals which inhabit them: and as far as the eye can reach, it perceives no trace of human existence; not even a canoe is to be seen on the surrounding waters.<sup>4</sup>

### **MISSION FARMS**

In addition to learning the imposed Christian doctrine, the Native Americans were instructed in the mission farms even though game, fish, and nuts were plentiful around them.<sup>5</sup> Fields of figs, olives, apples, apricots, grapes, pears, peaches, and especially seedling Mogul oranges were set out and watered by the old irrigation ditches.<sup>6</sup> The varieties were generally tender (low tolerance to freezes) Mediterranean and sub- tropical fruits that thrived in this climate of hot summers and mild winters. Although the layouts of the orchards and vineyards



are not known, this period is significant in that it signaled the beginning of planned fruit growing in the Bay Area.

An equally significant new land use, and one that arguably had the longest term effect on the landscape, was the introduction of grazing and exotic grasses. In particular, the overgrazing of domestic livestock, the infill of Mediterranean plant species that covered less land and left exposed hillsides susceptible to erosion, and the elimination of traditional burning practices initiated a gradual decline in the coverage and composition of the native grasslands.<sup>7</sup>

### **MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE**

In 1821 Mexico gained its independence from Spain and established a national government. However, the new nation was slow to develop as factions and military adventurers struggled for control. In the northern frontier lands such as Alta California and New Mexico, governance was left to local officials.<sup>8</sup> By this time, the Spanish mission system was in decline in part because of Indian resistance to secularization. In 1834 the new government ordered the missions and agricultural lands turned over to the Mexican California state. The remaining Native Americans, who by this time had become dependent on the missions, found work as laborers, servants, and ranch hands. Others took to hunting cattle and sheep that had largely replaced the herds of elk and antelope; they were consequently regarded as outlaws by new settlers and traders entering the area.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the place names used today originate from this period. One account has it that a band of Mexican soldiers pursuing a group of Native Americans near the Martinez area became lost and famished. Consequently, they named the valley Cañada del Hambre, or the Valley of Hunger. After they left the valley, they found a group of friendly Indians who supplied them with ground meal made of parched corn, translated by the soldiers to the word ‘Pinole’.<sup>20</sup> Pinole is still used today in most land- related property descriptions and plat maps.

### **MEXICAN RANCHOS**

The land use policies of the new Mexican government differed with those of the Spanish government; whereas Spain thought it best to keep settlements centered around presidios and pueblos to exert the most control of the country, the Mexican belief was that land widely settled was easier to hold against a foreign enemy than a country whose interior was inhabited by wandering and sometimes hostile Native Americans. This view accommodated a second generation of

settlers which had now entered the scene and was hungry for new homesites.<sup>21</sup> As a result, many of the former mission ranch lands were merged into large land grants awarded by the Mexican government to high- ranking citizens, families, and military personnel.

The massive size of the new ranchos, which often encompassed thousands of acres, was also a result of the favored land use at the time. While some fruits, vegetables, corn, and wheat were cultivated, such crops were typically limited to what a family needed. Instead, a majority of the land was devoted to large- scale cattle grazing, which in this semi- arid landscape required vast amounts of acreage. Little attention was paid to property boundaries because at the time the land was not seen as valuable; it took acres to feed a single steer, and one steer hide brought only two dollars. The typical rancho had between two and ten thousand cattle and perhaps a thousand horses, the latter of which were used for everything from transportation (no one ever walked) to harvesting grain by stomping it.<sup>22</sup>

Roads and trails naturally existed between missions, presidios, and pueblos, and new trails were developed to reach the sprawling ranchos that were often far removed from existing main roads. These early paths, called caminos, were typically pedestrian or horse trails and were usually not in fixed locations except at destinations or in areas constricted by terrain. The rancho lands were open and unfenced, and passage through them was protected by law except for small fenced areas such as gardens, orchards, vineyards, and grain fields around the adobe houses. To reach a desired destination the traveler was free to choose his own camino by following an existing trail or making a new one. The trails were typically impassable in the winter months and until April or May because of rains, possibly another reason why roads were not in fixed locations.<sup>23</sup>

A descriptive view of the California rancho landscape comes from J.P. Munro-Fraser:

“...[The] broad acres were one vast field of waving corn, in the months of March and April looking like an emerald sea, dotted with islands, as it were, formed from the clumps of oaks...Then the area had no roads, only trails...which twisted through the growth of wild oats that reached, on every side, as high as the head of the passing equestrian. No fences. Around, the vista was variegated with flowers of the richest perfumes, lending a pleasing sensation of sweet repose; the slightest sounds were heard in the vast solitude...”<sup>24</sup>

Since no fences or barriers separated one ranch from the other, cattle would often roam the hills and ultimately intermingle. Neighbors would be invited to

roundups, or rodeos, and it was not uncommon for a visitor to find two or three hundred of his cattle at another's rodeo.<sup>25</sup> Not surprisingly, the absence of fences and the sheer size of the ranchos led to countless lawsuits, claims, and boundary disputes.

#### **THE 1823 RANCHO EL PINOLE GRANT**

The lands that would become the Strentzel- Muir fruit ranch were part of a land grant received by Don Ignacio Martinez in 1823 and finalized in 1842 (Figure 1.4). Martinez was one of Mexican California's first pioneers and would become one of her most distinguished citizens. Born in Mexico City in 1774, he was assigned to the Presidio of Santa Barbara in 1799 as a cadet in the Royal Spanish Army. In 1806 he was promoted to ensign at San Diego and then in 1819 transferred to the Presidio of San Francisco where he eventually served as commandant from 1828 until his discharge in 1831. During this tenure, Martinez served on a commission that established the Federal Constitution of 1824, which although had little power and lasted only a year, was California's first constitution.<sup>26</sup>

Due to his exemplary service with the Spanish and Mexican governments, Governor Antonio Luis Arguello granted Martinez provisional title to three square leagues of land (approximately 13,200 acres) in the area northeast of San Francisco known as the Contra Costa, or the "opposite coast," in 1823.<sup>27</sup> This immense area of land was characterized by foothills generally oriented northwest to southeast and separated by valleys and creeks, and was bounded on the north and east by San Pablo Bay.<sup>28</sup> Using the local name, Martinez referred to his land as the Rancho el Pinole.

Martinez sent his two sons, Jose and Vicente, to the new ranch in 1824 with a run of cattle to learn the livestock business from his mayordomo, Bruno Valencia.<sup>29</sup> Development of the ranch and construction of permanent structures was initially slow, possibly because Martinez knew that the validity of the land grant, which was provisional and not grants in fee, would be challenged if California became part of the United States or England.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, by c.1828 his sons had built an adobe on a ridge above Pinole Creek, constructed corrals, and planted a grape vineyard and pear orchard.<sup>31</sup> That same year, Valencia brought in 600 to 700 cattle and constructed a second adobe for himself and future ranch managers.<sup>32</sup>

By late 1836, the Martinez brothers constructed two additional adobes for their own families and the complex became known as Rancho de la Merced. The Martinez ranch had grown considerably by this time and consisted of 3000 cattle, 400 horses, 600 sheep, 80 'tame' horses, 300 milk cattle, and 300 goats. Like

other grant holders, Martinez used the mission Native Americans as laborers to construct and run the rancho.<sup>33</sup>

### **LAND DISPUTES**

Sometime during his tenure at the San Francisco Presidio, Martinez apparently misplaced or lost the grant papers. When he finally notified Mexican authorities of this in 1834, it set into motion decades of complicated legal challenges over the Rancho el Pinole. Martinez petitioned the new governor, Jose Figueroa, and the legislature to reissue the grant, but no evidence of the original grant from former Governor Arguello was found. The legislature then sent the Martinez petition to the Committee on Colonization and Vacant Lands who reported back to the legislature that the petition be returned to Martinez so he could present it again, this time in the proper form. To further complicate matters, Figueroa died and three different governors followed in rapid succession.<sup>34</sup>

In 1837, Juan Bautista Alvarado became governor and Martinez petitioned yet again, explaining he lost the original grant. In the application, perhaps to prove that he was in fact using the land, he described his ranch holdings of livestock and “an orchard of fruit bearing trees and a vineyard which is very productive.”<sup>35</sup> He also requested an additional square league of land:

Although this may appear considerable land the greater part is not fit for pasture, it being composed of stony hills and swamp which are of no benefit to cattle. The latter lyes (sic) in the direction of the...Canada del Hambre which is the place which the cattle resort to.<sup>36</sup>

The new land was situated east of the Rancho El Pinole with its eastern border more or less defined by the Arroyo del Hambre (today it is also called Alhambra Creek). Governor Alvarado sent the revised Martinez petition to the town council of San Francisco, who had jurisdiction of the district. He directed the council to determine if this additional land was vacant and not under the possession of a mission, Native American corporation, or village.<sup>37</sup> However, since the boundaries were in doubt because of the lost papers, a series of counter claims ensued for the lands in the Cañada del Hambre involving Felipe Briones, Manuela Valencia, Jose Estrada, and Teodora Soto and lasted for years.<sup>38</sup>

### **THE 1842 LAND GRANT**

On June 1, 1842, after weighing the various petitions and considering Martinez’s claims, Governor Alvarado officially awarded the land grant to Don Ignacio Martinez (Figure 1.5). The grant now encompassed four square leagues

(approximately 17,745 acres) and included the additional land in the Cañada del Hambre, defined as:

Commencing from the mouth of the Canada del Pinole... easterly by the same until it adjoins with the corral de Galindo from this place to La Canada de la Hambre (sic) and from thence to the Straits of Carquinez emptying into a mouth of the said Canada el Pinole into the Bay of San Francisco.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, Martinez was required to:

mark out the boundaries on which the premises he will place other than the land marks, some front trees or shrubbery (sic) of some utility...within one year he must have a house built upon it which shall be inhabited.<sup>40</sup>

The grant was first approved by the Surveyor General of the United States for California in 1852, but the vague land description would lead to many more years of land disputes.<sup>41</sup>

#### **THE RANCHO EL PINOLE LANDSCAPE**

Despite the prolonged years of litigation and uncertainty, Martinez visited his ranch often and finally retired there with his family in 1838 after serving as alderman of San Jose and mayor of San Francisco. As was true for most early Californians living on ranchos at the time, the immense size of the Rancho El Pinole guaranteed a mostly rural and self-sufficient existence. The rancho feature three large valleys, each of which had its purpose: the family lived in the Pinole Valley, held rodeos in the Rodeo Valley, and grazed livestock in the Cañada del Hambre (Figure 1.6).<sup>42</sup> The valleys were likely connected by caminos that criss-crossed the hills and navigated the valley floors.

Neighbors were always invited to the rodeos to socialize and to sort out their own livestock that had strayed on to the rancho's open range (one account has it that Martinez favored raising white cattle that were easily distinguished from other cattle). Martinez also hosted many balls, and when his son Jose was married the festivities reportedly lasted a week and featured bullfighting, dancing, and picnics in the woods. Ranch life was not without of peril, however; attacks and robberies by renegade Native Americans were common.<sup>43</sup>

The fertile ranch lands provided good soil for growing a variety of produce and ample space for grazing. Numerous land petitions are a testament of the value of the land and provide vague yet valuable descriptions of land use:

[Briones]...has a house upon it which has cost two thousand dollars a Garden fruit trees... with a quantity of four thousand head of wild cattle with more than three hundred tame cattle and horses... three hundred goats oxen and...horses.<sup>44</sup>

### **THE RANCHO CAÑADA DEL HAMBRE LANDSCAPE**

Don Ignacio Martinez died in 1848 and was buried in the mission at San Jose.<sup>45</sup> The Rancho El Pinole property descended to his eleven children, and in 1849 the massive land grant was divided. Martinez' son, Vicente, received his share in the Cañada del Hambre portion of the ranch where he had been living since c.1846, an area approximately 1660 acres in size (Figure 1.7). This became known as the Rancho Cañada del Hambre.<sup>46</sup>

Testimonies from the land cases reveal that portions of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre had been under cultivation since c.1842, the largest area of which was around twenty- four acres. Another area called "the Gardens" was fenced and had been cultivated for some twenty- five years. The exact locations of these areas are not known, but may have been near Vicente's first frame house which he and his wife, Maria Guadalupe Moraga, constructed in 1846 at the mouth of a small tributary valley variously called Canada Siscal, Sicares, Lucas, and Siscases (now called Franklin Canyon). The dwelling was situated approximately 200 feet west of a small creek possibly of the same name (now called Franklin Creek).<sup>47</sup>

Numerous factors may have prompted Vicente's relocation from his father's main ranch house in the Pinole Valley to the Cañada del Hambre area. First, Vicente's homestead was ideally located to manage this part of the Rancho El Pinole, which was somewhat physically removed from the much larger western section. The Canada Siscal essentially provided the only valley passage between the two areas and for this reason was likely traversed by a well- traveled camino that eventually led to the Bay of Carquinez from which hides, meat, and tallow produced at the ranch were shipped. Second, the hillsides and flat bottomlands offered excellent grazing and farming opportunities, a point his father had argued when he requested this area in 1837. Third, the construction of a dwelling and corrals probably helped satisfy the requirements of the 1842 grant and possibly eased overcrowding at his father's ranch house caused by his (and his siblings') growing families.<sup>48</sup>

Ongoing land disputes also may have contributed to Vicente's move. Around the time Vicente constructed his first house, Desiderio Briones and Teodoro Soto built a dwelling of tule and mud and a bake oven on the east side of the Canada Siscal. Soon after, Briones built an adobe on the same land and was raising "some very fine melons." According to a local resident:

The Old Lady (the wife of Briones) claimed the land on both sides of the creek, and raised a crop of grain on the west side, after which Vicente Martinez took possession of the field on the west side and planted a crop on the same ground the next year.<sup>49</sup>

(The Briones incident was just one of many land disputes and claims that dogged the Martinez heirs until 1868, when President Andrew Johnson awarded the family the Rancho El Pinole and its eleven divisions totaling 17,760.64 acres. By then, however, most of the land was occupied by settlers and squatters.<sup>50</sup>)

### **THE MARTINEZ ADOBE**

The land dispute with Briones may have occurred near Vicente's frame house, and possibly prompted him to build a more permanent residence in 1849. A new two-story adobe structure was constructed approximately fifty-five feet west of the frame house in a style typical of other Mexican rancho houses of the period; each level featured two multi-purpose rooms and a veranda or porch connected by an outdoor stair. The adobe bricks were handmade on site near the creek and probably erected by Native American laborers, as was typical, and the roof was likely tule placed over a frame of poles and sealed with mud. The foundation was constructed with sandstone rubble and mud mortar, and according to scholar J. N. Bowman suggests it was one of the better houses in the area.<sup>51</sup> The Martinez family had accumulated some wealth by this time, and it is also likely the house was well-appointed.<sup>52</sup>

The adobe was surrounded by a collection of outbuildings and corrals and was situated closer to the camino than the previous dwelling. The location of the complex as a whole – on a gentle slope overlooking arable land and a creek – was typical of other rancho layouts. The sloping land provided good drainage during rain storms (to keep the adobe from disintegrating) and kept the corrals from getting too muddy. The setting also helped catch cool breezes in the summer flowing in from the Straits.<sup>53</sup>

The wooded and grass hills to the west of the camino were used for timber and to corral and graze wild cattle, rodeo cattle, milk cows, and horses. Proximate to the adobe were outbuildings such as an outhouse, cookhouse, and blacksmith shop as well as a trash dump and additional corrals, all of which may have been arranged in a “U” or “L” shape that retained the idea of a Mexican courtyard.<sup>54</sup> According to one scholar, this area was integral to family life because most activities occurred outside. Interestingly, a stipulation in the land grants stated that “front trees or shrubbery of some utility” were required, and if taken literally, may mean that fruit trees or grape arbors may have been located on the

east side of the adobe, which was the formal entrance. Surrounding this domestic area were cultivated fields that extended east toward the creek and beyond, probably devoted to hay and grain crops for raising cattle.<sup>55</sup>

### **GOLD RUSH AND STATEHOOD**

Vicente Martinez's move to the largely uninhabited and isolated Rancho Cañada del Hambre in 1846 occurred on the eve of dramatic changes in government, population, land use, and agriculture. In the early 1840s it became clear to many Californians that Mexican California was in turmoil. Incoming settlers had already begun to revolt against the economic and political failings of the Mexican government and went so far as to proclaim the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic at Sonoma in 1846. This revolt was short lived, but along with the nation's increased westward expansionist interests contributed to the outbreak of the Mexican- American war later that year. The conflict ended in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded much of the west to the United States, including the Mexican province of Alta California, and opened the territory to speculators and squatters.

The discovery of gold in 1846 at Sutter's Mill on the American River triggered a massive influx of prospectors and fortune seekers. Investors sought land to raise cattle and produce and obtain wood and supplies for the new boomtowns.<sup>56</sup> One such beneficiary of the gold rush was Colonel William R. Smith, a San Francisco businessman and agent of the Don Ignacio Martinez estate. In 1849, Smith surveyed a new town on the Straits of Carquinez at the mouth of the Arroyo del Hambre and named it after Don Ignacio Martinez. California achieved statehood in 1850 and in 1851 Contra Costa County was organized with Martinez as its county seat. The designation assured growth for the new town and Smith was there to sell newly platted lots to the waves of new settlers and investors.<sup>57</sup>

The area's transportation capabilities improved at this time as well. By 1850, a ferry operated by Dr. Robert Semple made regular crossings from the downtown Martinez wharf to Benicia across the Straits, replacing earlier oar, horse, and sail-powered boats and providing one of only a few access points to the northern gold fields. Products from the Rancho El Pinole and other ranchos were likely shipped on the ferry and other steamers calling on the wharf, while brick, glass, and other building materials were probably brought in the same way. Although local transportation was still primarily by horse, the influx of people placed new demands on the old caminos. Wheeled vehicles and carts soon became more



prevalent, at which time the concept of fixed roads, legally and cadastrally, became known and existing and new roads were surveyed.<sup>58</sup>

### **LAND GRANT CHALLENGES**

Some of the new emigrants arriving in Alta California in the 1850s were under the false impression that the vast amounts of land formerly held by the Mexican government was to become public property of the United States. A stipulation of the Treaty of Guadalupe, however, bounded the US government to recognize the land grants.<sup>59</sup> The most fertile lands were controlled in the grants, leaving only inferior and inaccessible lands in government control. Consequently, the settlers viewed the ranchos as monopolies holding back settlement and deliberately squatted where they could.<sup>60</sup> Pressure on the rancho families increased, as did incidents of cattle rustling and theft of wood and hay.

The effect on the livelihood of the ranchos was significant. Most of the wealth accumulated by the Mexican ranchers had been through raising and trading cattle, which required vast amounts of land. Burdened with demands for land by new settlers and by costly lawsuits against squatters, they often had to sell parcels, which meant less land for raising cattle. As a result, the rancho families were forced into other pursuits to meet living expenses. Additionally, the rancheros had little experience with the new monetary economy; some newcomers often loaned them money for mortgages only to later foreclose, or acquire the property through dubious means.<sup>61</sup>

Although the Department of the Interior determined that most of the Mexican land grants were in fact legal and in accord with the law, the United States Board of Land Commissioners, established in 1851, placed the burden of proof of ownership on the Mexican grantees, giving them two years to prove their claim or risk forfeiture of the land. Consequently, many of the landholders lost their ranches through this process in part because the Commission members could not speak Spanish, land boundaries were poorly defined and marked, and squatters removed boundary markers.<sup>62</sup>

The Mexican system of metes and bounds provided only rough estimates of the actual land area. To resolve this, the US rectangular system of townships and sections was adopted to measure the land grant area unless the boundaries were clearly definable. The surveys intended to segregate lands that had been granted from those that had not, the latter of which became the property of the United States as public lands. However, the US system also produced vagaries. To further complicate matters, deeds and mortgages often used both systems to

describe land parcels, and as a result it typically took years to determine the validity of the grants and even more years to settle on the boundaries.<sup>63</sup>

### **VICENTE SELLS RANCHO CAÑADA DEL HAMBRE**

It is likely that Vicente Martinez had to deal with squatters and trespassers on his large share of the Rancho El Pinole because of its location near the growing town of Martinez, but to what degree is not known as there is little information about his life and testimonies in land cases regarding his departure are conflicting. Martinez and his family apparently lived on the Rancho Cañada del Hambre until the early- to mid- 1850s. According to Samuel J. Tennent, Vicente's brother-in-law, the land around the adobe was under cultivation and included "corrals for cattle, and for two years he successfully cultivated...[the land] and had a house upon it in which his men lived."<sup>64</sup>

In December 1850, Vicente mortgaged most of his 1660- acre property, including his adobe, for \$1500 from neighbors Napoleon Smith, Warren Brown, and Thomas Brown.<sup>65</sup> For the next three years, Vicente used the property as collateral to obtain a number of loans from various persons. Later, in 1853, he sold most of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre, now described at 1700 acres, to Edward Franklin of San Francisco for \$6000.<sup>66</sup> Much of the land at this time was in cultivation.

### **THE ALHAMBRA VALLEY**

By the early 1850s, industrial mining had replaced the efforts of gold rush prospectors and most of the new settlers turned to previous occupations or other ventures. Many farmers looked toward greater prospects in the potentially fertile California valleys and foothills. Some grew rice, grapes, cotton, and citrus fruits with success while others tried mulberry trees and silkworms, eucalyptus, and tobacco, only to fail.<sup>67</sup> Some newcomers were even fortunate enough to find remnants of orchards already laid out in the abandoned farms of the Spanish missions. By c.1853, the first commercial pear orchard in California was established by W. M. Stockton, who grafted stumps of old Spanish pear trees with his own stock.<sup>68</sup> Another successful pioneer was one Dr. John Strentzel, future father-in-law to John Muir, who arrived in Martinez in 1853.

### **DR. JOHN STRENTZEL**

John Theophile Strentzel was born in Lublin, Poland on November 29, 1813, the son of a prominent doctor. Growing up among his family's orchards and gardens, he fled to Hungary in 1831 when Russia defeated Poland and he was

faced with conscription into the Russian military. Strentzel studied viticulture and received a medical degree in Budapest and in 1840 emigrated to the U.S., eventually settling in Texas where he married Louisiana Erwin of Tennessee in 1843.

The Strentzels and their young daughter, Louie Wanda, moved to the gold fields of California in 1849 like many young couples at that time. Dr. Strentzel served as a medical advisor on the Clarkeville wagon train and in California set up a medical practice, general store, hotel, and ferry near LaGrange on the Tuolumne River. After his wife's illness forced him to sell out in 1852, he and his brother Henry decided to try farming and stock raising and bought 600 acres near the town of Snelling. Soon after, a flood on the Merced River wiped out the crops and he caught pneumonia trying to save his family. This affected his health for the rest of his life. Vowing never to be flooded out again, he moved his invalid wife and family to Stockton, Santa Cruz, and finally to Benicia, then the state capital and a prosperous city with a good harbor, established commercial areas, and a good climate favorable to his and his family's health.

On the advice of a friend, Strentzel hopped a ferry to visit the town of Martinez and the Cañada del Hambre in 1853. Deciding the sheltered valley was ideal for growing grapes and other fruits, Strentzel painted an opportunistic picture of the area:

Here was a lovely fertile valley, protected by high hills, from the cold winds and fogs[sic] of San Francisco, a stream of living water flowing through it, the hills and valley partially covered with magnificent laurel, live- oak and white- oak trees, and everywhere a green mantle of wild oats from 8- 12 inches high. I knew at once that the valley was well adapted to fruit growing and thought, "here I can realize my long cherished dream of a home surrounded by orange groves, and all kinds of fruits and flowers, where I can literally recline under my own vine and fig- trees." I immediately purchased 20 acres of the richest valley land, two and half miles from town, paying \$50 per acre, and at once removed my family to the new home, they arriving on the 4th of April, 1853.<sup>69</sup>

Strentzel's twenty- acre parcel was situated at the far southeastern corner of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre and was purchased from Napoleon Smith (who earlier mortgaged land to Vicente Martinez). The land was generally flat and bounded roughly on the east by the Arroyo del Hambre and on the west by hill lands and a road to Martinez (a different road than next to the Martinez Adobe).<sup>70</sup> He constructed his first house here, and at this time, according to Strentzel, the Cañada del Hambre acquired yet another name (Figure 1.7):

Mrs. Strentzel, on arriving here was much displeased with the name, and remembering Irving's glowing description of the Moorish paradise, decided to christen our new home "Alhambra," and the valley has ever since been called 'Alhambra Valley.'<sup>71</sup>

Dr. Strentzel acquired many more parcels over the next twenty- five years through purchase and litigation. Most of the land holdings were within the Alhambra Valley, although some lay in the lands along the Straits of Carquinez. The fruit ranch eventually grew to some 2300 acres and produced many varieties of grapes, peaches, and pears.<sup>72</sup>

#### **GRAVESITE PARCEL**

Soon after buying the original twenty- acre parcel, Strentzel expanded the property north with the purchase of twelve acres of land from Abeline Allamirz on July 30, 1853.<sup>73</sup> On this flat and fertile land Strentzel planted his first pear orchard as well as eucalyptus and incense cedar trees.<sup>74</sup> With the death of his only son, John Erwin, in 1857, Strentzel established a small gravesite next to the creek on the new parcel. It is not known if any markers were erected at this time, nor it is clear why this spot was chosen other than its quiet beauty and natural setting. The Strentzel's daughter Lottie, who died before they moved to the Alhambra Valley, was reinterred here later.<sup>75</sup>

#### **FROM GRAZING TO CULTIVATING**

A devastating drought in the early 1860s killed over three million cattle and set the stage for major changes in land use. The area's ranching industry never fully recovered, and the number of cultivated acres in the Alhambra Valley and Contra Costa County gradually increased. Most of the valley bottomlands were plowed and planted at this time, particularly with grain crops, while upland grasslands continued to be grazed or cut for hay.<sup>76</sup>

As noted earlier, the cumulative effect on the native landscape was profound. In less than one- hundred years – since the arrival of the Spanish in the later half of the eighteenth century –farming, cattle grazing, and the recent drought had replaced most of the native bunchgrasses with Mediterranean grasses and other alien plants and weeds.<sup>77</sup>

#### **FRANKLIN CANYON AND THE REDFERN FARM**

In 1853, the same year Dr. Strentzel purchased his first two parcels of land and constructed a ranch house, Edward Franklin purchased the Martinez Adobe and most of Vicente Martinez's Rancho Cañada del Hambre. Over the next twenty- one years, the massive ranch would again be sold, resold, and ultimately

subdivided through a complicated series of leases, mortgages, and lawsuits. Despite the many ownership changes, and continued population growth in Martinez, most of the old ranch lands remained mostly rural in character throughout this period and its vineyards, orchards, grasslands, and woodlands continued as thriving and much sought after resources.

#### **THE FRANKLIN BROTHERS**

Edward Franklin was the first non-Spanish owner of these lands and is for whom Franklin Canyon, Franklin Canyon Road, and Franklin Creek are named. Little is known of how he used the land. Portions of the approximately 1660-acre Rancho Cañada del Hambre were apparently transferred back and forth among family members, who collectively operated a mercantile business in San Francisco. The only known reference to ranch work is a planting of 4000 grape vines in 1854, while other parts of the ranch were leased and rented out for cutting hay and wood.<sup>78</sup> It is unclear if any of the Franklins lived in the Martinez Adobe, but there are vague references that others may have resided there:

[James Henry] occupied and lived in the house which is upon it (Franklin's land)... he built a ditch around a small piece of land and plowed it. He leased the land and lived there six months; at the expiration of which time he renewed it with the privilege of cutting wood at the head of the (illegible) valley.<sup>79</sup>

The Franklins encountered some of the same problems as Vicente Martinez, including squatters and trespassers. Edward Franklin sought injunctions against a number of them, claiming that they:

Commit divers acts of waste to wit, cut off and remove large quantities of wood...timber... and Grass, and are now engaged in cutting down and destroying the wood and Grass growing upon...said...Share of...Rancho...Pinola (sic) without any right.<sup>80</sup>

An accumulation of debts arising from lawsuits against the trespassers and a failure to pay taxes resulted in Edward's decision to sell the land, some 1800 acres at this point, to his brother Lumley for \$12,000 in September 1855. This was an extraordinary rise in the value of the land in just two years.<sup>81</sup> They also borrowed heavily against the ranch; at times, the same lands were repeatedly mortgaged to different persons. The Franklins' repeated failure to pay taxes led to numerous transactions and court seizures until the ranch was divided, leased, and sold to Benoit Merle, Henry Cook, Charles Newhouse, and Peter Turner. One of the transactions in January 1858, to Cook, included a description of a twelve acre parcel that included the Martinez Adobe:

... being within 200 yards from the dam at the commencement of the Canada de Siscases and being about 2 miles distant South from the town of Martinez through which the road to Oakland passes... the lines running from the center of the said house in a northerly, easterly, southerly and westerly direction.<sup>82</sup>

It has also been suggested that the Franklin brothers sold the property because they had found life “too lonely” on the isolated ranch.<sup>83</sup>

#### **TURNER/MERLE OWNERSHIP**

Despite the numerous land seizures and sales, by February 1860 the old Rancho Cañada del Hambre had grown to 1800 acres, at which time it was conveyed to Peter Turner. In the deed, the land was described as:

... lying and being situate in the Valley known as Del Hambre on which an adobe dwelling house built by Vicente Martinez stands with its enclosures including also the Valley of “Sicares” and “Luces” situate near the town of Martinez and also all lands situate elsewhere on the said Rancho Merced del Pinole undivided, together with all...appurtenances... farming utensils cart horses furniture lumber harness.<sup>84</sup>

Turner owned the land for only five months before selling to Benoit Merle in July 1860. However, the Merles probably did not live in the Martinez Adobe as their ranch house was situated north along Alhambra Creek, about a mile south of the Straits of Carquinez.<sup>85</sup>

#### **THE REDFERN FARM AND REDFERN PLACE**

In January 1861, Merle sold forty acres of the 1800- acre Rancho Cañada del Hambre to Thomas Redfern for \$3400. The parcel included the Martinez Adobe and was:

Situated at the Cannon (sic) near Martinez enclosed by a fence and to contain not less than forty acres of valley land and if not to be made up from adjoining Valley together with House Fruit Trees, vines and etc.<sup>86</sup>

According to the deed, Redfern had apparently intended to convert vineyards on the property to crops:

Mr. Redfern is to have the Run (sic) for eight cows and four horses and all the board required for his house to which said B. V. Merrill agrees... to send a man at his expense to cut the vines and furnish horses to plough all required of said land.<sup>87</sup>

Research of old plat maps indicates that this forty- acre area generally encompassed land situated north, east, and south of a line defined by the “Road to Oakland” and the Martinez Adobe, although how far it extended in those directions is unclear. This reasoning would place a good portion of the land on

the opposite side of Franklin Creek. It can be presumed that there was at least one crossing and/or farm road to convey livestock, horses, and carts from the Martinez Adobe area to the fields situated around a knoll on the other side.

In October 1862, Merle mortgaged some of the remaining 1760 acres of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre to Alexander Halphen. However, Merle was sued because of outstanding debts, and except for Redfern's forty-acre property, most of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre land was seized and sold at a sheriff's sale to satisfy creditors.<sup>88</sup> In June 1867, Redfern enlarged his holdings and paid Halphen \$100 in gold coin as part payment for the purchase of an additional 198 acres of the Rancho Cañada del Hambre, "bounded easterly by Redfern's line and the road – to be surveyed by the County Surveyor."<sup>89</sup> Redfern's farm now encompassed 238 acres and straddled both sides of the "Road to Oakland" and Franklin Creek (Figure 1.8).

By 1870, Redfern's farming operations were still relatively small in scale. According to county records, the 238 acres were worth \$1369 with improvements valued at \$550, and holdings included six horses, three cows, two dogs, poultry, and farming tools. An assessment a year later showed a tax for 100 gallons of wine, suggesting he had not removed all of the grape vines. Apparently, he also "...ran an inn catering to those traveling to Dr. Semple's ferry boat on the road to the [gold] mines."<sup>90</sup> The Martinez Adobe, Cookhouse, and other outbuildings and corrals around the adobe and across the road may have served this purpose.

#### **REDFERN SELLS TO STRENTZEL**

Thomas Redfern was arrested for the manslaughter of a friend at the Martinez Adobe in June 1873. A jury trial the following year declared him not guilty, but the criminal case placed him in financial straits. In August 1873, Redfern conveyed 198 acres made up of part of the forty acres he purchased from Merle in 1861 and part of the 198 acres received from Halphen in 1867 – including the adobe – to his lawyers Lansing Mizner and Josiah Sturgis as collateral for fees. After the trial, Mizner and Sturgis conveyed the property back to Redfern.<sup>91</sup>

By January 1874 the value of the Redfern farm had increased to \$4690, \$1000 of which was for "Improvements thereon." Redfern occupied the Martinez Adobe until later that year when, perhaps because of lingering debt problems, he sold the Redfern farm, now totaling 244 acres, to Dr. John Strentzel for \$6500 in gold coin.<sup>92</sup>

For the purposes of this report, the portion of the Redfern farm from approximately the Martinez Adobe area to the knoll area will be referred to as the “Redfern Place,” which is one of the general names Mrs. Strentzel used to identify this part of the Redfern farm (Figure 1.8). An ownership summary of the Rancho El Pinole land grant – from Don Ignacio Martinez’ provisional title in 1823 to Dr. Strentzel’s purchase of the Redfern farm in 1874 – appears in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Ownership Summary of the Rancho El Pinole Land Grant for John Muir NHS					
Date	Rancho El Pinole				
1823	<u>Don Ignacio Martinez</u> granted three square leagues of land (approximately 13,200 acres). He reapplies for the land in 1834 after the original grant papers are lost, and in 1837 requests an additional square league in a valley east of the original area, called the Cañada del Hambre, to graze cattle. A long series of land disputes begins.				
Jun 1842	<u>Don Ignacio Martinez</u> granted the lands that comprise the Cañada del Hambre area, increasing the acreage of the grant to four square leagues (approximately 17,886.49 acres).				
		Rancho Cañada del Hambre portion of Rancho El Pinole (includes present- day lands of John Muir NHS)			
		Non- park Lands	Mt. Wanda Unit	House Unit	Gravesite Unit
Jun 1849		Vicente <u>Martinez</u> granted 1/11 <sup>th</sup> portion of of Rancho El Pinole on east end (approximately 1600 acres) upon death of Don Ignacio Martinez. Builds adobe. Enters a series of mortgages beginning in 1850.			
Jul 1852	<u>Martinez heirs</u> file petition to resolve land disputes.				
Apr 1853		<u>Dr. John Strentzel</u> purchases 20 acres in the Alhambra valley for his ranch house.			
Jul 1853					<u>Dr. John Strentzel</u> purchases 12 acres in the Alhambra valley for a pear orchard and, later a small gravesite.
Sep 1853		<u>Edward Franklin</u> acquires property (now approximately 1700 acres) from Vicente Martinez. Franklin and his brother fail to pay taxes the land is divided and sold in a complicated series of transactions and court seizures.			
Feb 1860		<u>Peter Turner</u> acquires 1800- acre property from Franklin Brothers.			
Jul 1860		<u>Benoit Merle</u> acquires 1800- acre property from Peter Turner.			
Jan 1861		<u>Benoit Merle</u> mortgages some of the remaining 1760 acres to Alexander Halphen in October 1862. Merle is sued over outstanding debts and most of the remaining land is seized, subdivided, and sold.		<u>Thomas Redfern</u> acquires 40 acres from Merle, including the adobe. In June 1867, he acquires more land for a total of 238 acres.	
Aug 1868	Martinez heirs officially awarding 17,760.64 acres by President Andrew Johnson. By this time, however, most of the land has been sold and settled.				
Dec 1874			By 1885, <u>Dr. John Strentzel</u> acquires land that will later include the Mt. Wanda unit.	<u>Dr. John Strentzel</u> purchases the Redfern farm and Redfern Place (which includes the Martinez Adobe), now 244 acres.	



## **SUMMARY: DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE IN 1874**

### **THE UPPER ALHAMBRA VALLEY**

By 1874, the Rancho Cañada del Hambre – Vicente Martinez’s 1600- acre portion of his father’s sprawling Rancho El Pinole land grant – had been subdivided and sold into countless smaller farms. The Alhambra Valley, as this area was now known, had hosted hunters and gatherers called the Karkins, the farms of the Spanish missions, and the cattle of the Mexican ranchos. This landscape had dramatically changed from untouched wilds to cultivated fields. By this time, fertile bottomlands planted with grain and fruit crops extended south from the growing town of Martinez, sheltered by hillside woodlands harvested for timber and grasslands grazed with cattle. Adobe houses, farm- related structures, and corrals dotted this rural scene.

A network of roads grew from the old caminos, and likewise generally followed the valley floor to serve both the farmer hauling carts and wagons to the markets and the traveler on horseback. Both the 1871 atlas (Figure 1.6) and the 1870 plat map (Figure 1.7) show a road winding through Franklin Canyon alongside and crossing Franklin Creek and then turning north toward the markets and shipping facilities in Martinez. This Road to Oakland, as it was sometimes called, cut through the Redfern farm and separated the hillsides to the west from the flat valley floor on the east. Another road, the Road to Martinez, wound along the lower east side of Mt. Wanda and fronted Dr. Strentzel’s Alhambra ranch house, providing access to his large farm. Like most roads at this time, they were dusty in the summer months and muddy to the point of being impassable in the winter months.

### **THE FUTURE PARK UNITS**

#### **House Unit** (Drawing 1.1)

The year 1874 marks the transfer of the 244- acre Redfern farm and the Martinez Adobe to Dr. John Strentzel. Today, the park’s House Unit represents the Redfern Place portion of the farm, which generally includes land from the Martinez Adobe area to a knoll area across Franklin Creek.

In 1874, activity centered on the two- story Martinez Adobe, constructed in 1849, and a Cookhouse dating from around the same time. By this time, the adobe had been both owner- occupied and rented to tenants, and it may also have accommodated travelers on their way to Martinez. These buildings were surrounded by a larger collection of outbuildings and corrals that extended across the “Road to Oakland.” Fields variously comprised of fruit trees,

vineyards, grain crops and hay, and pastures stretched easterly down from the adobe and up and around a knoll on the other side of Franklin Creek. A farm lane and bridge presumably connected these two areas.

According to the “Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site” by James K. Agee, an analysis of historic photographs and tree ages indicates the presence of some plantings near the Martinez Adobe – a black locust north of the building, several smaller trees, and possibly some fruit trees.<sup>93</sup> The row of figs on the north side of the entry road may have been planted in the early 1870s. Based on a c.1883 photograph – the earliest of the site – the dominant vegetation at the time was probably the riparian vegetation along Franklin Creek. These photographs will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Gravesite Unit**

The ownership history at Gravesite Unit is comparatively simple. It was purchased by Dr. Strentzel in 1853 and was part of a larger twelve acre tract devoted mostly to pears. In addition to a planting of eucalyptus and incense cedar, there were likely scattered masses of riparian vegetation along the banks of the Arroyo del Hambre, much like that along Franklin Creek. It is not known if the interments of Strentzel’s daughter Lottie or son John were accompanied by markers.

### **Mt. Wanda Unit**

Although ownership of the Mt. Wanda Unit at this time is unclear, it was probably used as grazing land like other hillside areas at the time. Historical records for Mt. Wanda begin in 1837 when Martinez petitioned for the Cañada del Hambre area, which included Mt. Wanda. Since several individuals contested the land grant, Mt. Wanda had probably been grazed for years. The Martinez family used it to graze cattle, horses, sheep and goats.<sup>94</sup> The mosaic of rolling hills of wooded ravines and open grasslands probably encouraged subsequent owners to do the same.

## **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE**

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco- Monterey Bay Area*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1978:1- 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 7- 9.

<sup>3</sup> Margolin 1978: 7.

- <sup>4</sup> Margolin 1978: 8; Laura S. Teixeira, *The Costacoan/Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Area: A Research Guide*. Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1997: 2.
- <sup>5</sup> Upwards of thousands of grizzly bears may have lived in the Bay Area at the time of the Ohlones and early Spanish settlement. Early Californians chose the bear as the emblem on their state flag. Margolin 1978: 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Teixeira 1997: 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> “Background Information For Vital Signs LTEM Monitoring Workshop,” undated report: 9. JOMU files; Susan Dolan, “A Fruitful Legacy: The Historic Context of Fruit Trees and Orchards in the National Park System.” Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Columbia Cascades Support Office, and National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardships and Partnerships. Draft, March 2001: 20- 21; Teixeira 1997: 2.
- <sup>9</sup> Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, “Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 232.
- <sup>10</sup> Margolin 1978: 37- 38.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 38.
- <sup>12</sup> Edgar A. Vovsi, “Establishment of the Rancho El Pinole.” Pinole, CA: Pinole Chamber of Commerce, 1968: 1.
- <sup>13</sup> Burke 1992: 6.
- <sup>14</sup> Otto von Kotzebue, “A New Voyage Round the World in the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826. Volume 2.” London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830, reprinted in De Capo Press, New York, 1967: 87- 88. (Cited in Teixeira, 1997: 3).
- <sup>15</sup> Margolin 1978: 3.
- <sup>16</sup> Seedling oranges were themselves off springs of fruits brought to Spain by the Moguls of China and India in the thirteenth century. Dolan 2001: 20- 21; Edward James Wickson, *The California Fruits and How to Grow Them: A Manual of Methods Which Have Yielded Greatest Success, With the Lists of Varieties Best Adapted to the Different Districts of the State*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. San Francisco, CA: Pacific Rural Press, 1926: 42.
- <sup>17</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: 36; Burke 1992: 232.
- <sup>18</sup> George P. Hammond, *Romance of the California Ranchos*. Martinez, CA: Contra Costa County Historical Society, 22 August 1954: 11.
- <sup>19</sup> Margolin 1978: 164.
- <sup>20</sup> Carmel G. Martinez, “The presidios of California under four flags: life and times of a Spanish officer in California, 1799- 1848 - Don Ignacio Martinez,” Volume 2, written c.1900, typed manuscript, c.1987: 324; Monty Lindstrom and Robert Griffin, *Alhambra*

*Valley: Rural America Disappears*. Martinez, CA: Contra Costa County Historical Society, 1970: 3.

<sup>21</sup> Toma Elizabeth Akers, "Mexican Ranchos in the Vicinity of Mission San Jose." Thesis ms., Bancroft Library, University of California – Berkeley: 1931: 5- 6.

<sup>22</sup> Akers. 1931: 6; George P. Hammond, "Romance of the California Ranchos." Martinez: Contra Costa County Historical Society, August 22, 1954: 11; Elizabeth Gray Potter, "Early Mexican Ranchos in the San Francisco Bay Region," San Francisco, CA: National Society of Colonial Dames of America, 1951: 19- 20.

<sup>23</sup> J. N. Bowman, "The Roads of Provincial California." Ms., Bancroft Library, University of California – Berkeley, 1946: 2, 73.

<sup>24</sup> J.P. Munro- Fraser, *History of Contra Costa County, California*. San Francisco, CA: W.A. Slocum and Co. 1882: 383. (Cited in Vovsi 1968: 14).

<sup>25</sup> To train the cattle, they were driven to the rodeo grounds by vaqueros two or three times a week to become acquainted with the place and then allowed to disperse. Soon, this was done less and less to a point where all that needed to be done was to send out twenty or thirty vaqueros to ride over the rancho and shout, and the cattle would gather at the rodeo ground, which they had learned to know. Potter, 1951: 19- 20.

<sup>26</sup> Vovsi 1968: 24- 26.

<sup>27</sup> One square league equals approximately 4428 acres. Akers 1931: 6.

<sup>28</sup> Martinez c.1987: 322.

<sup>29</sup> Kathryn Burns Plummer, "Don Ignacio Martinez." *Contra Costa Chronicles*, Vol. 1, No. 1. Martinez, CA: Contra Costa County Historical Society, 1965: 12- 13. (Cited in Vovsi 1968: 16).

<sup>30</sup> Martinez c.1987: 322- 325.

<sup>31</sup> Plummer, 1965: 12- 13. (Cited in Vovsi 1968: 16); "Review of Pinole History," typescript of article printed in the *Oakland Tribune*, 11 June 1967, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 7); George W. Hendry and J. N. Bowman, "The Spanish and Mexican Adobe and Other Buildings in the Nine San Francisco Bay Counties: Part V. Contra Costa County." Manuscript, Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley, 1940: 445;

<sup>32</sup> Deposition of Bruno Valencia, mayordomo of the Rancho El Pinole, before Hon. J. Wilson, San Francisco, 7 August 1852: 7. California Private Land Grant Cases, US District Court, Northern District of California, Papers in Case 205, Ms. on file at Bancroft Library, University of California- Berkeley (hereafter referred to as "Case 205 ND"). (Cited in Burke 1992: 7).

<sup>33</sup> Martinez c.1987: 324; Burke 1992: 6, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Martinez c.1987: 325.

<sup>35</sup> Ignacio Martinez to Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado, 10 November 1837, Case 205 ND: 332- 333. (Cited in Vovsi 1968: 15.)

<sup>36</sup> Ignacio Martinez, 10 November 1837, Case 205 ND: 332- 333. (Cited in Burke 1992: 8).

<sup>37</sup> Martinez c.1987: 326.

<sup>38</sup> Information regarding the following petitions compiled from the following sources: Felipe Briones, 24 July 1839, Case 205 ND: 39, “Expediente,” (cited in Burke 1992: 8); Ignacio Peralta, Rancho San Antonio, to Prefect Don Jose Castro, 27 July 1839, L.S., Case 205 ND: 298- 299; M.M Valencia, Pueblo of San Jose Guadalupe, to the prefect of the First District, 8 June 1842, L.S. Case 205 ND: 304; Jose R. Estrada, Monterey, CA, to the Justice of the Peace of Contra Costa and San Francisco, 2 June 1842, L.S. Case 205 ND: 329 (last three cited in Vovsi 1968: 2- 3, 6- 9).

BRIONES- VALENCIA PETITION, 1839- 1842. Felipe Briones petitioned for three leagues of land in the Rancho El Pinole: “It is some more than ten years that I have possession in said place [Corral de Galindo] the land... upon which I have built a house planted a garden of much consideration and cultivated some lands by which labors the products thereof and some milking cattle then I there. I maintain my family composed of eighteen persons used as I have no title of ownership whatever and might have to lose the works undertaken by me... his [Martinez’s] petition operates injuriously for asking for the Canada del Pinole.” Justice of the Peace Ignacio Peralta reviewed the petition and sided with Martinez. The additional land Martinez was seeking was in the direction of the Canada del Hambre, not the Canada del Pinole on which the Corral de Galindo was located. Peralta noted that Martinez had occupied the original land grant since 1823 by permission of Governor Arguello and that the Corral was not within this area. Peralta also referred to the agreement the two men had reached in 1831: “agreeing that their ends should meet,” and that Briones “should assist at rodeos, and place his small houses immediate for company.” Briones’ petition was for that land he occupied, but he had given the wrong name. In 1842, the widow of Briones, Manuela Valencia, resubmitted the claim for three leagues of land located at the mouth of the Canada del Pinole and bordered on the north by some of Martinez’ land. She claimed to have been there for eleven years. This land was eventually granted to Valencia and was known from then on as La Boca de la Canada del Pinole.

ESTRADA- SOTO PETITION, 1842. Another claim for the Canada del Hambre, involving Jose Estrada and Dona Teodora Soto, is apparently dismissed because the land is determined to be part of the Rancho El Pinole.

<sup>39</sup> Juan B. Alvarado, Governor of the Department of California, 1 June 1842, Case 205 ND: 40, “Expediente.” (Cited in Burke 1992: 9); Hendry and Bowman 1940: 444.

<sup>40</sup> Juan B. Alvarado, Governor of the Department of California, 1 June 1842, Case 205 ND: 40, “Expediente.” (Cited in Burke 1992: 9).

<sup>41</sup> Plummer 1965: 10. (Cited in Burke 1992: 9).

<sup>42</sup> Martinez c.1987: 327.

<sup>43</sup> Potter 1951: 19; Martinez c.1987: 327, 338. Martinez reportedly fired the cannon to welcome his son Jose’s wedding party.

<sup>44</sup> Ygnacio Peralta, 27 July 1839, Case 205 ND: 38, “Expediente.” (Cited in Burke 1992: 8).

<sup>45</sup> Vovsi 1968: 24- 26.

<sup>46</sup> The Rancho Cañada del Hambre is somewhat confusing as later maps identify the land grant north of the Rancho El Pinole land grant simply as Rancho Cañada del Hambre. As a point of clarification, this area will be referred to as Rancho Cañada del Hambre land grant. Abstract of title for the 1/11<sup>th</sup> portion of the Rancho El Pinole originally owned by Vicente and Nieves Soto, 1861, agreement among Martinez widow and heirs. John Muir Papers, Ms. 48: 1. University of Pacific - Stockton, CA. (hereafter referred to as “1861 Abstract”). (Cited in Burke 1992: 10).

<sup>47</sup> Deposition of Bruno Valencia, 7 August 1852, Case 205 ND: 8. (Cited in Burke 1992: 13); Hendry and Bowman 1940: 450.

<sup>48</sup> Burke 1992: 13.

<sup>49</sup> Deposition of Stephen Cooper, July 1858. California Private Land Grant Cases, Case 205, Northern District, United States vs. Richardson et. al., 1852- 1868, Docket 334: 0889. US National Archives Record Group 49, General Land Office, Film C- 1 100, CA. (Cited in Burke 1992: 13).

<sup>50</sup> In 1852, Don Ignacio Martinez’s heirs filed a petition with the United States Land Commission to confirm the title to the Rancho El Pinole and resolve the many conflicting claims. In 1854, the Land Commission ruled in favor of the Martinez family and a survey was completed, but Samuel J. Tennent, Martinez’s son- in- law, objected to the survey, claiming that it excluded lands within the original Martinez grant issued by the Mexican government, included lands not in the original deposition, and did not follow the natural boundaries of the original grant or landmarks referred to in the confirmation decree. The survey also failed to include the lands in the Canada del Hambre. This version of Rancho El Pinole embraced some seven square leagues, almost double the 1842 grant. Consequently, a new survey was ordered. By September 1860, the Martinez’ heirs lawsuit regarding the ownership and survey of the Rancho El Pinole was still undecided and all interested parties were directed to present their cases in district court. In 1862, after years of testimony and deliberation, the US District Court of the Northern District, California, ruled that the original survey of four square leagues should be accepted. The decision was appealed to the US Circuit Court in September 1866, but was dismissed. Finally, in August 1868, President Andrew Johnson signed the patent and a parcel of land was awarded to the Martinez heirs to the extent of 17,760.64 acres. However, by this time, many portions of this land were already occupied by squatters or had been “conveyed to strangers...on the supposition that the claimants were entitled to the whole land within the extension limits.” Information compiled from the following sources cited in Burke 1992: 15, 21: Collier, “Rancho El Pinole,” 3; *Contra Costa Gazette*, 7 June 1862, as quoted in Collier, “Rancho El Pinole,” 3- 4; Case 205 ND: 534- 535; and *Contra Costa Gazette*, 8 September 1860).

<sup>51</sup> J. N. Bowman, “Adobe Houses in the San Francisco Region.” Geologic Guidebook of the San Francisco Bay Counties: History, Landscape, Geology, Fossils, Minerals, Industry, and Routes to Travel. San Francisco, CA: Division of Mines. December 1951: 58- 59.

<sup>52</sup> Burke 1992: 151.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>54</sup> According to archeological testing, a cookhouse was located just west of the adobe. Burke 1992: 157.

<sup>55</sup> Case 205 ND: 110. (Cited in Burke 1992: 10); Burke 1992: 151, 233.

<sup>56</sup> Martinez c.1987: 409.

<sup>57</sup> Martinez Chamber of Commerce, undated pamphlet. JOMU files.

<sup>58</sup> Smith and Elliot, Illustrations of Contra Costa County, California, with Historical Sketch. Oakland, CA: Smith and Elliot, 1878: 25. (Cited in Burke 1992: 14); “Brief Historical Sketch of Martinez,” undated typescript, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 12); Bowman 1946: 76.

<sup>59</sup> The United States acquired the province of Alta California, or Upper California, but did not acquire the province of Baja California, or Lower California, which today is a Mexican state.

<sup>60</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, California Inter Pocula. San Francisco, CA: (no publisher given) 1888: 400. (Cited in Akers 1931: 17).

<sup>61</sup> Akers 1931: 15; Burke 1992: 14.

<sup>62</sup> Property lines were typically delineated by trees, stakes in trees, or large rocks. Shaw, “Spanish Land Grants in Contra Costa County.” No publisher or date given. (Cited in Burke 1992: 14).

<sup>63</sup> Briefs by Theo Wagner, No. 13: “William E. Christian vs. Dr. John Strentzel: involving claim to Lot 5 of Section 25 in Township 2, North range 3, W, M.D.M. brief on behalf of John Strentzel, on appeal from the decision of Hon. Commissioner of the General Land Office, rendered in said case 2 July 1886, Theo Wagner, attorney for John Strentzel.” San Francisco, CA: Women’s Cooperative Printing Office, 1886: 10.

<sup>64</sup> Lumley Franklin vs Pasqual Mitchel, Draft Amendments to Plaintiff’s Statement on Motion for New Trial, September 1857, District Court, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Contra Costa County, File No. E9B, Contra Costa County Historical Society, Pleasant Hill, California (hereafter cited as “Franklin vs Mitchel”). (Cited in Burke 1992: 12).

<sup>65</sup> Contra Costa County Deeds (hereafter cited as “Deeds”), Book 1, 180, recorded 19 December 1850. No release was found for this mortgage. See also “Undated Abstract.” (Cited in Burke 1992: 16).

<sup>66</sup> Burke 1992: 16.

<sup>67</sup> Nilda Rego, “Some Golden State Agricultural Schemes Went Bust,” *Martinez Times*, no date. JOMU file folder “California Agriculture.”

<sup>68</sup> Dolan 2001: 41- 42.

<sup>69</sup> “The Biography of John T. Strentzel,” undated typescript: 15. JOMU folder “Strentzel Family Information.”

<sup>70</sup> Deeds, Book 2: 467. JOMU folder “Strentzel Deeds.”

<sup>71</sup> “The Biography of John T. Strentzel,” 15.

<sup>72</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 36.

<sup>73</sup> Deeds, Book 3: 309. JOMU folder “Strentzel Deeds.” Strentzel purchased the land for 250 dollars.

<sup>74</sup> Information on the incense cedar from statement by Sherry Hanna, widow of Muir’s grandson, Strentzel Hanna, long-time resident of Alhambra Valley. Information regarding the eucalyptus from interview with Justices Wakefield Taylor and A.F. Bray. (Cited in P.J. Ryan, “The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery.” Typescript dated 1979: 1); National Park Service, “Feasibility Study, John Muir Gravesite, Contra Costa County, California: Draft.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, May 1980: 2; Statement of Margaret Plummer, long time Alhambra Valley resident and granddaughter of John Muir’s close associate and friend, John Swett (Cited in P.J. Ryan, “The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery,” 1979: 1).

<sup>75</sup> Ryan 1979: 2.

<sup>76</sup> Nilda Rego, “Some Golden State Agricultural Schemes Went Bust,” Martinez Times, no date. JOMU file folder “California Agriculture.”

<sup>77</sup> Harold F. Heady, “Valley Grassland,” in Michael G. Barbour and Jack Major, *Terrestrial Vegetation in California*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1977: 491-514. (Cited in Karl Kuellmer, “Differences in species diversity and ground cover between grazed and ungrazed grassland near Martinez,” undated typescript: 3. JOMU files).

<sup>78</sup> *Contra Costa County Gazette*, 29 September 1860. (Cited in Burke 1992: 17).

<sup>79</sup> Franklin vs. Mitchel: 1. (Cited in Burke 1992: 18).

<sup>80</sup> Edward Franklin vs. John H. Livingston et al., 18 May 1854. Transcript, District Court of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District for the County of Contra Costa, Document No. 3, E-9B, Edward Franklin, Contra Costa County Historical Society. (Cited in Burke 1992: 18).

<sup>81</sup> Undated Abstract: 7; 1861 Abstract: 5; and Deeds, Book 5: 5. (All cited in Burke 1992: 18).

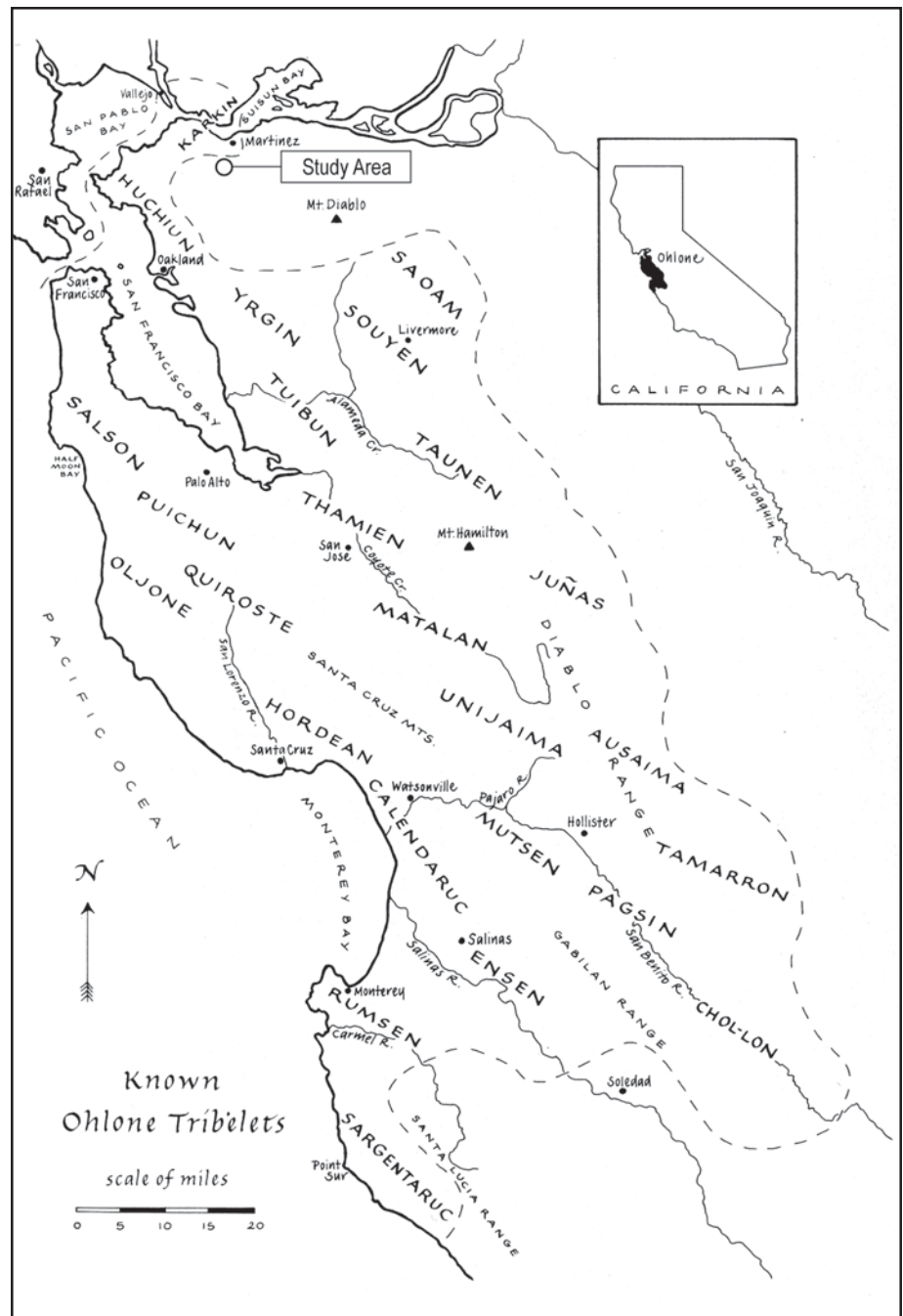
<sup>82</sup> Undated Abstract: 10. (Cited in Burke 1992: 19).

<sup>83</sup> Application for Registration of Historical Point of Interest, Vicente Martinez Adobe. Sacramento: California Division of Beaches and Parks File. Typescript, 15 July 1953: 1. (Cited in Burke 1992: 18).

<sup>84</sup> 1861 Abstract: 12 and Deeds, Book 7: 577- 578. (Cited in Burke 1992: 20).



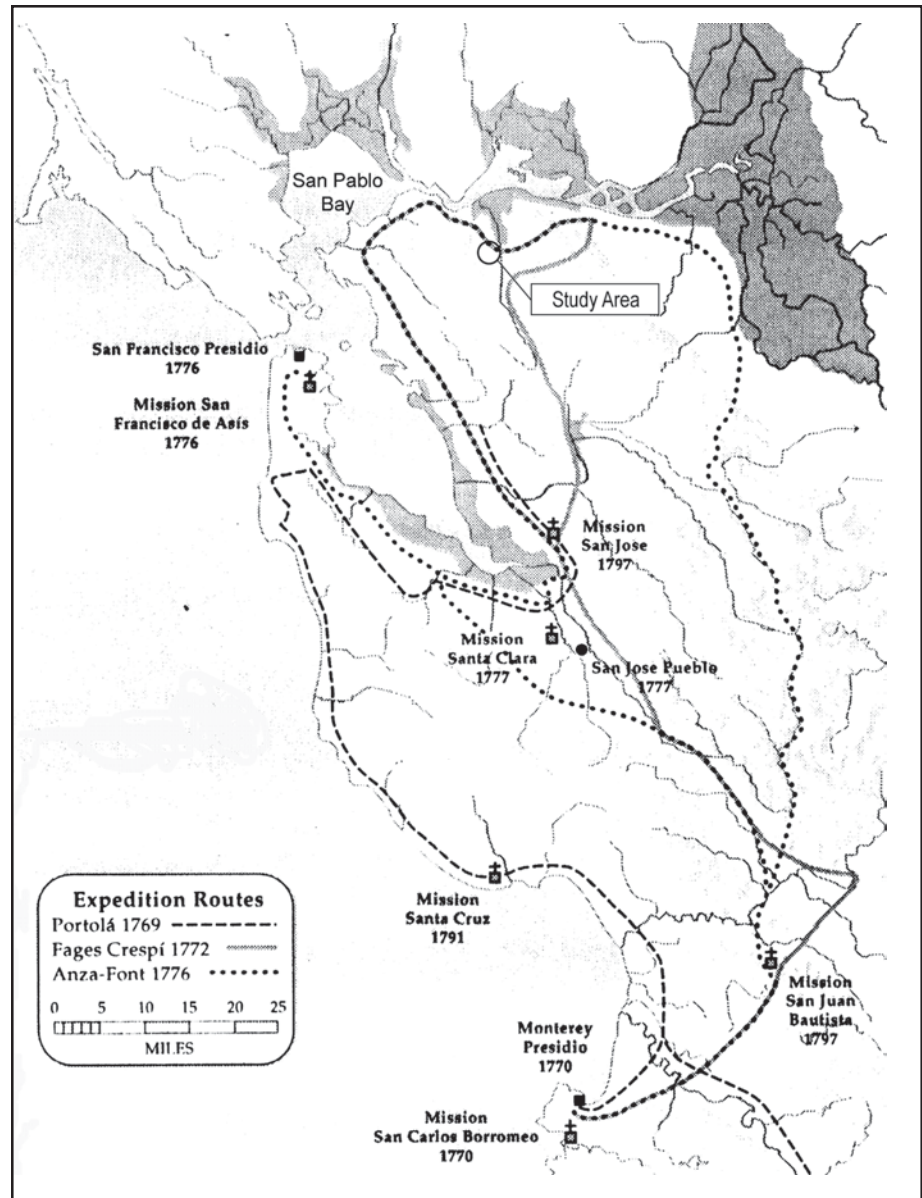
- <sup>85</sup> Kathryn Burns Plummer, “Don Ignacio Martinez.” *Contra Costa Chronicles*, Vol. 1, No. 1. Martinez: Contra Costa County Historical Society, 1965: 6. (Cited in Burke 1992: 21).
- <sup>86</sup> Deeds, Book 14: 354. (Cited in Burke 1992: 21).
- <sup>87</sup> Deeds, Book 14: 354 and Book 8: 449- 451. (Cited in Burke 1992: 21).
- <sup>88</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 25 November 1865 and 16 December 1865. (Cited in Burke 1992: 22).
- <sup>89</sup> Deeds, Book 14: 484- 486. (Cited in Burke 1992: 22).
- <sup>90</sup> Burke 1992: 22- 23; Charlotte Perry, “The Family of Don Ygnacio Martinez.” Typescript dated 1989, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 23).
- <sup>91</sup> Munro- Fraser 1882: 364. (Cited in Burke 1992: 23); Deeds, Book 25: 170- 173, Deeds, Book 14: 484- 486, Deeds, Book 8: 450- 451, and Deeds, Book 27: 319. (Cited in Burke 1992: 23).
- <sup>92</sup> Deeds, Book 27: 321- 325. (Cited in Burke 1992: 24).
- <sup>93</sup> James K. Agee and P. J. Ryan, “Historic Trees of the John Muir National Historic Site.” *Journal of Forest History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 1980: 42.
- <sup>94</sup> “Background Information For Vital Signs LTEM Monitoring Workshop,” undated report: 10. JOMU files.



**Figure 1.1: The Ohlone Tribelets of the San Francisco Bay Area prior to Spanish settlements. (Map based on research of C. King and R. Millikin. From Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1978. Used by permission).**



**Figure 1.2: An Ohlone settlement on the shores of the San Francisco Bay. (Illustration by Michael Harney. From Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1978. Used by permission).**



**Figure 1.3:** Two of the major expeditions into the Bay Area passed through the Martinez area. (Map courtesy of Randall Milliken. From Laura S. Teixeira, *The Costacoan/Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Area: A Research Guide*. Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1997. Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley).





Figure 1.4: The Rancho El Pinole and other Mexican ranchos after c.1842. (Map by Robert H. Becker, 1968. Earth-Science Library, University of California - Berkeley).

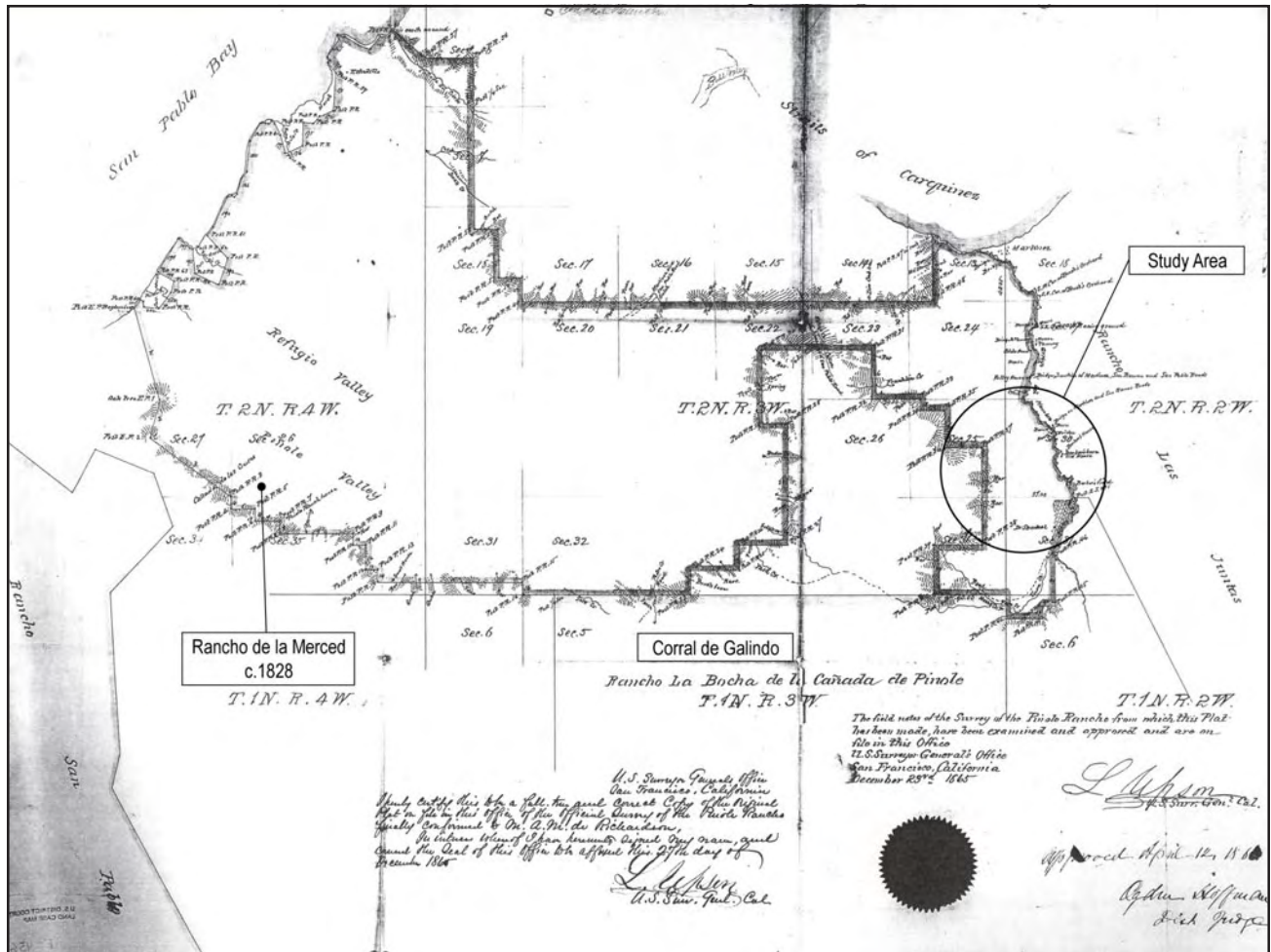
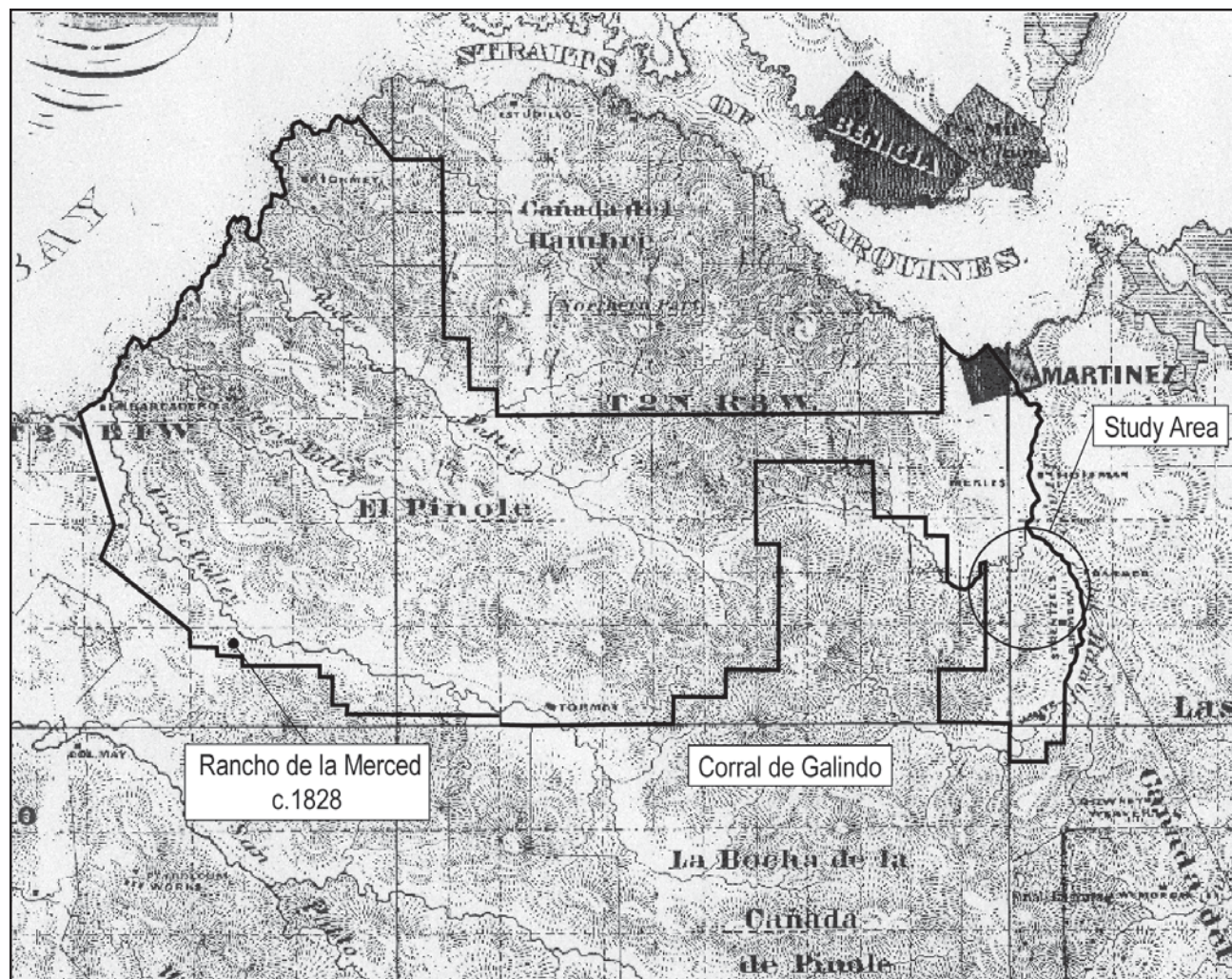


Figure 1.5: This 1865 map by Kirk White Taylor is the earliest surviving survey of the Rancho El Pinole. (Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley).





**Figure 1.6:** This topographic map of Contra Costa County shows three primary valleys - Pinole, Rodeo, and Cañada del Hambre (on the east end marked bounded by the Arroyo del Hambre) - within the boundaries of the Rancho El Pinole as it appeared in the 1840s (illustrated in black). For Vicente Martinez and subsequent owners, the Cañada del Hambre provided a large flat area for husbandry activities and provided easy access to markets and shipping facilities in Martinez. By the time this map was drawn in 1871, trails or roads (represented by dotted lines) followed the valley floors. (Map adapted by OCLP. Courtesy of Contra Costa County Historical Society, Martinez, CA. F-204).

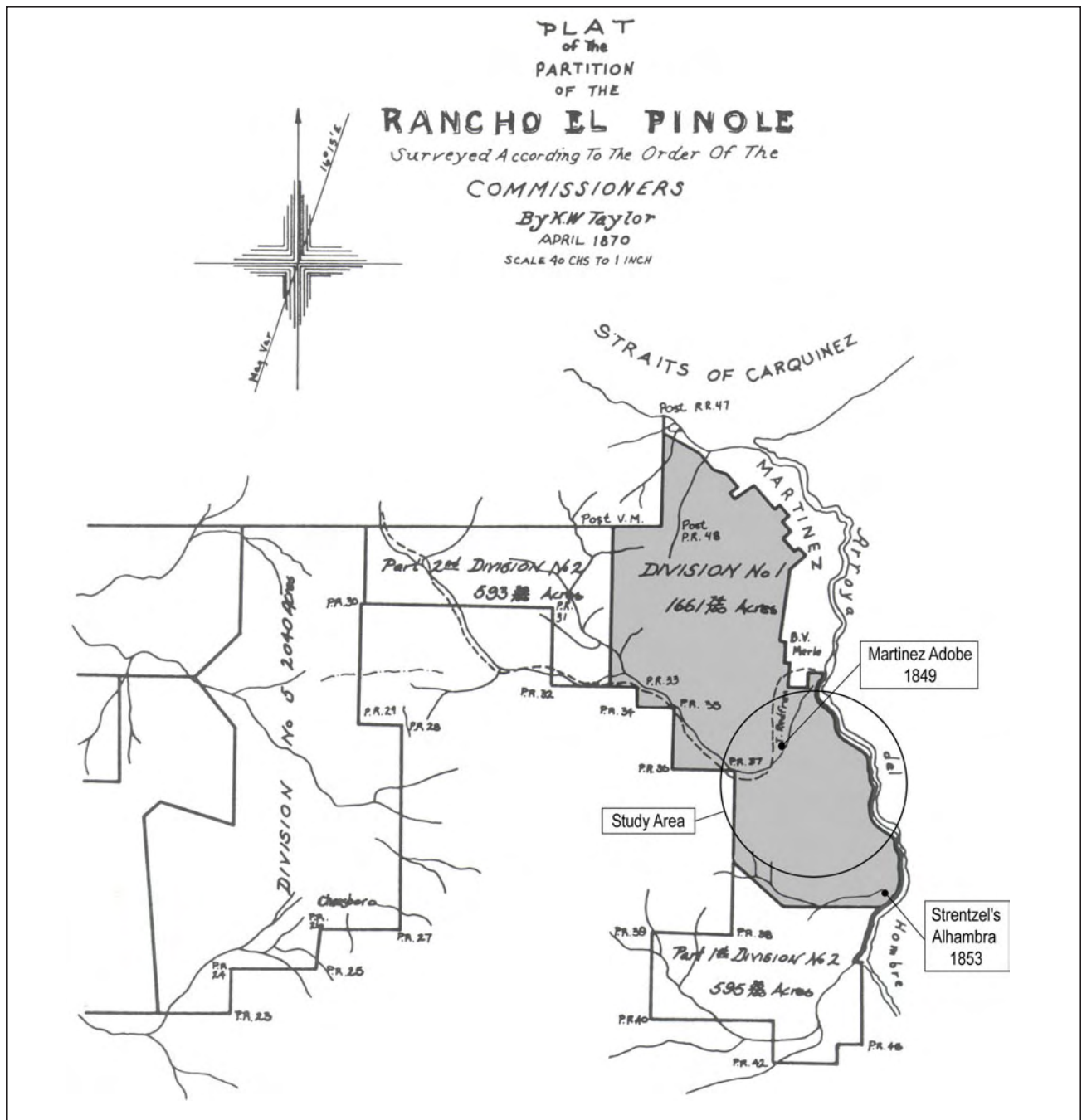
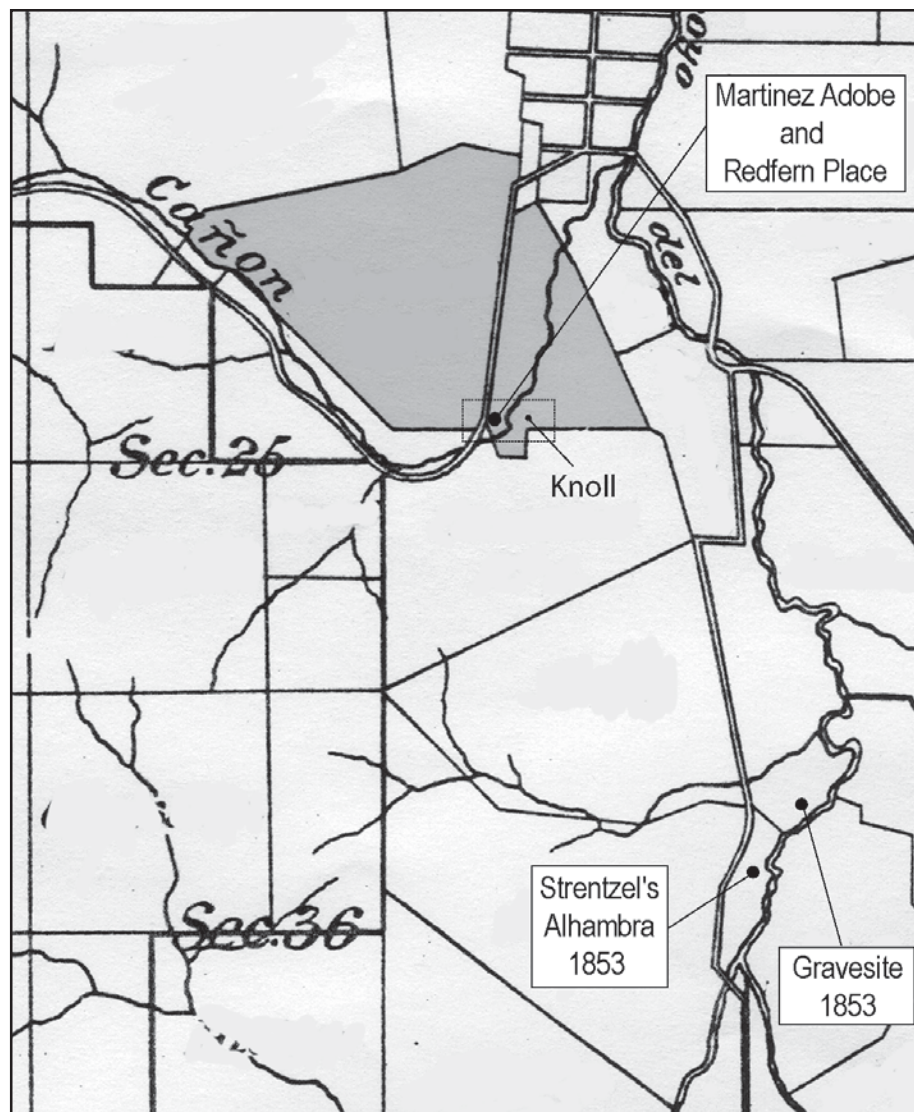


Figure 1.7: Illustration showing the Rancho Cañada del Hambre, Vicente Martinez' share of his father's Rancho El Pinole. The map also shows the location of his adobe in 1849, and the approximate location of Dr. John Strentzel's Alhambra ranch house in 1853. This plat map is from 1870 and also shows the road emerging from the Canada Siscal and turning north as it passes next to the Martinez Adobe (shown with dashed lines). (Adapted by OCLP from an 1870 plat map redrawn from original on file at the Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley. From Burke, Steve M. and Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site." Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992).



**Figure 1.8:** The dark gray area in this illustration shows the location of the Redfern farm, which encompassed 244 acres when purchased by Dr. Strentzel in 1874. The rectangle at the southern end of the farm generally represents the extent of the Redfern Place. The map also shows the approximate locations of Strentzel's Alhambra ranch house and the family gravesite. (Adapted by OCLP from an 1885 Contra Costa County atlas by Thomas McMahon. Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley).





## Plants at John Muir National Historic Site

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)
Aa	Agave americana	Century plant	Ng	Nicotiana glauca	Tobacco tree
Ac	Aesculus californica	California buckeye	No	Nerium oleander	Oleander
Aj	Aucuba japonica	Variegated gold dust plant	Oe	Olea europea	Common olive
Al	Acacia longifolia	Golden Wattle	Oh	Osmanthus heterophyllus	False holly
Am	Acanthus mollis	Bear's breach	P	Perennials	Perennials
Ama	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Pa	Prunus armeniaca	Apricot
Ar	Alcea rosea	Hollyhock	Pap	Papaver spp.	Pink poppy
Ard	Arundo donax	Giant reed	Pc	Pyrus communis	Pear
Au	Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Pca	Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island date palm
Bp	Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote brush	Pcc	Pyraecanthus coccinea	Firethorn
Bs	Buddleia spp.	Butterfly bush	Pce	Prunus cerasifera	Cherry plum
Bu	Buxus spp.	Boxwood	Pco	Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Ca	Cedrus atlantica	Atlas cedar	Pd	Prunus dulcis	Almond
Cae	Casmanthe aethiopica	Chasmanthe	Pe	Pittosporum eugenoides	Pittosporum
Cc	Callistemon citrinus	Lemon bottle brush	Pg	Punica grantum	Pomegranate
Cca	Carpenteria californica	Anemone	Pga	Prosopis glandulosa	Honey mesquite
Cd	Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar	Pgl	Picea glauca	White spruce
Cda	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry cotoneaster	Ph	Pelargonium hortorum	Common geranium
Cde	Calocedrus decurrens	Incense cedar	Pin	Pinus spp.	Pine
Cf	Cupressus funebris	Mourning cypress	Pl	Philadelphus lemoinei	Mockorange
Ch	Chrysanthemum spp.	Chrysanthemum	Ply	Prunus lyonii	Catalina cherry
Ci	Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Pm	Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir
Cj	Camellia japonica	Camellia	Po	Prunus domestica	European plum
Cl	Citrus limon	Lemon	Pp	Prunus persica	Peach
Cla	Crataegus laevigata	English hawthorn	Ppn	Pinus ponderosa	Ponderosa pine
Clg	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Japanese, Flowering quince	Ppu	Picea pungens	Colorado spruce
Cli	Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon	Pr	Pinus radiata	Monterey pine
Cm	Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey cypress	Ps	Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce
Co	Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Psa	Prunus salicina	Japanese plum
Coc	Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	Pv	Prunus avium	Sweet cherry
Cp	Campanula medium	Canterbury bells	Qa	Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Cr	Campsis radicans	Common trumpet vine	Qg	Quercus garryana	Oregon white oak
Cs	Citrus sinensis	Orange	Ql	Quercus lobata	Valley oak, Cal. white oak
Csc	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Qs	Quercus suber	Cork oak
Cse	Cornus sericea	American dogwood	Rb	Rosa banksiae	Lady Bank's rose
Csi	Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	Rc	Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy
Csp	Cupressus spp.	Cypress	Rh	Rosa harisonii	Harison's yellow rose
Cy	Cordyline spp.	Cordyline	Ri	Rhaphiolepis indica	India hawthorn
Dc	Dianthus caryophyllus	Carnation	Rl	Rosa laevigata	Cherokee rose
Ds	Deutzia scabra	Deutzia	Ro	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Ec	Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Rod	Rosa odorata	Tea rose
Ej	Eriobotrya japonica	Loquat	Rov	Rhus ovata	Sugar bush
Eu	Eucalyptus spp.	Eucalyptus	Rp	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust
Fc	Ficus carica	Common fig	Rs	Rosa spp.	Rose
Fca	Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush	Rsp	Ribes speciosum	Fuchsia flowering currant
Fs	Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple guava	Sa	Salvia spp.	Sage
Ge	Geranium spp.	Geranium	Sg	Sequoiadendron giganteum	Giant sequoia
Gl	Gaura lindheimeri	Gaura	Sl	Salix lasiandra	Yellow willow
Gs	Gladiolus spp.	Gladiolus	Sm	Sambucus mexicana	Blue elderberry
Ha	Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Sp	Spiraea prunifolia	Bridal wreath spiraea
He	Heliotropium arborescens	Heliotrope	Smo	Schinus molle	Pepper tree
Ig	Iris germanica	Bearded iris	Ss	Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Jc	Juniperus conferta	Shore juniper	Sv	Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac
Jh	Juglans hindsii	California black walnut	Tf	Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill palm
Jm	Jasminum mesnyi	Primrose jasmine	Tg	Tamarix gallica	Tamarisk
Jr	Juglans regia	English walnut	Ti	Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson clover
La	Lavendula angustifolia	English lavender	Tj	Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star jasmine
Lc	Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	To	Thuja occidentalis	American arborvitae
Ln	Laurus nobilis	Sweet bay	U	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Lo	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California privet	Uc	Umbellularia californica	California bay
Ls	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum	Up	Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm
Lsp	Lampranthus spectabilis	Trailing ice plant	Ve	Verbena spp.	Verbena
Lv	Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	Vm	Vinca major	Periwinkle
Ma	Morus alba	White mulberry	Vo	Viola odorata	Sweet violet
Maq	Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	Vv	Vitis vinifera	Grape
Mc	Myrtus communis	True or Common myrtle	Wf	Washingtonia filifera	California fan palm
Mca	Myrica californica	Pacific wax myrtle	Wr	Washingtonia robusta	Mexican fan palm
Md	Malus domestica	Apple	Ws	Wisteria sinensis	Chinese wisteria
My	Myosolus spp.	Forget-me-not	Za	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Common calla

Cultural Landscape Report for John Muir National Historic Site



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

1874, House Unit  
Period Plan  
Drawing 1.1

**Sources**  
Base information from John Muir NHS Geographic Information System, January 2002; historic and contemporary maps, plans, and photographs; *Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe*, Burke.

**Notes**  
Locations and scale of features are approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by OCLP, NPS.

Approximate scale in feet


0

25


50


75


100





**Legend**


 Contour

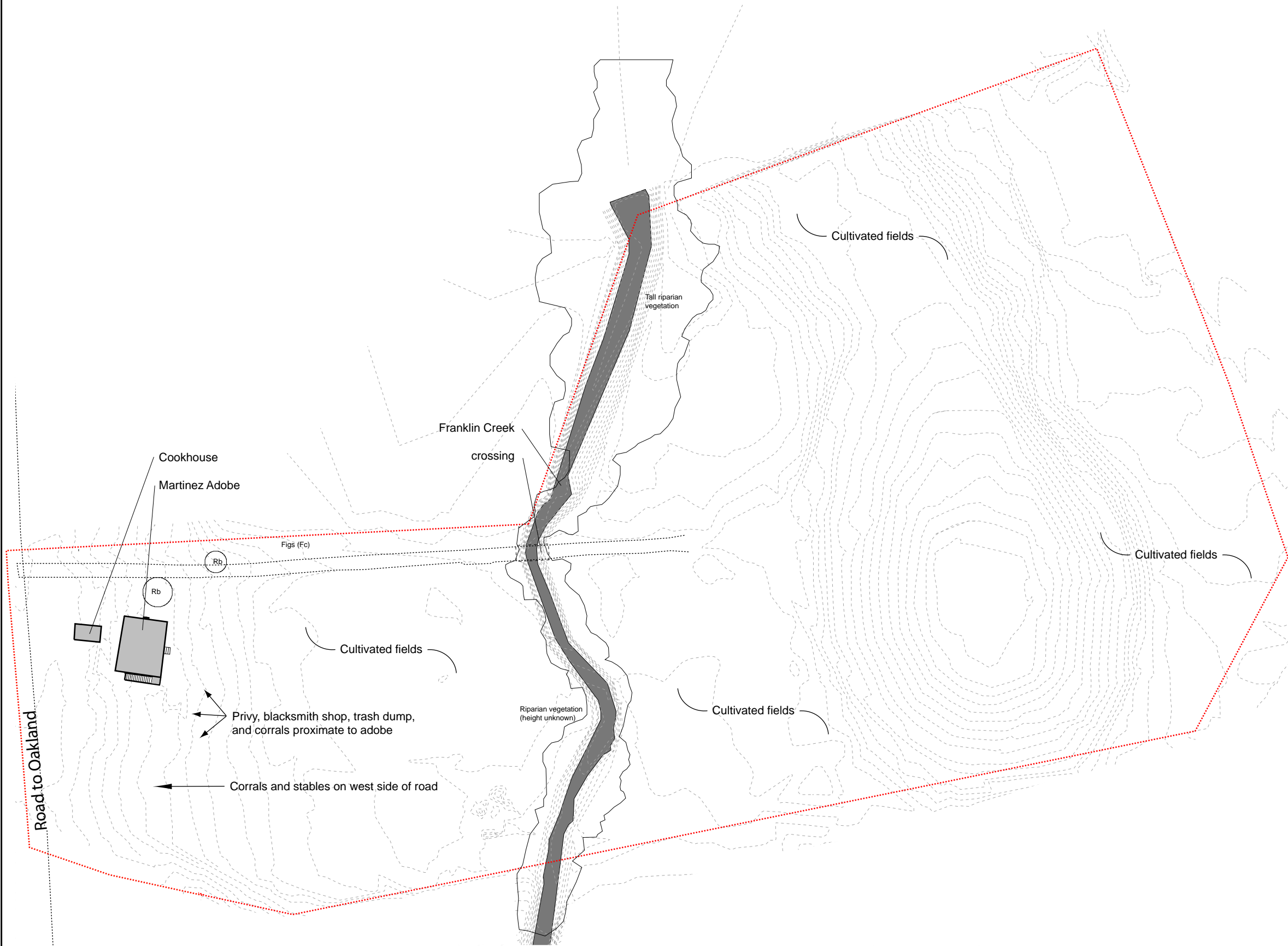
 Future Park Property Line

 Paved and Dirt Road / Path

 Building / Structure

 Water

 Mass / Specimen Vegetation



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE STRENTZEL RANCH AND JOHN MUIR, 1874–1890**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Dr. Strentzel's purchase of the Redfern farm and Martinez Adobe in 1874 added 244 acres to his ever- increasing landholdings. During this period, the Alhambra Valley was primarily devoted to fruit crops. Farmers such as Strentzel found great success in selling their products, particularly to markets in the eastern United States. In 1881 Strentzel retired and constructed a new residence east of the Martinez Adobe that would become, after his death in 1890, the home of his son-in-law and business partner, John Muir. Soon after he married Strentzel's daughter, Louie, in 1881, Muir became manager of the ranch and streamlined operations, bringing new profitability to the ranch which eventually allowed him to retire and devote his time to traveling and writing for the remainder of his life. The foundations, and indeed successes, of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch were established much earlier when Dr. Strentzel arrived in the Alhambra Valley in 1853.

#### **EARLY ORCHARDING AND THE GENTLEMEN FARMERS**

Although Dr. Strentzel was a practicing medical doctor, he instead chose to focus on farming. This decision may have simply reflected the desire of many post-gold rush settlers who hoped to make profitable California's fertile valley lands. However, his upbringing and professional training likened him to the gentlemen, or model, farmer who possessed a passionate interest in pomology (the science and practice of fruit growing). Gentlemen farmers were typically trained in other professions, yet were well- read in horticultural literature coming out of the Northeastern U.S. and Europe. Using their wealth and leisure time to develop experimental orchards on their land, they obtained European fruit varieties through nurseries in Europe and created new varieties. These pomologists, as they were sometimes called, kept track of each other through societies and published works.<sup>1</sup>

The nineteenth century was pomology's "golden age," a time before science and technology entered the orchard and when orcharding became an acceptable means of making a living. It was also a time when American fruit orchards were viewed as part of a national identity and were cherished for their unique tastes and appearances.<sup>2</sup> One of the earliest promoters of this was Andrew Jackson Downing, a landscape gardener, architect, and horticulturist whose 1850 treatise,

*Fruits and Fruit Trees of America*, was the most widely read book on the subject at the time. Downing referred to America as a “young orchard” with soil so rich that “in one part or another of the Union every man may, literally, sit under his own vine and fig tree.”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Strentzel was apparently familiar with Downing’s book as he recounted a similar prophecy when he described his first encounter of the Alhambra Valley (see Chapter 1).

Downing offered practical advice, encouraging farmers to plant orchards with standard trees rather than dwarf trees and to leave them unpruned, which he felt would extend their longevity. Doing so would allow the orchard to perpetuate as a family legacy, an investment that they could pass on to their sons and be profitable for 50- 75 years. As a result, fruit trees at this time were generally unpruned, and were grafted close to the ground and allowed to develop tall trunks of five or more feet with high canopies. This practice allowed the ground underneath to be cultivated more easily and thoroughly. Layouts typically consisted of rows planted with several kinds of fruit and many varieties of each. Tree form was created by browsing livestock and deer, and diseases were warded off by hand washing the trees with soap. Spacing for peaches and plums was typically a square of fifteen feet within rows and fifteen feet between rows, while apples and pears were spaced in a 20- 30- foot square. Downing’s techniques became the norm as more and more farmers were taking up commercial orcharding as a vocation by the mid- nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

#### **DR. JOHN STRENTZEL**

Dr. Strentzel’s optimistic view of the Alhambra Valley in 1853 was manifested in tireless experimentation, invention, and production. With great enthusiasm, he and his brother Henry resumed the horticultural experimentation that they had begun on their lands along the Merced River in Snelling. They went to great lengths to satisfy their passion for horticulture, planting and working many types of fruit to learn which grew best in a local climate of hot and dry summers and cool and wet winters. Although their planting techniques appeared to be grounded in the advice of Downing and others, they were equally (and perhaps more) influenced by the local conditions; orchard trees for example, were branched low to protect the trunks from sun scald and protect and shade the ground.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Strentzel first concentrated on growing vines with imported varieties of grapes from Europe, but phylloxera wiped them out and he turned to a hardier domestic grape stock. Eventually, Strentzel grew the first Muscat grapes in

California as well as Tokays, Catawabas, and Malagas, and also produced the first raisins, which earned him recognition at the State Fair in 1861.<sup>6</sup> He also made wine, an art he had learned while working in a winery in Budapest.

Strentzel successfully experimented with varieties of many other fruits. By 1860 he was raising fifty different varieties of peaches. At the Contra Costa County Fair of 1861, Strentzel displayed thirty- six varieties of apples, thirty- five varieties of pears, four varieties of quinces, five varieties of plums, and three varieties of grapes. That same year, the Strentzel orchards and gardens were also producing apricots, cherries, currants, blackberries, gooseberries, strawberries, sugar beets, almonds, figs, olives, and the area's first navel oranges.<sup>7</sup> There was much success with pears, and eventually the Strentzel orchards contained some sixty varieties, making it one of the earliest commercial fruit plantations in central California.<sup>8</sup>

In a diary entry from 1869, Louisiana Strentzel wrote of selling 375,000 pounds of produce, including grapes, peaches, pears, mulberries, apples, oranges, lemons, cherries, melons, plums, quince, pomegranates, olives, figs, pecans, walnuts, beans, asparagus, corn, carrots, peas, and hay. Mrs. Strentzel also mentions hogs, cattle, chickens, and turkeys on the ranch.<sup>9</sup> She shared her husband's love of horticulture and arranged fresh cut flowers for weddings and funerals in the Martinez area.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Dr. Strentzel did not sever ties with his homeland; the hospitable Alhambra ranch house became a refuge for many Polish political dissidents.

The road to success, however, did not come easily:

Many difficulties I had to contend with in that early day obtaining the right kind of seeds and trees for planting, often receiving invoices of trees and plants untrue to label, or the many losses and disappointments through inexperienced and unreliable help, but by energy and perseverance, and unremitting attention to business, I succeeded in overcoming all obstacles. When my first tract of land was filled out I purchased more and continued to purchase when needed, or opportunity offered and plant year to year..."

With new acquisitions came the need for efficient labor, and he hired his work force carefully:

I always insisted that my pickers could whistle while at work...I kept my ears opened and when they stopped whistling I knew they were eating cherries and it was time for me to act if I was to make a profit from my crop."<sup>11</sup>

### **STRENTZEL'S CONTRIBUTIONS**

By 1874, Strentzel's success was mirrored in California's booming commercial orchard industry. Farmers wasted little time in taking advantage of the

transcontinental railroad completed in 1869 and aggressively shipped produce to new regional and eastern markets.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the town of Martinez flourished as a governmental and trade center. As the county seat, the town attracted lawyers, judges, and businesses to serve this regime and the town became a major shipping port, based primarily on lucrative grain trade between California's Central Valley and international ports- of- call.<sup>14</sup> The arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad to Martinez in 1877 provided for long- distant shipping of Alhambra Valley produce.

The Strentzels were major contributors to the town's growth. Seizing on the area's population boom, they purchased whole city blocks and waterfront parcels in town and property in San Francisco, and in the late 1870s founded the town of Valona northwest of Martinez. The Strentzels also donated right- of- way land to the railroad.<sup>15</sup>

Keenly aware of the value of a strong and united community of farmers, Dr. Strentzel helped establish the Alhambra Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, No. 231, in Martinez in 1874. The Grange warehouses and 1900- foot wharf provided for the storage and deep- water shipment of grain. It also allowed the county's farmers to work cooperatively and to ship goods overseas without losing money to an intermediary. The venture was financially successful.<sup>16</sup>

Strentzel introduced innovative growing and shipping techniques which allowed his produce to sell for top dollar in San Francisco and other markets. He is credited with inventing a shipping technique that employed carbonized bran to prevent damaged to delicate fruits during shipping. In 1876 he demonstrated that California fresh fruit could be sent to eastern states when specimens from his ranch took prizes at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. He also invented several planting practices that became standard, such as planting table grapes in the valley floors and wine grapes on the slopes.<sup>17</sup>

Strentzel's contributions clearly aligned with the traits of the gentlemen farmer – someone who farmed not just for profit, but also in a didactic manner to improve local rural and agricultural conditions. Despite the benefits of growing and exporting grain, he was wary of a one- crop economy that used up valuable soil nutrients.<sup>18</sup> He urged his fellow farmers to plant vineyards and fruit trees, and never hesitated to proclaim the benefits of fruit growing. The Strentzel orchards, featured in articles in the *Contra Costa Gazette* and the *Martinez Gazette*, were a constant source of publicity for his work. He also wrote articles for state and local scientific journals and often gave vine cuttings and fruit away for free.<sup>19</sup>



By 1875, some farmers apparently heeded Strentzel's advice: the Alhambra Valley had become the cradle of fruit growing in Contra Costa County with 40,000 apple trees; 20,000 peach; 10,000 pear; 1250 apricot; 3500 mulberry; 1000 orange; 500 prune; 100 olive; and 50 lemon.<sup>20</sup>

### **THE STRENTZELS AND JOHN MUIR**

John Muir's relationship with the Strentzel family began in the summer of 1874 when the Doctor, his wife, and their daughter, Louie Wanda, visited the home of their friend J. B. McChesney in Oakland where Muir was then living and writing. There is no record of their conversation, but the event apparently prompted Dr. Strentzel to invite Muir to visit the ranch.<sup>21</sup>

Muir, then thirty- six years old, had spent the last six years in California working as a ranch hand, saw mill operator, and sheepherder while simultaneously hiking and studying the Sierra ranges and glaciers. His writings of the Yosemite Valley landscape were widely published, and his reputation as an advocate of conservation was growing. The twenty- seven year old Louie Wanda Strentzel was a graduate of the Miss Atkins 'Young Ladies' Seminary at Benicia (later Mills College) and a promising concert pianist. However, with the family ranch producing and shipping hundreds of tons of fruit annually, she had chosen to remain at home to help her aging father.<sup>22</sup>

Jean Carr, a mutual friend of John and Louie, had long hoped for the two to meet. In a letter to Louie she had commented:

I want you to know my John Muir – and I wish I could give him to some young noble woman 'for keeps,' and so take him out of the wilderness into the society of his peers.<sup>23</sup>

Despite her wishes, it was not until the fall of 1877 that Muir accepted Dr. Strentzel's invitation. After a trip to Mount Shasta, Muir arrived in Martinez in a small boat and walked the three miles to the Strentzel's Alhambra ranch house and their "eighty acres of choice orchards and vineyards." In a letter to his sister he wrote:

"They pitied my very looks and made me eat and sleep, stuffing me with turkey, chicken, beef, and fruits, and jellies in the most extravagant manner imaginable, and begged me to stay a month."<sup>24</sup>

Frequent correspondences and visits followed, and Mrs. Strentzel's diary suggests that John and Louie did not spend all of their time in scientific

discussions with the good Dr. Strentzel.<sup>25</sup> By the spring of 1879, Muir and Louie were engaged, and Mrs. Strentzel wrote:

Mr. Muir is the only man that the Dr. and I have ever felt we could take into our family as one of us and he is the only one that Louie has ever loved, altho [sic] she has had many offers of marriage.<sup>26</sup>

### **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

In the summer of 1879, Muir embarked on a trip to Alaska aboard the steamer *Victoria* and Dr. Strentzel and Louie saw him off at the Martinez wharf (Figure 2.1). Soon after, care packages of wine, jelly, and cherry preserves were making their way to Alaska, and for his part, Muir sent back a book, maps, and pressed leaves.<sup>27</sup> Wedding arrangements were made the following winter and the ceremony took place on April 14, 1880 in the Alhambra ranch house. The Strentzel's wedding gift to the couple was the Alhambra ranch house and the surrounding twenty acres of vineyards and orchards.<sup>28</sup> However, the two couples lived together for another two years until the Strentzel's new house was constructed on the Redfern property.

In their first summer as a married couple, Louie continued helping her father on the family ranch and Muir toiled in the orchards and vineyards until July when he briefly resumed his exploration of Alaska. In the following spring, on March 25, 1881, their first daughter was born and Muir wrote to a friend, "I am now the happiest man in the world. We are five now – four steadfast old lovers around one little love."<sup>29</sup> The occasion bore a response from the *Contra Costa Gazette*:

For the man who in the wilderness had found no time to enjoy and even correspond with children, life must have seemed complete in March of 1881, when he became the proud father of a little girl, who was given the name Wanda.<sup>30</sup>

Muir marked the occasion by planting a tree next to the Alhambra ranch house, and did so again at the birth of their second daughter, Helen, on January 23, 1886.<sup>31</sup>

### **SETTLING DOWN**

In May 1881, Muir embarked on a third trip to Alaska, and the timing of this trip so soon after Wanda's birth apparently surprised his in-laws, friends, and neighbors. However, the journey was made at the urging of Louie who understood the renewing powers of the mountains on her husband's physical and emotional well-being. Muir returned in the fall, partly because of Dr. Strentzel's declining health and his young family's financial needs, but mostly because of homesickness. For the next three years he stayed close to his family and home and devoted much of his time and energy to the ranch.<sup>32</sup>

Purposefully, Muir settled down to life on the ranch and labored in the fields to learn the intricacies of raising grapes and fruit trees. He was hard- working, thrifty, and creative – qualities which impressed the Strentzels.<sup>33</sup> According to diary entries from Mrs. Strentzel, Muir also carried out improvements around the Alhambra ranch house and the gravesite, which included numerous battles with the Arroyo del Hambre and its bankside vegetation:

1881 January 16: John has been gone for several days to show the man about making a ditch...east of the vineyard to turn the water from washing a gully into the garden. He has also planted buckeyes at the same place. Got fearfully poisoned with poison oak, confined to his room several days, face badly swollen.

1881 March 19: Mr. Muir has been cutting down the trees and shrubbery along the creek which improves the look of the place very much as they had greatly obstructed the view.

1881 March 20: Mr. Muir and I took a long walk down to the end of the flume at the creek sat down and rested awhile, then went to graves. John set the brush on fire along the creek.<sup>34</sup>

### **THE STRENTZEL HOUSE**

On February 15, 1882, Mrs. Strentzel wrote in her diary the following passage about their move to the Redfern property, variously called the “Redfern place,” “Franklin place,” “other place,” and the “Big house:”

“We have given up this our home place [the Alhambra ranch house] to Louie and John, and made a deed, and now poppa and I will go live on the Franklin place as soon as we can build a house. We hope this will prove a good arrangement.”<sup>35</sup>

The Strentzels located their new residence (hereafter called the Strentzel House) on a knoll about 200 yards east of the Martinez Adobe, on the east side of Franklin Creek.<sup>36</sup> Having been flooded out in the gold fields, Dr. Strentzel took care that the structure, situated some thirty feet above Franklin Creek, was secure from high water.

The house was designed by Wolfe & Son of San Francisco and constructed by Sylvester and Langabee of San Francisco. Work on the two- story, fourteen- room structure proceeded quickly: a well was dug in May 1882 west of the house near Franklin Creek; excavation of the cellar and cistern commenced in early July; framing was completed by late July; and chimneys and plumbing were installed by mid- August. Dr. Strentzel visited the site often and may have ordered most of the materials and supervised construction.<sup>37</sup>

The building's formal and symmetrical plan and facade reflected both the Italianate style popular at the time among prosperous families in the area and the formality of late nineteenth-century society. The front of the structure faced north, most likely to take advantage of the long views down the Alhambra Valley and the Straits of Carquinez. The wood-frame and brick structure was symmetrically arranged about a center hall and measured thirty-eight by forty feet with a nineteen by twenty-five-foot rear kitchen wing. The house included a basement, several porches, a full attic, and as described in the *Contra Costa Gazette*, was "crowned with an ornate cupola of corresponding style with the building, from which a view may be had an altitude of full one hundred feet above the valley level."<sup>38</sup>

Special care was taken to ensure a reliable water supply. In addition to the well and the 13,000-gallon cistern, a water tank was installed in the attic and was supplied either by rain water or well water pumped by the windmill along Franklin Creek. Two additional wells and windmills were erected on the Redfern property later, but it is unclear whether they served the house.<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, a wood cistern was erected just northeast of the house by c.1886, which counters somewhat the tendency in late-Victorian period landscape design to relegate utilitarian structures and spaces at the rear of the house. The cistern may have been located here simply because there was no other level location close to the house to put it. The Woodshed was constructed around the same time on the southeast side near the kitchen door to store firewood and later a large iron and brick kitchen range. A stone and brick retaining wall and steps were built into the knoll to create a level area for this structure.<sup>40</sup>

#### **A WATCHFUL PUBLIC**

Construction of the Strentzel House was frequently monitored by the local newspaper. An update from July 1882 offered glowing descriptions of the new residence and ranch:

Dr. Strentzel intends to have erected a handsome and costly residence on that portion of his farm known as the old Redfern ranch. A large part of the tract, which is beautifully situated, is covered with a young and flourishing orchard and vineyard, and within a few years it will be one of the most attractive places in the country.<sup>41</sup>

The house, fruit ranch, and owner received further attention from the press in October in this lengthy description:

The new house in process of completion for Dr. John Strentzel, about two miles south of Martinez, is well comported in plan, proportion, style and

situation, with the financial resources, esthetic rural tastes, and social position and obligations of the owner. The site is a well chosen one, elevated some thirty foot above the valley level, which fronts and flanks it on either side, and it commands an outlook northward, between the ranges that bound our valley on the east and west, which takes in a section of Carquinez Straits, Benicia, and the rising mountains beyond, towards the Coast Range, Sierra Nevada and Cascade Summits. The immediate front and left flanks of the mansion site elevation is covered by a thrifty vineyard and well planted young orchard of choice fruits, and the situation will be a very charming one indeed when the elevation is embellished with its shrubberies, plots, terraces, winding roadways, and walks, with a half acre fish pond space as its base to mirror its beauties...<sup>42</sup>

### **THE STRENTZELS MOVE TO THE REDFERN PLACE**

When completed, the imposing and monumental house was painted light gray with dark grey or black trim.<sup>43</sup> The Strentzels moved into the new house in late 1882 or early 1883, fulfilling their promise of passing the Alhambra ranch house to John and Louie. This was not an easy decision for Mrs. Strentzel:

The Dr. told Louie a few days ago that he would give her and John this place as their own, and he and I will go over to the other place to live. They seem well pleased with the proposition... but the tho't of us separating makes me feel very sad, for I have always hoped that we could remain together as one family.<sup>44</sup>

Fortunately for Mrs. Strentzel, they would not be far away. The Strentzel House was less than a half- mile to the north of the Alhambra ranch house and quickly became the center of social activities; frequent visitors were John, Louie, baby Wanda, and John's sisters, Sarah and Margaret.<sup>45</sup> Communication was further improved by 1884 when telephone service was brought to the house.

### **ORCHARDING IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY**

By the 1880s, the nation's fascination in growing fruit for the sake of it had subsided and the "golden age of pomology" had passed. Diseases, pest infestations, and economic and productivity concerns overtook pride in the beauty and tastes of the fruits.<sup>46</sup> From this time until the end of World War 2, scientific development of the orchard increased while the number of varieties grown in the field dramatically decreased.

Much of this change was brought about by pest infestations. In first part of nineteenth century, pests were of little concern and most could be managed by grazing livestock or by even by hand. By this time, however, they were nearing epidemic proportions caused by the expansion of agricultural settlements, the ability to ship and receive products from other parts of the country, the destruction of native host plants, and the sheer number of orchard plantings

throughout all areas of the United States. This resulted in a new era of scientific horticulture and the development and introduction of various pesticides, insecticides, and fungicides to control such problems as Codling moth and Canker worm on apples, Fireblight on pear, apple, peach, plum, and quince, and Gray mold on grapes. The role of federal government in the field was further established in 1887 with development of agriculture experimental stations in every state, which aimed to increase the profitability of all forms of agriculture and horticulture. Research was focused on increasing crop quality and yields and all factors capable of enhancing or reducing yields. The information was typically broadcast through bulletins.<sup>47</sup>

For many farmers, however, the help came too late as the combination of untreated pests and diseases and record low yields was too much to bear, and thus began a period of decline in the number of orchards in the country. Many small independent farmers gave up, knowing that to be commercially successful they needed to invest more capital, skills, and knowledge that was beyond the reach of many. Consequently, their individual influence waned as the orchard business became more standardized by larger corporations and cooperatives, such as the Alhambra Grange. This trend continued until the end of World War 2.<sup>48</sup>

Although the number of independent orchard farmers and the diversity of fruit varieties were on the decline nationally, California actually saw increases in orcharding and the number of fruit trees. This can be attributed to plantings on newly settled lands as well as new techniques in canning, the development of cold storage, and the introduction of the refrigerated rail car. These technological advances were important to a young industry that relied heavily on shipments to eastern markets (by the turn of the twentieth century, 90% of the population was east of the Mississippi River). By the 1890s the trend of lower orchard yields was somewhat reversed by the use of pesticides, but was offset by more specialization in the field as well as industrialization and urbanization.<sup>49</sup>

### **THE STRENTZEL-MUIR RANCH IN THE 1880S**

In addition to settling down to domestic life and ranching, Muir entered financial partnership with Dr. Strentzel. Some parcels, such as the twenty-acre Alhambra ranch house tract, possessed Muir's name while others retained Strentzel's, and additional tracts were bought, rented, and leased. By 1885, the Strentzel-Muir Ranch encompassed over 2300 acres of land spread throughout the Alhambra

Valley.<sup>50</sup> Their holdings included the land that now comprises the park's three units (Figure 2.2).<sup>51</sup>

Dr. Strentzel retired from the day- to- day ranch operations around 1881. In the spirit of a gentlemen farmer, he remained active in the Alhambra Grange and gave many lectures, reported on experiments, and in 1884 was elected president for an eleventh consecutive term.<sup>52</sup> Muir took on the responsibilities of ranch manager and soon began to implement his own horticultural theories and practices.

### **STREAMLINING AND SPECIALIZATION**

In what was surely a sign of the times, one of Muir's first decisions as ranch manager was to pull back from experimental varieties of fruits. Although Dr. Strentzel had experimented with the best varieties of fruit attainable in Europe, Muir knew this period had passed and gradually began to focus on the successful varieties of fruits – Bartlett pears and Tokay grapes, for example – that commanded the highest market prices. In time, he grafted the sixty- five varieties of pears to the Bartletts and the many kinds of grapes to the Tokays, and planted land that had grown hay and grain with fruit trees and vines.<sup>53</sup>

Muir was no stranger to the business of farming; much of his youth was spent toiling in the family farms in Wisconsin. As ranch manager, he supervised the work of up to forty men, and labored alongside them to plant and harvest hundreds of tons of fruit. His keen senses of inventiveness and efficiency inspired him to improve ranch operations; among his inventions was a machine for each ranch worker to plant grape vines in perfectly straight lines.<sup>54</sup>

Muir quickly proved to be a savvy businessman. The wharf was at Martinez, and on steamer days ranch wagons loaded with fruit rolled down the Alhambra Valley at dawn to be met by the eager commission merchants. Muir was always the first to arrive at the railroad station to receive the sturdiest boxes for shipping. Thus, while late- arriving farmers were mending whatever crates were left over, he was already shipping his produce to market. Strentzel's products were in high demand by both eastern and western markets, and the ranch profited; as one story has it, Muir would drive up to the bank, put out a big white bag labeled "laundry," and vanish inside.<sup>55</sup>

### **CONSERVATION VERSUS PROFITS**

Not all of the lands at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch were brought into production, however. Mrs. Strentzel had long admired the hills south and west of the Alhambra ranch house – a range which includes the park's Mt. Wanda unit – and

the “dark green of the buckeye, laurel (also called California bay), and live oaks.” She envisioned a time when “other generations will be here to enjoy the scene.” In the same spirit, Muir also chose to preserve these hills for their beauty, natural character, and botanical variety, maintaining it as a preserve for frequent walks and botany excursions with his daughters, friends, and colleagues. Views from the top were, in Muir’s words, “delightful in color like a fairyland,” and on clear days, the pencil- like outline of the Sierras was visible.<sup>56</sup> The excursions to this untouched area would become an important part of Muir’s life at the fruit ranch.

According to author Stephen Fox, Muir had comfortably settled into civilized life by this time, but was less satisfied in returning to farming. Transforming his in-law’s ranch from a botanical hobby to a profit- making operation forced him to regard the natural world in a different way; he loved birds, but now the birds ate his cherries and were costing him five hundred dollars a year in profits.<sup>57</sup> To an editor requesting an article in 1883, he declined, saying,

Work is coming upon me from near and far and at present I cannot see how I am to escape its degrading vicious effects. Get someone to write an article on the vice of over- industry, it is greatly needed in these times of horticultural storms.”<sup>58</sup>

At this time, conservation was more about the wise and practical use of natural resources, and Muir practiced these notions in the ranch fields; he used kerosene and mineral oil sprays as recommended by University of California- Berkeley, prohibited the use of poisons or guns to kill animals, and employed hillside viticulture to minimize erosion.<sup>59</sup>

#### **CROPS AT THE STRENTZEL-MUIR RANCH**

In the 1880s the total acreage of the ranch had tripled in size since Dr. Strentzel purchased his first twenty- acre piece of land some thirty years earlier. Mrs. Strentzel’s diaries, as well as letters between Louie and John and other family members and friends, paint both a broad and intimate picture of the massive fruit ranch during this period (see Appendix 2).<sup>60</sup> The list below summarizes the crops that were grown on the Strentzel- Muir Ranch in the 1880s as reported in the letters and diaries:

- Fruits: almond, apple, apricot, cherry, fig, olive, orange, pear, peach, pecan, plum, pomegranate, quince, raisin
- Vines: grape (Isabelle, Tokay, Muscat of Alexandria, Rose Peru, Malaga, Zinfandel)
- Fields: hay, oats, rye, spring wheat, winter wheat



Since 1874, Strentzel had managed the 244- acre Redfern farm as part of his extensive land holdings that had grown steadily from his original twenty- acre purchase in 1853. County records suggest the Redfern farm was primarily devoted to orchards and vineyards: the valuation of the property in 1877 totaled \$3660 (\$15/acre) with improvement assessed at \$500. By 1879, the value of the land had increased to \$4148 (\$17/acre) with improvements listed as \$252.<sup>61</sup>

As noted earlier, Muir's focus was on the most marketable fruits and grapes, and much of the ranch's land was dedicated to these efforts. For example, he consolidated the number of pears by grafting Strentzel's sixty- five varieties to the Bartletts.<sup>62</sup> He also found success in table grapes, and compared to other farmers in Contra Costa County, devoted considerable acreage to them: by 1890, table grapes comprised over two- thirds of the 150 acres platted in grapes. Muir was able to produce a table grape that grew later in the season, and it may have been the combination that allowed him to sustain such a successful operation, especially when exporting the product to the East Coast where prices were higher.<sup>63</sup>

#### **CROPS AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

References of specific land uses at the Redfern Place (the vicinity of the Martinez Adobe and the Strentzel House) coincide with the construction of the house in 1882. An April 29, 1882 diary entry from Mrs. Strentzel speaks of a visit to the Redfern Place, which by this time had been owned by Strentzel for eight years:

The Dr. and I drove over to the new place...everything is growing beautifully...many of the young trees are already full of fruit. The apricots [sic] planted last year (when the baby was born) have a fine growth, and quite a sprinkling of fruit. We drove down the avenue between the trees and grapes, to the cypress hedge, the sun was low in the west, and shining thru the trees making the pink tips of the young apricot shoots appear gloriously transparent, and the trees all seemed as if varnished in silver. It was a magnificent [sic] sight, one never to be effaced from my memory.<sup>64</sup>

Historic photographs from the 1880s show some of the crops noted above at the Redfern Place as well as the vast extent of the orchards, vineyards, and crops that surrounded this area. The earliest known photograph dates from c.1883, soon after the new Strentzel House was completed (Figure 2.3). The photograph shows the Road to Oakland, which by this time is called Franklin Canyon Road, bordered by rows of orchard trees and a field of wheat, hay, or silage. In the background is the Strentzel House, which even from this distance appears to be quite imposing, and the outline of Mt. Wanda. A distant view of the Redfern Place looking west in c.1885 shows crops planted across the lower hills west of the Martinez Adobe and on the east slope of Mt. Wanda (Figure 2.4). A closer

inspection shows the east slope of the knoll below the Strentzel House dotted with a collection of fruit trees, which in later photographs appear to be apples, but the vantage point is too far away to confirm the specific kind of tree. Another photograph taken the same year provides a closer view of the hills west of the Martinez Adobe, barns, and sheds draped in vines (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 provides a wealth of information about the Redfern Place during this period. Franklin Creek roughly divides the landscape into two spaces. On the east side of the creek, the east-west farm road separates a plum orchard from a row of quince that borders an area known as the fish pond space. On the other side of Franklin Creek, orchards of cherries or apricots are planted on the south side of the lane while grapes and apricots are planted on the north side. According to Agee's research, a row of figs had been planted along the north side of the main farm road by this time. The mass of vegetation visible in this part of the photograph may be the figs.

Another interesting photograph of the Strentzel House and its environs was taken c.1887 from the north slope of Mt. Wanda and shows orchards and vines extending northward across the floor of the Alhambra Valley (Figure 2.6). The clarity of the photograph yields specific information about the crops around the Strentzel House: to the north and northwest are peaches; to the west and southwest are plums and pears; and to the south are Muscat, Tokay, and Zinfandel vines. At this time, the south slope of the knoll was devoted to a dry yard with trays of grapes stacked and ready to dry out, probably to produce raisins.<sup>65</sup> The lower west slope was planted with a cover crop, probably wheat or wild oats, while the field east of the knoll was planted in hay.<sup>66</sup>

#### **CIRCULATION AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Much of the infrastructure required to operate the huge Strentzel- Muir fruit ranch was in place by the mid- 1880s. Figure 2.3 shows an early view of the Franklin Canyon Road, which by this time was undoubtedly the primary means of access into the fields comprising the Redfern Farm and other properties at the ranch.

A variety of smaller farm lanes connected to this road, and chief among them was a road present in some form during Redfern's time that lead from the Martinez Adobe area to across Franklin Creek. As shown in Figure 2.5, by c.1885 the road spanned Franklin Creek via a simple crossing identified only by two wood railings. The road appears to have a compacted dirt surface, so like most roads in the Alhambra Valley at this time it was probably muddy after sustained rains and

dusty in times of drought. Although its width could be described as a two-track road, the absence of vegetation along the centerline indicates that it was well traveled; its use probably increased with the construction of the Strentzel House, and it may actually be the 'avenue' referenced by Mrs. Strentzel in her April 1882 diary entry. There is no known name for this road, so for the purpose of this report it is called the "main farm road."

Figures 2.5 and 2.6 provide good views of the main farm road and the point at which it splits, at the west side of the knoll. One branch is shown heading southeast along the base of the knoll to the fields beyond. This lane may have continued southeasterly into the upper Alhambra Valley, and possibly connected to the Alhambra Valley Road (formerly the Road to Martinez) and the Alhambra ranch house where Muir lived at this time. This road, along with the main farm road, was probably the two main routes into the Redfern Place. Another branch heads northeast and traverses the north side of the knoll to end as a loop at the front entrance of the Strentzel House. For this report, these lanes are named, respectively, the "southeast farm road" (because of its utilitarian use) and the "carriage drive-loop" (because of its primarily domestic use). The center of this important intersection was defined by a triangle-shaped wedge of land. Figure 2.6 also shows a very faint trace of what may be another farm lane at the lower south slope of the knoll, on the south side of the vineyard. The lane appears to track westerly through the orchards. For this report, this lane is called the "east-west farm lane."

Although curvilinear approach driveways were common in late-Victorian period landscapes, the design of the curving carriage drive-loop was more likely due to utility; its route offered the path of least resistance up the slope of the knoll, which would have been appreciated by workers hauling construction materials up to the new house site. Meandering walkways were another late-Victorian period concept, but the walks around the Strentzel House generally reflected the orthogonal plan of the house and tended close to the foundation, leaving a small space for plantings. The concrete/aggregate walks, however, did feature low raised edges and curved rather than right-angled intersections, especially next to the front steps. Additionally, immediately after construction of the house, the knoll was more or less a smooth hill absent of vegetation, so except for the island created by the carriage drive-loop, there would have been few features around which to run curving paths.

Several other circulation features are worth noting. On the west side of the dry yard was a narrow earthen path that connected the rear of the house to the

southeast farm road. On the east side of the house was a short earthen driveway extending from the carriage drive- loop to the Woodshed area. For this report, they are named the “knoll path” and “east driveway,” respectively.

#### **BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Starting in 1874, the Martinez Adobe apparently no longer served as a residence. According to several sources, it was instead used as both a storehouse and ranch headquarters where workers reported in the mornings for the assignment of their daily tasks.<sup>67</sup> A detailed analysis of Figure 2.5 reveals the presence of a lean- to shed on the northeast side of the structure and what appear to be scattered pieces of farm equipment and stockpiles of materials.

Given its central location within the Strentzel- Muir Ranch and along Franklin Canyon Road, the Martinez Adobe was a logical place around which to assemble barns, sheds, corrals, and the like. Figure 2.5 shows some of the outbuildings and structures present in c.1885. A two- story, wood- shingle, and gable roof structure was situated southwest of the adobe, and was probably used as a ranch foreman’s house.<sup>68</sup> A small one- story, gable roof shed with vertical board siding and a wood cistern were located along Franklin Canyon Road, northwest of the adobe. The shed was likely used for fruit packing because of the many crates stacked around it. Such structures were a unique feature of orchards in the western U.S. and were built to shelter fruits from the sun and rain they were carefully packed.<sup>69</sup> On the west side of Franklin Canyon Road was a barn with vertical board siding constructed in 1882 and described by the *Contra Costa Gazette* as “large and commodious,” and behind this was a smaller pyramidal- roofed structure, possibly a hay barn. Other than the Cookhouse on the west side of the adobe and the barn, it is not known if the other outbuildings were built by Strentzel or Muir or if they were left over from the property’s previous owners.<sup>70</sup>

Another historic photograph, taken from the corral adjacent to the barn in the late 1880s, shows the other side of the packing shed and provides several more clues about this area (Figure 2.7). The corral was enclosed by a run of three- board and two- wire fencing and accessed through a paired wood swing gate off Franklin Canyon Road. A variation of this type of fencing continued north along the road. On the other side of the road, a section of vertical board fence stretched from the shed to a section of picket fencing and gate, opposite the corral gate. The picket fence and gate appear to line up with the main farm road and would suggest that this area was a key circulation point between the barns and corrals, the Martinez Adobe, and the Strentzel House (barely visible up on

the knoll). The picket or corral gate may be the one Muir was working on in mid- July 1882 “on the place.”<sup>71</sup>

One of the most important and visible features at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch was the well and windmill along Franklin Creek (hereafter called the “Franklin Creek Well and Windmill”). In addition to serving the Strentzel House, it was likely used to irrigate adjacent fields. It has been suggested that water from this well was also pumped to a storage tank on a hillside behind the Martinez Adobe for domestic and irrigation uses and for the livestock barns and corrals.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of the final destination, the structure between the main farm road and the windmill in Figure 2.5 appears to support a pipe that conveyed water from the well. The railings on either side suggest the pipe doubled as sort of a catwalk to provide access to the well.

As referenced earlier by the *Contra Costa Gazette*, and according to Helen Muir, the depression around the Franklin Creek well and windmill was referred to as the fish pond.<sup>73</sup> It is unclear whether the fish pond space was a man- made area regulated by a sluice, as suggested in Figure 2.5, or simply a natural low area along the banks of Franklin Creek. No evidence of a water- regulating structure has been found, however, and that the pond actually supported fish is also questionable. Given its location next to the flood- prone Franklin Creek, the fish pond space was probably both natural and man- made. In terms of the former, it was a natural seasonal pond whose water levels corresponded to the cycles of wet and dry weather in the Alhambra Valley. As for the latter, Figures 2.5 and 2.6 suggest that in addition to a sluice, its size may have been managed by what appear to be earthen berms visible on the south side and especially on the northeast side. A likely scenario is that this area accepted both water funneling under the main farm road bridge and stormwater flowing over the main farm road that had been backed up behind the bridge during particularly heavy rain events.

Other structures in this part of the Redfern Place included several small houses south and east of the Martinez Adobe, along Franklin Creek. They accommodated the Chinese laborers who comprised some of the work force on the ranch.<sup>74</sup> One of these houses is visible in several historic photographs and was called the “China House”; the Chinese were a common and well- regarded source of labor in California during this time, not only on fruit ranches but in the gold mines and railroads as well.<sup>75</sup>

**PLANTINGS AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Several early historic photographs of the Redfern Place – along with Mrs. Strentzel’s diary entries and archival and field analysis of historic trees at the park by James K. Agee in 1978 – provide insight into some of the early non- agricultural plantings. Figure 2.3 shows several evergreen trees along Franklin Canyon Road, and Figure 2.6 shows similar trees along the edge of the field northeast of the Strentzel House. The trees appear to be cypress, and while it is not known if they were purposely planted, they surely provided a shady rest area for the workers toiling in the fields.

Shade was also found along portions of Franklin Creek. Figure 2.3 shows two concentrations of vegetation north and west of the Strentzel House. One of these appears to correspond to the tall and dense mass of plants north of the main farm road and especially around the Franklin Creek well and windmill, as shown in Figures 2.5 and 2.6. These plants may possibly be a mix of oak, willow, and other riparian vegetation. Interestingly, the portion of the creek just south of the main farm road appears to virtually absent vegetation; Muir occasionally cleared vegetation along the Arroyo del Hambre behind the Alhambra ranch house and the gravesite and may have done the same here along Franklin Creek. This work was presumably undertaken to maintain an unobstructed channel upstream from the Franklin Creek Bridge and to prevent creekside vegetation from growing tall enough to shade the adjacent orchards. The tallest vegetation in this area at this time, though, encircles the Franklin Creek Windmill and almost touches the blades.

There are several other identifiable plantings in the creek area and at the Martinez Adobe. Analysis of Figure 2.5 reveals a conifer at the southwest corner of the Franklin Creek Bridge and a black locust in the middle of the main farm road at its junction with another farm lane. At the adobe, a plant of some type was growing in the front toward the south end and a large black locust grew on the north side (also visible in Figure 2.7).<sup>76</sup> The mass of conifers behind the adobe are either pine or possibly the cypress Mrs. Strentzel referred to in her diary entry in April 1882. Additionally, an entry in Mrs. Strentzel’s diary from February 24, 1877 refers to “planting eucalyptus trees on the Redfern place.”<sup>77</sup> The specific location of this reference is not known, but a later historic photograph suggests it may be south of the adobe along Franklin Creek, and possibly provided shade for the corrals in that area.

### **PLANTINGS AROUND THE STRENTZEL HOUSE**

With a family so consumed with horticulture, it is not surprising that the grounds surrounding the new house were adorned with trees, shrubs, and flowers in a relatively short time. Soon after the house and carriage drive- loop were constructed, a mass planting comprised of upwards of twenty Monterey pine was planted on the west side of the house, probably to establish a windbreak and to provide shade from the late afternoon sun. As shown in Figures 2.3, 2.6, and 2.7, within about five years these fast- growing pines dominated the west side of the house and dwarfed an arcing row of fifteen to twenty incense cedars planted just downslope.<sup>78</sup>

Relief from the dusty valley winds may also have influenced mass plantings on the south and southwest sides of the house. Figure 2.4 shows a mass of conifers and/or deciduous trees and shrubs planted in the vicinity of the Woodshed on the southeast side of the house. Figure 2.6 shows a line of evergreens, possibly a cypress hedge, wrapping around the south side of the knoll in an arc shape similar to that of the incense cedars.<sup>79</sup> This feature included an opening for the knoll path.

Not surprisingly, the carriage drive- loop and the front and sides of the Strentzel House were the favored location of the more unique plants, and collectively they provided an interesting contrast with the surrounding orchards and vineyards. The first encounter of this different landscape was at the bottom of the carriage drive- loop next to the fish pond space, where as shown in Figure 2.5, a line of shrubs that included two agaves was planted.

At the top of the drive, the center island of the loop was roughly marked out with clumps of roses, inside of which were more roses and possibly two quinces (Figure 2.8). More shrubs were planted along the outer edges of the loop and were particularly dense on the east side; these roses and hollyhocks, together with a three- rail wood fence, marked the extent of the flat top of the knoll. Figure 2.8 also shows two Monterey pine on either side of the house (the northeast specimen is also visible in Figure 2.4), the tops of two California fan palms on either side of the front door, and what appears to be a hedge at the top of the loop flanking the front walkway. Interesting and unique plantings also wrapped around the east side of the house (Figure 2.9). A lemon was planted at the east porch entrance and windmill palm, loquat, and a Canary Island date palm grew near the Woodshed.<sup>80</sup>

Some of these plants were acquired by Muir, who often brought them home from his summer journeys around the country. In one such instance, in the summer of 1884, Louie suggested the couple take a break from never- ending ranch work and travel to Yosemite together (ever the reluctant traveler, this was one of the few trips she took with him).<sup>81</sup> They returned from their journey with a snow plant and a lily with fifty- two buds.<sup>82</sup> Another story has it that Muir brought a giant sequoia seedling from the Sierra Nevada wrapped in a moistened handkerchief. It was planted in the triangle- shaped area formed by the intersection of the main farm road, southeast farm road, and carriage drive- loop and because of this location may have been protected in the crate shown in Figure 2.5. Other transplanted vegetation may have been planted at the Alhambra ranch house.

Although no original landscape plan for the house has been found (it is quite possible none was created), the historic photographs referenced above reveal that some characteristics of the landscape design trends popular at this time – namely the Gardenesque and Subtropical styles – appear to have been practiced here. The movements favored ornamental and naturalized planting schemes set out in visible places, such as along driveways and pathways. The varieties of palms and the sequoia, as well as plantings set out along the carriage drive- loop and in the island gesture to the two movements.

Another common late- Victorian period landscape characteristic was the use of plantings to screen elevated foundations and to separate spaces; Figure 2.5 shows scattered plantings around the perimeter of the house and the conifer hedge separating the house area from the dry yard area, and Figure 2.8 suggests a row of shrubs between the carriage drive- loop and the house. The mass of shrubs along the east side of the carriage drive- loop and the distinct row of incense cedars on the west side of the house may have been planted with this idea in mind.

The choice and location of plants was also likely influenced by practical needs. The Strentzel House was situated on an exposed hill surrounded by plowed fields filled with fruit trees and vines. These conditions, combined with sea and land breezes whipping through the Alhambra Valley, undoubtedly created plenty of dust. Thus, masses of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, and fast growing species in particular, were a logical solution.

It is important to note that there were likely many other plantings around the Strentzel House from this time that are not captured in historic photographs, especially around the foundation of the house. As later research will show, the 1880s was the first decade of a roughly thirty- year period when more than 120



species of plants, including many exotics imported for their beauty or novelty, were set out around the Redfern Place.<sup>83</sup> The plantings, in fact, became increasingly more lush and dense, so much so that some species had to be removed because of overcrowding.

### **THE CALL TO TRAVEL AND WRITE**

Ever since meeting John Muir, Louie understood the hold of the wilderness on her husband and its influence on his peace of mind and strength. With his wife's blessing and prodding, Muir traveled every summer while the vines were ripening, remaining close to the post offices and telegraph stations, and returned every fall for the harvest.<sup>84</sup> Louie assumed much of the responsibility for the day-to-day ranch affairs when Muir was away, supervising the workers, hiring and paying ranch hands, and keeping the ranch books.

Despite these sojourns, by the late 1880s the years of hard labor were beginning to affect Muir's health. Approaching the age of fifty years, at times he reportedly weighed less than one hundred pounds from working so long and hard in the fields.<sup>85</sup> Daughter Helen's birth in 1886 and her subsequent poor health brought him added anxiety. Although having a grandfather who was a physician enabled the child to weather her first anxious years, Muir nonetheless refused to travel on long trips until she was walking and talking. "I am all nerve- shaken and lean as a crow – loaded with care, work and worry," he confided to one of his brothers in 1887.<sup>86</sup>

Muir had also grown frustrated with the unending and monotonous routine of farming. He regularly supervised between fifteen and forty men and worked long days and longer days still in the peak seasons, all the while shipping two thousand grapes a day and arguing over prices.<sup>87</sup> One day in May 1888, fellow Alaskan traveler, S. Hall Young, appeared unannounced in the orchard while Muir was picking cherries. Upon seeing his old friend, Muir dropped his basket and ran to him, crying:

"Ah, my friend... You have come to take me on a canoe trip, have you not? My weariness of this hum- drum work- a- day life has grown so heavy it is like to crush me... I, who have breathed the mountain air... condemned to penal servitude with these miserable little bald- heads [the cherries]... And for money! Man. I'm like to die of the shame of it!"<sup>88</sup>

Louie knew what her husband needed and encouraged him to resume his travels:

Even your mother and sister would understand. My father and mother at last realize your need of the mountains. Then as for the old ranch, why it is here, and a few grapes more or less will not make much difference.<sup>89</sup>

The years of ranch work had not been advantageous to Muir's writing career either. Cut off from the field studies that powered his work, most of his correspondences had been limited to family members and he was not writing even so much as a journal. As author Stephen Fox notes, however, one cannot put the blame entirely on the crops he despised:

Writing was laborious and tortuous affair for him [Muir], and he may have actually preferred farm work to staring at a blank sheet of paper. "Writing to me is very hard....for I have no facility in composition and no available vocabulary – only – only invention and imagination." Actually, though, he no longer had to write to make a living because the ranch was so successful. Freed of that powerful motive, he seldom wrote. If the grapes and cherries made a hiatus in his career, they also made it possible.<sup>90</sup>

Family, friends, and colleagues were relieved when he accepted a proposal to edit a two-volume book entitled *Picturesque California*, a job that entailed writing, supervision of other writers, and research trips. In July of 1888 he left the "humdrum, work-a-day-life" to travel to Mount Shasta, Mount Rainier, and as far north as Vancouver with his friend and fellow Scot, landscape artist William Keith.<sup>91</sup> On the very day he was ascending Mount Rainier "heart and limb exultant and free," Louie wrote to him these words:

A ranch that needs and takes the sacrifice of a noble or work ought to be flung away beyond reach and power for harm... The Alaska book and the Yosemite book, dear John, must be written, and you need to be your own self, well and strong, to make them worthy of you. There is nothing that has the right to be considered beside these except the welfare of our children.<sup>92</sup>

Upon his return that fall, Louie observed his improved spirit but still had concerns. On October 12, 1888, she wrote:

John is much better than before the Oregon journey, but just now he is awfully busy and woefully tired. The rush of work and the fervid heat of glowing sunshine have united to make this the most formidable week of the season, both in the long vineyard rows... and 8 hired men have complained of queer cookery!!<sup>93</sup>

#### **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Louie was supportive of her husband's fight for conservation and the traveling and writing the cause required.<sup>94</sup> Some others, such as Mr. Raap, a neighbor to the east, were critical of Muir "...and would always remember Louie as being a very sad and lonely little woman, whom that lout left to go off by his ownself and

leave his wife and little girls.”<sup>95</sup> Ignoring isolated comments like Raap’s, the couple began to sell and lease some of the Strentzel- Muir land holdings in order to free up time and money for Muir to resume his travels and writings. From 1889 on the family lived on these earnings and the reserve of money accumulated from the ranch’s profits. Revitalized, Muir returned to Yosemite Valley in June 1889 where he began, with Robert Underwood Johnson, the push for federal protection of the Toulumne Meadows from man, sheep, cattle, and the “money-changers... in the temple.”<sup>96</sup> It would be one of many preservation battles he would engage in for the next twenty- five years.

### **LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCES**

Despite his love of and need for “wanderings in the wilderness,” Muir’s resumption of frequent travels also brought feelings of doubt; “...it grows ever harder to leave my nest and young.” In his many letters to Louie, he often quoted from his latest drafts, seeking her counsel and approval.<sup>97</sup> Louie provided feedback and always included details about the ranch and stories about the children. One quick exchange of letters in July 1888 between Louie and John concerned the fish pond space below the Strentzel House, and possibly a concern about malaria:

July 19: John to Louie –You must have hot weather. Don’t take the babies over to the pond until it is perfectly dry and covered with soil.

Jul 23: John to Louie – I wonder if Anna [Muir’s younger sister, one of the twins] has got away – guess she has – and then if so whether you are trying to keep house or have moved to Grandpa’s [Dr. Strentzel]. If so, that confounded pond will worry me.

July 31: Louie to John – Grandpa burned a quantity of brush and straw with sulphur over that old pond and is strewing road dust also, so it is greatly improved.<sup>98</sup>

Many letters were also shared between Muir and his children over the years, which undoubtedly helped the family bridge the distance.

### **A CONSERVATIONIST AND RANCH MANAGER**

Muir looked forward to relinquishing his duties as ranch manager but was unsuccessful in finding such a person until 1891.<sup>99</sup> In the interim, he held the unique position of ranch manager and wilderness conservationist, and in a letter to his brother David on April 20, 1889, he lamented, “Am hard at work on the vineyards and orchards while the publishers at Picturesque Cal. are screaming for copy.”<sup>100</sup> A letter to a friend later that year described how he balanced the two roles:

I get up about six o'clock and attend to the farm work, go to bed about nine and read until midnight. When I have a literary task I leave home, shut myself up in a room in a San Francisco hotel, go out only for meals, and peg away awkwardly and laboriously until the wee sma' hours or thereabouts, working long and hard and accomplishing little. During meals at home my little girls make me tell stories, many of them very long continued from day to day for a month or two.<sup>101</sup>

By October 1890, Muir's leadership roles in preservation were well established with the creation of Yosemite, General Grant (later Kings Canyon), and Sequoia National Parks. His name and expertise were nationally known and his writings more popular than ever.<sup>102</sup> Thus began a prolific period of writing, traveling, and conservation.

### **DR. STRENTZEL'S DEATH**

On October 31, 1890, Dr. John T. Strentzel died and was buried in the family gravesite along the Arroyo del Hambre. A three- tiered obelisk constructed of Raymond granite was erected near the creek and inscribed with his name and a floral design believed to be the thistle, the Scottish national emblem. The space was enclosed by a low 26' by 34' rectangular- shaped Raymond granite coping, which was broken by an entry way on west side and flanked by two short pillars with the date 1890 carved in it.<sup>103</sup> The coping may have been set out this way to include other graves or grave markers recognizing Strentzel's son John Erwin, daughter Lottie, and his brother, Henry.<sup>104</sup> One of the eucalyptus trees planted by Dr. Strentzel near the gravesite must have been of considerable size by this time, for Muir is said to have likened its great white trunk to a guardian angel watching over the graves.<sup>105</sup>

Soon after his father- in- law's death, Muir wrote, "the family is broken like a house torn asunder and half taken away." His family then moved in with Mrs. Strentzel to provide her care and companionship. Within a few months, the Alhambra ranch house was occupied by Muir's sister, Margaret and her husband, John Reid. Reid became the ranch foreman, which finally relieved Muir of many of his ranch responsibilities.<sup>106</sup>

### **SELLING RANCH PARCELS**

Dr. Strentzel's estate passed to his wife and daughter, and Muir assumed the responsibility of the administration of the estate. At the time the estate was probated, the Doctor's holdings included 450 acres in Rancho el Pinole, 1,400 acres in the Rancho Cañada del Hambre and 240 acres in the Rancho Las Juntas. These lands – along with cattle, horses, and farm implements; property in Valona,

Martinez, and San Francisco; and shares in the Mt. Diablo Mining Company, Bank of Martinez, and the Alhambra Grange – left a not inconsiderable fortune of \$286,422.92. In particular, the Strentzel House and Martinez Adobe were part of a 106- acre area of land east of the Franklin Canyon Road transferred in two parts to Mrs. Strentzel and Louie on September 17, 1892.<sup>107</sup>

Many of the other land parcels were left to trusted employees and friends since Dr. Strentzel had no real heir to take over the business; his brother and partner, Henry, had died in 1865, and Muir was eager to reduce his role at the ranch. Continuing with their original plans, much of the land that passed to Louie was sold or leased to finance Muir's fieldwork and writing.

### **SUMMARY: DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE IN 1890**

#### **THE UPPER ALHAMBRA VALLEY**

The late nineteenth century was a time when scientific and economic development of orchards and vineyards had eclipsed the salad days of experimentation and hobby. The enormous variety of fruits was in decline as small independent farmers found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the standardized and commercial aspects of the business. However, cooperatives such as the Alhambra Grange, co- founded by Dr. Strentzel, provided farmers a strong and united voice with which to compete in the newly opened regional, national, and international markets.

The Strentzel- Muir Ranch provided a snapshot of the times. When Muir assumed management of the ranch in 1881, he began phasing out many of Strentzel's fruit varieties in favor of financially marketable products. This decision proved wise as it simultaneously yielded handsome profits and allowed a worn- out Muir to gradually return to his field work and conservation writing by this time. To financially support this endeavor, parcels of the ranch were sold and leased. Consequently, the size of the ranch began to decrease from its earlier peak of about 2300 acres.

Convenient access to the Grange and other shipping and rail facilities in downtown Martinez – which by this time was a bustling center of trade and government – was critical. Primary roads such as Franklin Canyon Road and Alhambra Valley Road served this purpose as best they could; their compacted earthen surfaces were likely a barometer of the latest weather patterns in the Alhambra Valley. A system of secondary earthen farm roads and lanes connected to these main roads.

By 1890, the bottomlands and lower slopes of the upper Alhambra Valley were flourishing with productive orchards and vineyards. For as far as the eye could see, the landscape was dominated by orthogonal plats of fruit trees, grape vines, and fields bounded by roads, fence lines, and the occasional crooked stream. Houses, outbuildings, corrals, and windmills contributed to the rural and agricultural scene.

#### **THE FUTURE PARK UNITS**

##### **House Unit** (Drawing 2.1)

Although some fruit varieties had been discontinued and some lands had been sold or leased, the Strentzel- Muir Ranch still produced an impressive variety of products at this time. Much of the land comprising the Redfern Place that is now part of the House Unit represented part of this historic scene in 1890. The east side of Franklin Creek included plums, pears, peaches, quinces, grapes, and possibly apple, while the west side featured oranges, an orchard of cherry or apricot, and a row of figs. A hay field, a cover crop planting of wheat or oats, and a dry yard surrounded the knoll and served as a transition between the main agricultural areas and some of the more exotic plantings along the carriage drive-loop and around the Strentzel House.

Improvements to the grounds surrounding the Strentzel House commenced soon after the building was completed in 1882. One of the first plantings was a grouping of fast- growing Monterey pine and Monterey cypress on the west side, which in short order was fronted with an arcing row of incense cedars. Whether by design or not, by 1890 the grounds had taken on a decidedly Gardenesque style with unique specimens such as windmill palm, Canary Island date palm, and two California fan palms. Groupings and rows of roses, hollyhock, quince, and other plants were set out throughout the grounds and around the foundation. Muir occasionally returned home from his summer travels with seedlings.

The comparatively spartan landscape around the Martinez Adobe reflected its utilitarian function. Two black locust trees shaded the work areas and main farm road while a mass of cypress or pine trees screened the building from the often-dusty Franklin Canyon Road. There may have been a few shrubs around the adobe leftover from when it was used as a residence by previous owners. Along Franklin Creek, willow, oak, and other riparian plants grew vigorously, particularly north of the main farm road. Plantings were purposely managed on the south side for the benefit of the adjacent orchards.

By far the most dominant feature in the landscape was the Italianate home of Dr. Strentzel, situated atop a knoll overlooking the fertile Alhambra Valley. By this time, the Doctor had died and Muir was making plans to move his family into the house to care for his mother-in-law. The hub of ranch operations, though, was at the Martinez Adobe, which now included a lean-to on the east side. The adobe was part of a complex that included the Cookhouse, Ranch Foreman's House, and a packing shed. To the west and south were a large barn and silo as well as stables and corrals, and to the southeast along the creek were small cabins for the Chinese workers. Other support structures in this part of the Strentzel-Muir Ranch included the Woodshed east of the house supported by a retaining wall and steps, the Franklin Creek well and windmill and an irrigation pipe, and cisterns and fencing along Franklin Canyon Road and the carriage drive-loop. A fish pond space, or more likely a seasonal dry pond, was situated at the base of the knoll next to Franklin Creek. It was apparently the cause of much worry for Muir.

These agricultural and domestic spaces were linked through an effective network of farm roads and paths. Concrete walkways and the east driveway at the Strentzel House connected to the carriage drive-loop while the earthen knoll path linked up to the southeast farm road. The carriage drive-loop and the southeast farm road connected to the main farm road that crossed Franklin Creek to its junction with Franklin Canyon Road, one of the main routes into Martinez.

#### **Gravesite Unit**

Most of the information about the Gravesite Unit coincides with the passing of Dr. Strentzel in 1890. At that time, a low, rectangular-shaped granite enclosure was constructed around his grave. An opening on the west side of the enclosure was marked by two short pillars inscribed with the year 1890. Around the time of Dr. Strentzel's death, Muir likened one of the eucalyptus trees near the grave to a guardian angel. Other plantings near the grave enclosure likely included a variety of riparian vegetation along the Arroyo del Hambre, which was periodically maintained by Muir. Since Muir and his family resided in the nearby Alhambra ranch house up until this time, the pear orchard around the gravesite was presumably well maintained and thriving.

#### **Mt. Wanda Unit**

In 1890, the Mt. Wanda Unit was a pastoral mosaic of buckeye, laurel (also called California bay), and oak interspersed with large swaths of grasslands. With the exception of the lower slopes, which were devoted to pear trees, the ravines and

upper slopes were no longer grazed, probably from the time the land was added to the ranch's holdings in c.1885. Excursions amongst the quiet rolling hills undoubtedly renewed Muir after endless days and weeks of toiling in the fields. With wife Louie and daughters Wanda and little Helen, looking east from the upper hills they saw the looming Mt. Diablo. To the south were the fertile lands of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch and the Alhambra Valley bumping up against the town of Martinez and the waters that comprised Suisun Bay and the Straits of Carquinez. Perhaps the most inspiring view for Muir, however, was the outline of the Sierras visible on clear days.

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup> Susan Dolan, "A Fruitful Legacy: The Historic Context of Fruit Trees and Orchards in the National Park System." Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Columbia Cascades Support Office, and National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardships and Partnerships. Draft, March 2001: 30.

<sup>2</sup> Dolan 2001: 25.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/treasures/science/downing.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Dolan 2001: 25, 37- 39, 50- 51, 64- 66 (also cites Auchter 29:210 and Lowther 14: I,158).

<sup>5</sup> John T. Strentzel, "Dr. Strentzel's Time Book: Notes on Agriculture, 1864- 1879." Typescript: 5. JOMU files.

<sup>6</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Strentzel Family History, *Daily Gazette*, Martinez, California, 15 March 1925; Edward James Wickson. *The California Fruits and How to Grow Them: A Manual of Methods Which Have Yielded Greatest Success, With the Lists of Varieties Best Adapted to the Different Districts of the State*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. San Francisco, CA: Pacific Rural Press, 1926, 50.

<sup>7</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 29 September, 1860, 5 October, 1860, 6 July 186, and 5 October 1861, JOMU folder "Strentzel Information: *Contra Costa Gazette*."; Undated typescript: 6. (Possibly part of a late 1960s or early 1970s interpretive guide, author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>8</sup> John Hussey, Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky, "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963: 17.

<sup>9</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 1869. JOMU files.

<sup>10</sup> Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site." Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 25.

<sup>11</sup> "The Biography of John T. Strentzel," undated typescript: 15. JOMU folder "Strentzel Family Information."



- <sup>12</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Strentzel Family History, *Daily Gazette*, Martinez, California, 15 March 1925.
- <sup>13</sup> Dolan 2001: 41- 42.
- <sup>14</sup> Martinez Chamber of Commerce, undated pamphlet. JOMU files.
- <sup>15</sup> Smith and Elliot, *Illustrations of Contra Costa County, California, with Historical Sketch*. Oakland, CA: Smith and Elliot, 1878: 25.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Misc. VI: Wanda Muir Hanna, Memorial, Family Series VC; “Notes from Viticulture Class,” 15 January 1975 (author unknown). JOMU files.
- <sup>18</sup> Nilda Rego, “Some Golden State Agricultural Schemes Went Bust,” *Martinez Times*, no date. JOMU file folder “California Agriculture.”
- <sup>19</sup> Masters thesis on Dr. Strentzel, author and date unknown. Appendix 1: 27. JOMU folder “Strentzel Family Information.”
- <sup>20</sup> Mae Fisher Purcell, *History of Contra Costa County*. Berkeley, CA: Gillette Press, 1940: 422- 423.
- <sup>21</sup> Hussey 1963: 20.
- <sup>22</sup> William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume I*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924: 100.
- <sup>23</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938: 174- 175.
- <sup>24</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1945: 171, 174- 175, 196. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 20); William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume 2*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924: 86. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 20).
- <sup>25</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1945: 198. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 20).
- <sup>26</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 17 June 1879. (Cited in Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1985, xvii).
- <sup>27</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 20 June 1879. (Cited in Sally Johnson Ketcham, “Historic Furnishings Report, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” Harpers Ferry, WV: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Harper’s Ferry Center, February 1971; revised 1982: 8).
- <sup>28</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Strentzel Family History, *Daily Gazette*, Martinez, California, 15 March 1925.
- <sup>29</sup> Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1985, ix.
- <sup>30</sup> After the birth of Wanda, John Muir invited his twin sisters, Sarah and Margaret, to visit his home, paying all their expenses himself. Worn out from their early hard life on the Wisconsin farm, the two semi- invalid women renewed themselves picking oranges and flowers and visiting with the Strentzels. Wolfe 1938: 230; “Muir – At the

Alhambra residence of Dr. John Strentzel, near Martinez, March 25<sup>th</sup> to Mr. And Mrs. John Muir, a daughter.” *Contra Costa Gazette*, 9 April 1881. JOMU files.

<sup>31</sup> The twenty- acre Alhambra ranch house parcel also included vineyards and part of the pear orchard planted by Dr. Strentzel in the 1850s. Proximal to the house were fenced and gated areas, hedges, shrubs, and trees. The house and landscape are no longer extant are not located within current park boundaries. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Misc. VI: Wanda Muir Hanna, Memorial, Family Series VC. Also see the photograph of the Alhambra ranch house published in Clark 1985: 23.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy – The American Conservation Movement*. Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 1981: 71.

<sup>33</sup> Clark 1985: viii.

<sup>34</sup> There have been suggestions that the reference to the buckeyes refers to Franklin Creek in the Redfern Ranch parcel. However, the entire quote as presented here suggests that the reference refers to the Alhambra ranch parcel. Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entries, 16 January 1881, 19 March 1881, and 20 March 1881. JOMU files.

<sup>35</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 15 February 1882. (Cited in Burke 1992: 27).

<sup>36</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, no date. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 22).

<sup>37</sup> John E. Jensen and Koue A. Lewis, “Historic Structures Report, Part 2, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, June 1968: 2; John W. Winkley, historical data for HABS, typescript c.1961: 2. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 22).

<sup>38</sup> One porch on the house was partially enclosed and used as a medical office for Dr. Strentzel, although it is unclear to what extent he still practiced at this time. Ketcham 1971: 15; National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975; *Contra Costa Gazette*, 28 October 1882. JOMU files.

<sup>39</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 28 October 1882. JOMU files; Ketcham 1971: 14- 15.

<sup>40</sup> HABS, Wood Shed. Paul Schulz, 15 March 1966. The name ‘Woodshed’ derives from the HABS document as well as National Park Service’s “Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965.

<sup>41</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 1 July 1882. JOMU files.

<sup>42</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 28 October 1882. JOMU files.

<sup>43</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “Paint Analysis for John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” Sacramento, CA: Architectural Resources Group, Sacramento, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 1882 (no specific date given). JOMU files.

<sup>45</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 24 December 188? (year unclear). JOMU files.

<sup>46</sup> Dolan 2001: 43.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 39, 47.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 45, 47- 48.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 48- 49.

<sup>50</sup> Most of the land was in the Rancho Cañada del Hambre portion of the former Rancho El Pinole land grant. Some land was also located in the Rancho Cañada del Hambre land grant to the north and the Rancho Las Juntas land grant to the east. Maps such as Figure 2.2 identify the land grant north of the Rancho El Pinole land grant simply as Rancho Cañada del Hambre. For clarification, this area will be referred to as Rancho Cañada del Hambre land grant. See also Volume I, Chapter I, of this CLR.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. Strentzel was involved in numerous land cases. Among them was a dispute with William Christian in 1886 involving the location of grazing and cultivated land and a dwelling in Lots 5 and 6 of Section 25. Briefs by Theo Wagner, No. 13: “William E Christian vs. Dr. John Strentzel: involving claim to Lot 5 of Section 25 in Township 2, North range 3, W, M.D.M. brief on behalf of John Strentzel, on appeal from the decision of Hon. Commissioner of the General Land Office, rendered in said case 2 July 1886, Theo Wagner, attorney for John Strentzel.” San Francisco, CA: Women’s Cooperative Printing Office, 1886: 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 8 December 1883 and 13 December 1884. JOMU files.

<sup>53</sup> Wolfe 1938: 230.

<sup>54</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entries, 22 February 1881 and 14 March 1881. JOMU files.

<sup>55</sup> National Park Service, “Final Interpretive Prospectus.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, September 1976: 17- 18; Wolfe 1938: 230.

<sup>56</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 37.

<sup>57</sup> Fox 1981: 72.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 37; Interview with Herb Thurman, July 17, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Most, but not all, of the crops mentioned in the 1860s are referenced in these correspondences. Although this may be attributed to Muir’s plan of focusing ranch lands on more profitable crops, it is important to note that the correspondences were personal accounts, and that even though some crops, nor any of the livestock, are specifically mentioned, they probably were present at this time, especially given the massive size of the ranch. Crops not mentioned include the following: currants, blackberries, gooseberries, strawberries, sugar beets, mulberries, lemons, melons,

walnuts, beans, asparagus, corn, carrots, and peas. Livestock include hogs, cattle, chickens, and turkeys.

<sup>61</sup> Contra Costa County Assessment Books, 1877 and 1879, Vol. 2, M- Z. (Cited in Burke 1992: 25); Burke 1992: 25.

<sup>62</sup> Wolfe 1938: 230.

<sup>63</sup> The 1891 edition for the growing year 1890 lists John Muir with 100 acres of grapes (eighty of which were bearing), seventy of the acres in table grapes and thirty acres in wine grapes. The varieties grown were Tokay, Muscat and Zinfandel. Strentzel was listed with fifty- five acres of grapes (forty- five of which were bearing), thirty- five of the acres in table grapes and twenty in wine grapes. Strentzel was growing five varieties of grapes; Tokay, Zinfandel, Muscat, Rose Peru, Malaga. When compared to other growers in the region it is clear from the figures that most of the other farmers had between five and twenty acres in land bearing grapes. A few had between twenty and thirty acres and only an occasional entry in the list had more than thirty acres. Information extracted from the 1890- 1891 “Annual Report” by the Viticultural Commission. JOMU files.

<sup>64</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 29 April 1882. (Cited in Burke 1992: 25).

<sup>65</sup> Steve Pauley, typescript notes, no date given. JOMU files.

<sup>66</sup> Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Brill, “The Vicente Martinez Adobe,” undated manuscript: 3. JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 27); Hussey 1963: 24.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Brill, “The Vicente Martinez Adobe,” undated manuscript: 3. JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 27).

<sup>69</sup> Dolan 2001: 49- 50.

<sup>70</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 2 September 1882. JOMU files; Burke 1992: 31.

<sup>71</sup> Burke 1992: 26.

<sup>72</sup> The water may have been pumped to the cistern next to the fruit packing shed. Undated typescript: 4. (Possibly part of a late 1960s or early 1970s interpretive guide, author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>73</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>74</sup> According to Helen Muir, “The orchard men lived in Chinese houses. There were remains of five Chinese houses along the upper creek by Adobe before Franklin Canyon was closed off.” Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>75</sup> Undated typescript: 7. (Possibly part of a late 1960s or early 1970s interpretive guide, author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>76</sup> James K. Agee, “Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 31.

- <sup>77</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 24 February 1877. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, Diary.
- <sup>78</sup> Steve Pauley, typescript notes, no date given. JOMU files; Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.
- <sup>79</sup> Observation based on an early 1890s photograph (F- 13, Fr. #651, Holt- Atherton) and conversation with Herb Thurman, JOMU Maintenance Chief, 17 July 2003.
- <sup>80</sup> Agee 1978: 29; Interview with Herb Thurman, 17 July 2003; Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.
- <sup>81</sup> Clark 1985: 4.
- <sup>82</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 26 July 1884. JOMU files.
- <sup>83</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975. (Cited in Burke 1992: 26).
- <sup>84</sup> Bonnie Johanna Gisel, ed., *Kindred and Related Spirits: The Letters of John Muir and Jeanne C. Carr*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2001: 273.
- <sup>85</sup> “Most Often Asked Questions at the John Muir National Historic Site.” JOMU website: <http://www.nps.gov/jomi/qufacts.htm>.
- <sup>86</sup> Clark 1985: ix, 12.
- <sup>87</sup> Fox 1981: 73.
- <sup>88</sup> “Final Interpretive Prospectus,” 1976: 18.
- <sup>89</sup> Wolfe 1938: 280.
- <sup>90</sup> Fox 1981: 73.
- <sup>91</sup> Clark 1985: 12.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.
- <sup>93</sup> Letter from Louie to Annie Muir, 12 October 1888. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>94</sup> From “Most Often Asked Questions at the John Muir National Historic Site.” JOMU website: <http://www.nps.gov/jomu/qufacts.htm>.
- <sup>95</sup> Barbara Shultz, “Bits ‘n Pieces.” Typescript, 11 April 1994. JOMU files.
- <sup>96</sup> Clark 1985: 17.
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 20.
- <sup>98</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>99</sup> Hussey 1963: 23.
- <sup>100</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>101</sup> Letter from John Muir to J. D. Butler, 1 September 1889. (Cited in William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume 2*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924: 231).
- <sup>102</sup> Clark 1985: 26.
- <sup>103</sup> P.J. Ryan, “The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery.” Typescript dated 1979: 1.

<sup>104</sup> National Park Service, “List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site.” Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration, Park Historic Structures Program. <http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

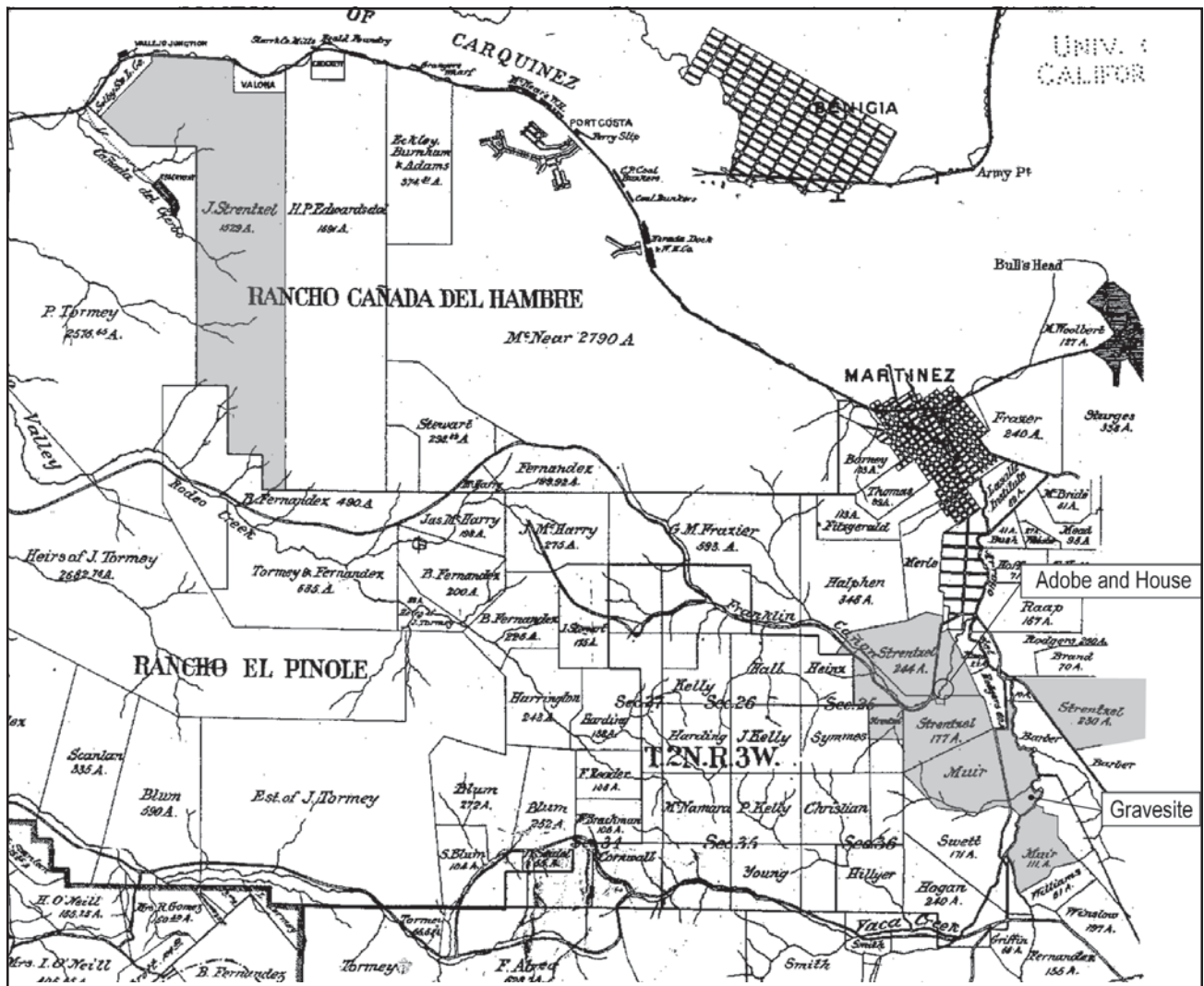
<sup>105</sup> Untitled newspaper clipping from JOMU files. (Cited in P.J. Ryan, “The Muir-Strentzel Hanna Cemetery.” Typescript dated 1979: 1).

<sup>106</sup> Clark 1985: 27.

<sup>107</sup> John Muir Papers, MS 48, Probate of the Estate of John Strentzel, microfilm, 1884: 2- 12; Estate of John T. Strentzel deceased, to Louisiana E. Strentzel (wife) and Louie Strentzel Muir (daughter). Transfers 106 acres in 2 parcels. From Distributions at Death, Book 1, 142. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).



**Figure 2.1: John Muir in 1879 at age 41. (JOMU Website)**



**Figure 2.2: By 1885, the Strentzel-Muir ranch encompassed numerous parcels scattered throughout the Alhambra Valley. (Map adapted by OCLP. Original by T. A. McMahon, 1885, courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley).**



**Figure 2.3:** This view, looking southeast c.1883, is the earliest known photograph of the Strentzel-Muir Ranch and the Redfern Place. Taken soon after completion of the Strentzel House, it shows the Road to Oakland, called Franklin Canyon Road by this time, defined by two and three-board fencing and occasional conifers. The road is flanked by young orchards to the east and a field of wheat, hay, or silage on the west. In the background is the Strentzel House and the outline of Mt. Wanda. The mass of vegetation (a) west of the house is situated along Franklin Creek, just north of the main farm road that connects to Franklin Canyon Road. The dark mass of vegetation on the west side of the house is a mass planting of Monterey pine and incense cedar. (A1-33, Ref:1883cP20).





**Figure 2.4:** This view from c.1885 looks west at the distant Strentzel House, Martinez Adobe (a), fruit packing shed, and a barn. Proximate to the Redfern Place is a pear orchard (b) on the lower east slope of Mt. Wanda and an orchard, possibly apples (c), on the east slope of the knoll. A young Monterey pine (d) is visible northeast of the house. (A1-67, JOMU).



**Figure 2.5:** Pictured is Dr. Strentzel in c.1885 next to one of the incense cedars planted on the slope west of the Strentzel House. In the background is the Martinez Adobe (a) (fronted by a lean-to), a ranch managers shed to the southwest, and a packing shed (b) to the northwest. Barns, corrals, and vineyards were situated on the other side of Franklin Canyon Road. The main farm road (c) connected the adobe area to the Strentzel House via a bridge and was bordered by cherries, apricots, grapes, and figs (d) on the west side of Franklin Creek and by plums, quince (e), the fish pond, and the Franklin Creek windmill and well on the east side. The road split at the base of the knoll, with one branch - the southeast farm road - continuing to the southeast and the other - the carriage drive loop (f) - heading up to the front of the house. Several other features are worthy of mention: plantings at the adobe include cypress or pines in back, an unidentified tree or shrub grows in the front, and two black locust -one just to the north of the adobe and one in the main farm road; a young conifer grows at the southwest corner of the bridge (g); vegetation along Franklin Creek is more tall and dense on the north side of the bridge compared to the south side; plants growing up through the windmill almost touch the blades; a possible sluice structure (h) is located west of the irrigation pipe; agaves and other plants separate the carriage drive loop from the fish pond; and the crate at the road intersection may possibly protect a seedling giant sequoia. (D6-1, Ref: 1885cP17).

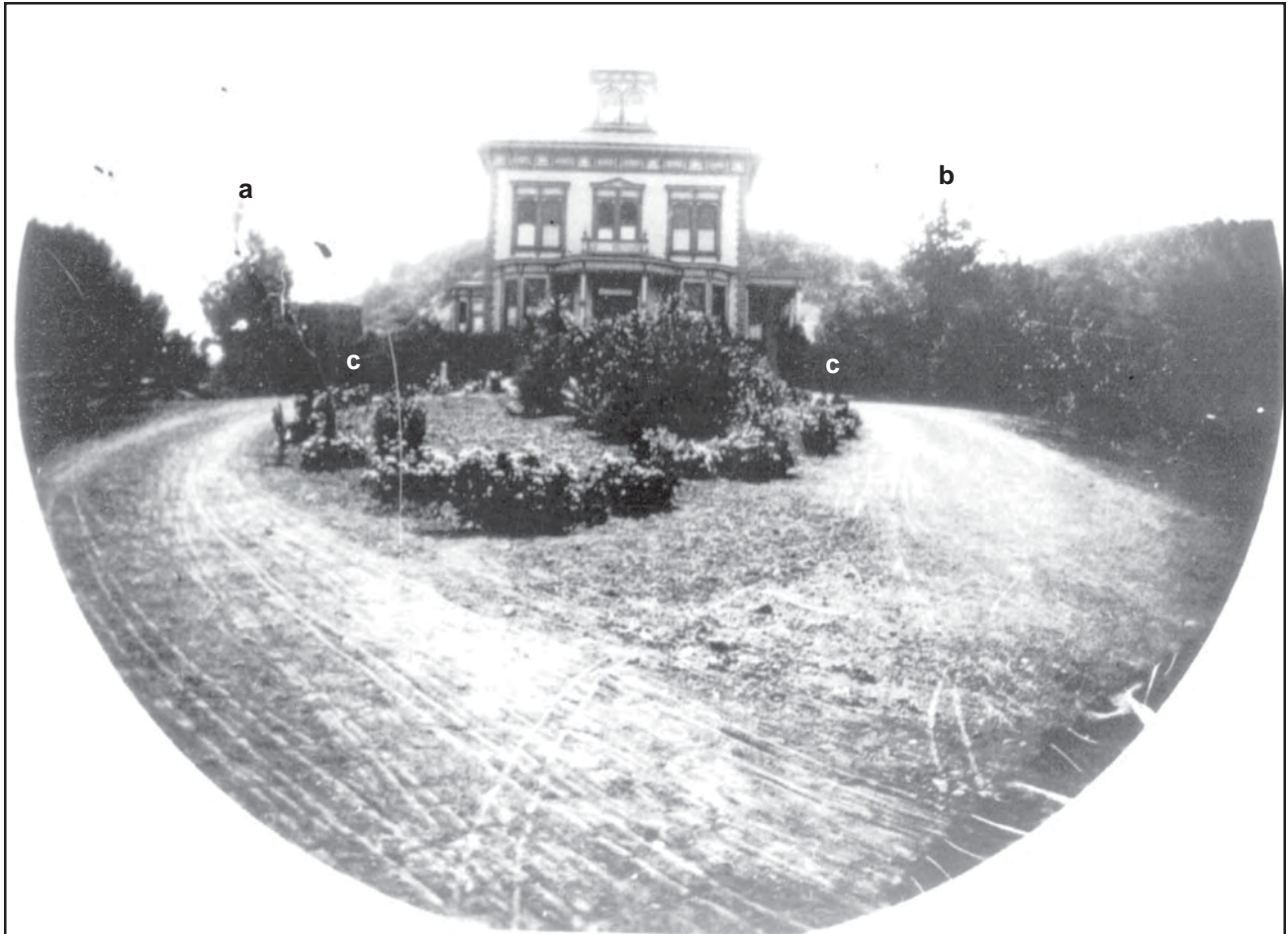




**Figure 2.6:** This photograph is from c.1887 and looks north over buckeye trees growing on the north slope of Mt. Wanda. In this view, the imposing Strentzel House overlooks acres of orchards and vineyards that fill the rich Alhambra Valley and is surrounded by a dry yard and grape vineyard to the south, pears and plums to the west and southwest, peaches to the north and northwest, and hay fields or cover crops to the east as well as the west side of the knoll. The main farm road, southeast farm road, and carriage drive loop converge next to the fish pond, some of which is defined by agave and other plantings that appear to be part of an earthen berm (a). An east-west farm lane (b,c) tracks along the south side of the knoll, crosses the southeast farm road, and passes between the pears and plums. The knoll itself is relatively barren save for Monterey pines (d), incense cedars (e), and a hedge (f) around the south side of the house. Conifers similar in shape to those along Franklin Creek, possibly cypress (g), grow along the hayfield northeast of the house. (Isaiah West Taber photo No. 3707).



**Figure 2.7:** This photograph of Helen (on the left) and Wanda Muir was taken next to the barn in the late 1880s and looks east toward the Strentzel House. A board and barbed wire fence separates a corral from the adjacent vineyard and Franklin Canyon Road, which tracks between this fence and a building probably related to fruit packing. The corral gate lines up with a picket gate on the other side of the road, which is the main farm road leading to the Strentzel House situated atop the knoll in the distance. The large deciduous tree behind the picket gate is a black locust (a). Note the mass of Monterey pines and the row of incense cedars fronting the west side of the house. Franklin Creek windmill is visible behind the packing shed. (A1-16, Ref: 1890cP19).



**Figure 2.8:** This view from c.1886, looking south, is the earliest known photograph of the carriage drive loop, east driveway, and plantings at the front entrance of the Strentzel House. Monterey pines appear on the northeast (a) and northwest (b) corners of the house (the latter is part of a larger grouping). The tops of two California fan palms can be seen flanking the front stairway as well an unidentified hedge (c) on either side of the front walk. Quince and roses roughly define the center island while more roses line the outer edges, particularly along a three-rail wood fence on the east side. Note the outline of the wood cistern on the northeast side of the house, next to the Monterey pine and the east driveway. (A1-93, Ref. 1886cP1).





**Figure 2.9:** This photograph of the Strentzel House, looking southwest toward the wooded north slope of Mt. Wanda, dates from c.1890. Directly northeast of the house is the Monterey pine and wood cistern. A lemon tree (a) grows near the east porch door, and to the south is the loquat (b), behind which the arched leaves of a Canary Island date palm can be seen. The arched leaves of a small windmill palm are barely visible in front of the loquat. Two California fan palms flank the front steps and to the west are some of the tall Monterey pines. A dense planting of shrubs in the foreground defines the east side of the carriage drive loop. They appear to include roses and hollyhocks. (A1-34, Ref 1890cP18a).



## Plants at John Muir National Historic Site

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)
Aa	Agave americana	Century plant	Ng	Nicotiana glauca	Tobacco tree
Ac	Aesculus californica	California buckeye	No	Nerium oleander	Oleander
Aj	Aucuba japonica	Variegated gold dust plant	Oe	Olea europea	Common olive
Al	Acacia longifolia	Golden Wattle	Oh	Osmanthus heterophyllus	False holly
Am	Acanthus mollis	Bear's breach	P	Perennials	Perennials
Ama	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Pa	Prunus armeniaca	Apricot
Ar	Alcea rosea	Hollyhock	Pap	Papaver spp.	Pink poppy
Ard	Arundo donax	Giant reed	Pc	Pyrus communis	Pear
Au	Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Pca	Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island date palm
Bp	Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote brush	Pcc	Pyraecanthus coccinea	Firethorn
Bs	Buddleia spp.	Butterfly bush	Pce	Prunus cerasifera	Cherry plum
Bu	Buxus spp.	Boxwood	Pco	Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Ca	Cedrus atlantica	Atlas cedar	Pd	Prunus dulcis	Almond
Cae	Casmanthe aethiopica	Chasmanthe	Pe	Pittosporum eugenioides	Pittosporum
Cc	Callistemon citrinus	Lemon bottle brush	Pg	Punica grantum	Pomegranate
Cca	Carpenteria californica	Anemone	Pga	Prosopis glandulosa	Honey mesquite
Cd	Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar	Pgl	Picea glauca	White spruce
Cda	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry cotoneaster	Ph	Pelargonium hortorum	Common geranium
Cde	Calocedrus decurrens	Incense cedar	Pin	Pinus spp.	Pine
Cf	Cupressus funebris	Mourning cypress	Pl	Philadelphus lemoinei	Mockorange
Ch	Chrysanthemum spp.	Chrysanthemum	Ply	Prunus lyonii	Catalina cherry
Ci	Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Pm	Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir
Cj	Camellia japonica	Camellia	Po	Prunus domestica	European plum
Cl	Citrus limon	Lemon	Pp	Prunus persica	Peach
Cla	Crataegus laevigata	English hawthorn	Ppn	Pinus ponderosa	Ponderosa pine
Clg	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Japanese, Flowering quince	Ppu	Picea pungens	Colorado spruce
Cli	Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon	Pr	Pinus radiata	Monterey pine
Cm	Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey cypress	Ps	Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce
Co	Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Psa	Prunus salicina	Japanese plum
Coc	Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	Pv	Prunus avium	Sweet cherry
Cp	Campanula medium	Canterbury bells	Qa	Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Cr	Campsis radicans	Common trumpet vine	Qg	Quercus garryana	Oregon white oak
Cs	Citrus sinensis	Orange	Ql	Quercus lobata	Valley oak, Cal. white oak
Csc	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Qs	Quercus suber	Cork oak
Cse	Cornus sericea	American dogwood	Rb	Rosa banksiae	Lady Bank's rose
Csi	Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	Rc	Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy
Csp	Cupressus spp.	Cypress	Rh	Rosa harisonii	Harison's yellow rose
Cy	Cordyline spp.	Cordyline	Ri	Rhaphiolepis indica	India hawthorn
Dc	Dianthus caryophyllus	Carnation	Rl	Rosa laevigata	Cherokee rose
Ds	Deutzia scabra	Deutzia	Ro	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Ec	Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Rod	Rosa odorata	Tea rose
Ej	Eriobotrya japonica	Loquat	Rov	Rhus ovata	Sugar bush
Eu	Eucalyptus spp.	Eucalyptus	Rp	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust
Fc	Ficus carica	Common fig	Rs	Rosa spp.	Rose
Fca	Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush	Rsp	Ribes speciosum	Fuchsia flowering currant
Fs	Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple guava	Sa	Salvia spp.	Sage
Ge	Geranium spp.	Geranium	Sg	Sequoiadendron giganteum	Giant sequoia
Gl	Gaura lindheimeri	Gaura	Sl	Salix lasiandra	Yellow willow
Gs	Gladiolus spp.	Gladiolus	Sm	Sambucus mexicana	Blue elderberry
Ha	Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Sp	Spiraea prunifolia	Bridal wreath spiraea
He	Heliotropium arborescens	Heliotrope	Smo	Schinus molle	Pepper tree
Ig	Iris germanica	Bearded iris	Ss	Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Jc	Juniperus conferta	Shore juniper	Sv	Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac
Jh	Juglans hindsii	California black walnut	Tf	Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill palm
Jm	Jasminum mesnyi	Primrose jasmine	Tg	Tamarix gallica	Tamarisk
Jr	Juglans regia	English walnut	Ti	Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson clover
La	Lavendula angustifolia	English lavender	Tj	Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star jasmine
Lc	Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	To	Thuja occidentalis	American arborvitae
Ln	Laurus nobilis	Sweet bay	U	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Lo	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California privet	Uc	Umbellularia californica	California bay
Ls	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum	Up	Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm
Lsp	Lampranthus spectabilis	Trailing ice plant	Ve	Verbena spp.	Verbena
Lv	Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	Vm	Vinca major	Periwinkle
Ma	Morus alba	White mulberry	Vo	Viola odorata	Sweet violet
Maq	Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	Vv	Vitis vinifera	Grape
Mc	Myrtus communis	True or Common myrtle	Wf	Washingtonia filifera	California fan palm
Mca	Myrica californica	Pacific wax myrtle	Wr	Washingtonia robusta	Mexican fan palm
Md	Malus domestica	Apple	Ws	Wisteria sinensis	Chinese wisteria
My	Myosolus spp.	Forget-me-not	Za	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Common calla



Cultural Landscape Report for John Muir National Historic Site



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

1890, House Unit  
Period Plan

Drawing 2.1

Sources

Base information from John Muir NHS Geographic Information System, January 2002; historic and contemporary maps, plans, and photographs; *Historic Trees of John Muir NHS*, Agee; *Historic Structures Report*, Martinez Adobe, Burke.

Notes

Locations and scale of features are approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by OCLP, NPS.

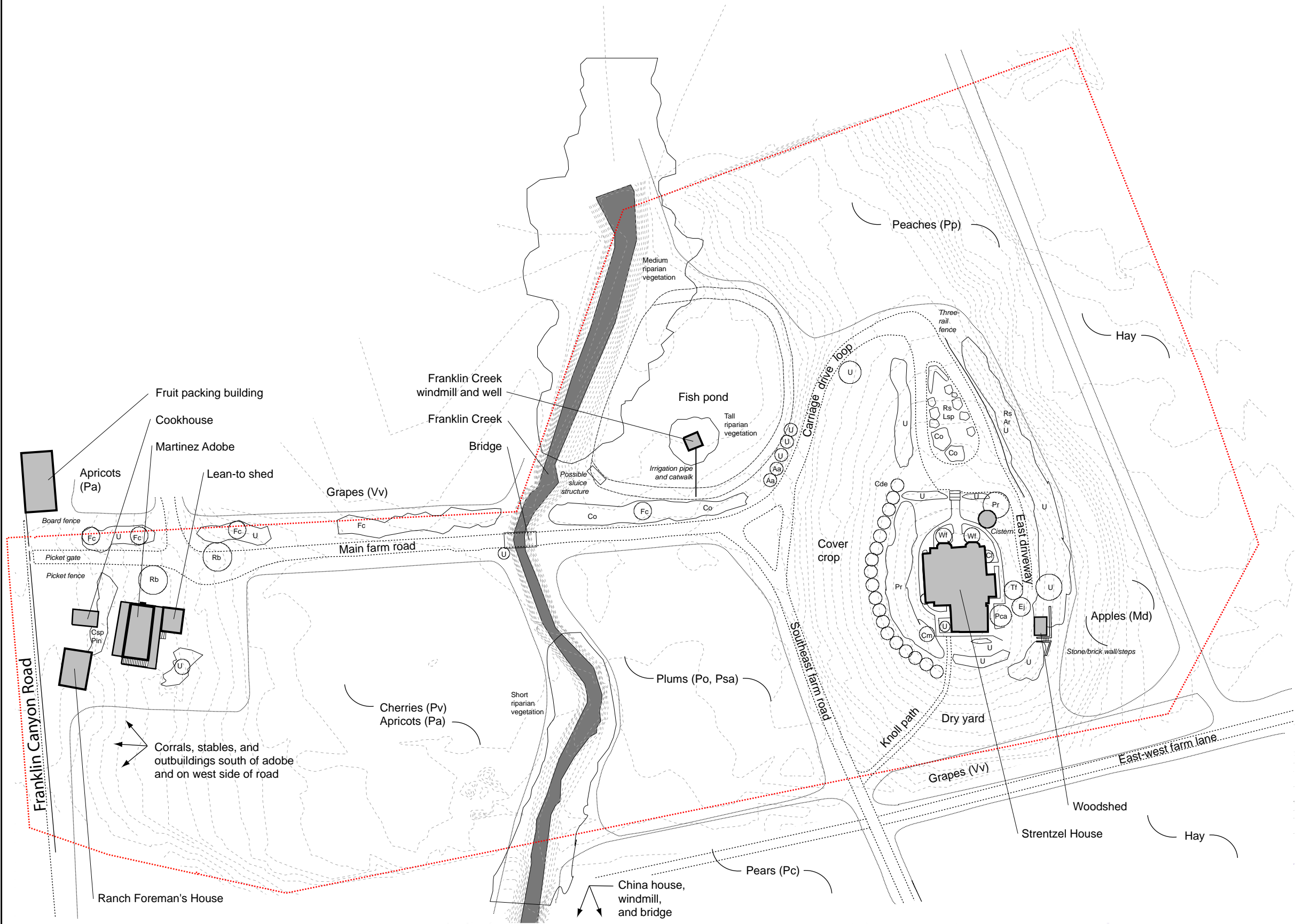
Approximate scale in feet

0 25 50 75 100



Legend

- Contour
- Future Park Property Line
- Paved and Dirt Road / Path
- Building / Structure
- Water
- Mass / Specimen Vegetation



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RANCHING AND WRITING, 1890-1914**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Muir family moved to the Strentzel House soon after Dr. Strentzel's death in late 1890, and from here for the next twenty- four years of his life John Muir made his most important contributions to the conservation and preservation of America's trees, mountains, and wild places. Muir was able to free himself of many of the most time- consuming ranch duties by selling and leasing land and enlisting the help of family members to manage the Strentzel- Muir Ranch. As the ranch had been so successful, subsequent managers made few changes until 1906 when Muir's son- in- law, Tom Hanna, took over and began grazing cattle on some of the ranch property. The arrival of the railroad and the continued growth of the town of Martinez were some of the other changes in the Alhambra Valley during the years shouldering the turn of the century. Muir lived to see some of these changes before his death in 1914.

#### **LIFE IN THE MUIR HOUSE**

Shortly after Dr. Strentzel's death in October of 1890, the Muir's moved from the Alhambra ranch house to join Mrs. Strentzel in the Strentzel House at the Redfern Place (the Strentzel House is hereafter called the "Muir House"). Initially, living in the house was a strange experience for the Muirs – the many large and high- ceilinged rooms were not as intimate and cozy as the Alhambra ranch house. One of the first priorities was to provide more convenient and accessible living accommodations for Mrs. Strentzel in the first floor parlor. Muir also needed a space, and Dr. Strentzel's dark, redwood- paneled office and library on the first floor seemed to be the natural place for him to work. Instead, he established his writing room, or "scribble den" as he called it, in the northwest upstairs bedroom where it was brighter and somewhat away from the confusion and noise of the household. From the north window he could see Martinez and the Straits of Carquinez.<sup>1</sup>

#### **CONSERVATION WORK**

When it came time to write, Muir was easily bothered and so sensitive to noise that his wife and daughters almost whispered and tiptoed when he was making "booksellers bricks" in his study.<sup>2</sup> Music was particularly distracting, so when he added a three- story addition to the south side of the house in 1891 for a water tank, he included a soundproof music room for Wanda's violin and Helen's

guitar playing. Louie, a learned pianist in her own right, would only play when Muir was traveling.<sup>3</sup> When important deadlines loomed, Muir fled by train to San Francisco until he completed his project.

Many of John Muir's most lasting ideas and writings about conservation and preservation originated from the scribble den. One of the most historic days for Muir, and indeed for many others, was May 28, 1892, when he and other mountaineering friends, including those who helped pass the Yosemite National Park bill, formed the Sierra Club. The group's formal purpose was "to explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; to publish authentic information concerning them; and to enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."<sup>4</sup> Where he had been merely a voice in the wilderness for the wilderness, he was now assisted by like-minded people to further his cause.<sup>5</sup>

Muir served as president of the Sierra Club until his death (Figure 3.1). In the beginning, offers of lectures were frequent, but he commented that after ten years away from the podium and only four lectures, he "escaped with fear and trembling to the shades of rural Contra Costa County, vowing henceforth eternal silence."<sup>6</sup> Of course, Muir was anything but silent. Over the next twenty-four years, he traveled around the country and the world, published countless articles and books, received numerous honorary degrees, and helped establish some of our most treasured national parks and wilderness areas.

#### **NEVER FAR FROM THE RANCH**

Although he was by this time mostly detached from the daily tasks of running the ranch, Muir, characteristically, could not completely divorce himself from ranch affairs. In one example, Muir intervened to assure wagons loaded high with fruits and produce arrived at the Martinez wharf unharmed and in the best condition. According to a former employee named Briones, some of the streets in Martinez were paved in cobbles around this time: "...so John Muir made a kick to the board there and by gosh they dug up – because it used to bruise the fruit..."<sup>7</sup>

As noted in Chapter 2, when exhausted by the labors of writing and demands of traveling, Muir sometimes grounded himself at home with work in the fields. On one occasion in 1895, Muir opined in his journal his dislike of the mission grape:

Scot making fair headway on the vine snags. A few break off when pulled by two stout Norman horses. Most come out from two feet underground and give no further trouble. The mission vine, the first planted in California, is a good table grape, but a poor wine grape, and brings a very low price for

either table or wine. The padres ought to have known better – such good judges as they were in most things relating to the stomach.<sup>8</sup>

When he was away, Wanda and Helen penned letters to their father about what was happening at home:

“Mama is having the house painted but it will be dry before you get here, they are painting it a light soft gray and I think it will look very pretty...”<sup>9</sup>

Some of Louie’s letters struck a more serious tone, however, such as this passage written in 1893:

Affairs here at home are going tolerably well. I suppose you have seen in the papers about the great depression all over this country [Muir is traveling in Europe], and the low prices for everything one wants to sell.<sup>10</sup>

Other letters spoke of the more mundane affairs and occasionally included, as this letter from September 1895 shows, a reassuring reminder of her steadfast support of his cause:

The weather has been extremely cool here for several days, the nights are really cold, with heavy dew, a great relief after so many hot days, so I suppose the grapes will ripen more slowly. There will be a few boxes of Rose Peru for the next steamer, but no other fruit and the late grapes will not be ready for 3 or 4 weeks yet, so there is nothing about the ranch that need hurry you away from the mountains, as the Chinamen are nailing the boxes and attending to the squirrels.”

### **LIFE ON THE RANCH**

Muir hosted many visitors at the house for meetings, meals, and overnight stays.<sup>12</sup> A few stayed for weeks and occasionally a relative would remain for a year or more. One frequent and favorite guest at the house was William “Willie” Keith. Mrs. Strentzel suggested subjects for the artist to paint. Muir enjoyed bantering with his fellow Scot, and the girls loved hilarious romps over the nearby hills with the two men.<sup>13</sup>

### **WALKS AND LESSONS**

The hilltops to the south and west – deliberately kept in a natural state and absent of crops and livestock – were a favorite destination for long walks and storytelling. Louie was fond of picnics, and the family often packed a basket with food and fruits and hiked over the hills until they found a suitable picnic spot.<sup>14</sup> When not on travel, Muir happily joined in these excursions; “wherever a Scotsman goes, there goes Burns,” Muir said, as he recited his verses on their rambles. Jean Hanna Clark, Wanda’s daughter, wrote about her mother’s and

aunt's tales of their walks with Muir in *Dear Papa, Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*:

Lessons in botany were part of [their] walks for not even a tiny bloom escaped his eyes. They saw hillsides blue with brodiaea or larkspur, a rocky slope bright with red Indian paint brush, or an open glade knee deep in buttercups. They knew cool, damp dells under the laurels where maidenhair ferns grew beside a little spring. They loved the buckeye balls that were just sprouting, and acorns that had lain in the damp leaf mold until life was stirring within. Muir named one of the hills in Alhambra Valley Mount Wanda, and another Mount Helen. It is no wonder that his daughters missed him sorely, even when he was as close as San Francisco.<sup>15</sup>

On a walk with Helen up a hill to the west, Muir wrote:

"The view of the bay was charming, mirror calm, shaded slightly with gentle breeze in streaks. The colors of the hills far and near fresh and beautiful. Had fine view of the Sierra. Solid white from summits to 2000 feet of the plain....Wish I could get off into it on snowshoes. But this literary walk will hold me fast for a long time."<sup>16</sup>

#### **ANIMAL FARM**

As Wanda and Helen were growing up, we get to know a little more about life on the fruit ranch before the turn of the century. Between 1894 and 1897, a family by the name of Firth lived in the Ranch Foreman's House just southwest of the Martinez Adobe, and one of the Firth children, Lillian (Firth- Thomas) remembered in a 1968 interview that she often played with the Muir girls. Among here many recollections were turkeys running loose in the orchard east of the Martinez Adobe and a chicken coop.<sup>17</sup>

The Muir family loved animals, and there were guinea pigs, rabbits, white rats, tumbler pigeons, a parrot named Jack, and at least three dogs named Stickeen (after the famous dog that Muir found in Alaska).<sup>18</sup> Cats were plentiful and roamed the ranch catching gophers, lizards, and to Muir's horror, birds. The girls wrote to their father of the goings- ons: "Helen's chickens and turkeys are growing fast but they are still very gentle."<sup>19</sup> Muir reportedly kept peacocks because they were adept at catching snakes.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1890s, Helen had a saddle horse named "Art," which she rode around the ranch.<sup>21</sup> Horses were, of course, an important labor force on the ranch and performed much of the heaviest work, from plowing the fields to hauling produce to the market. "Muir had the best horses in the valley," a ranch hand recalled, "If you...mistreated them in any way, you were fired on the spot."<sup>22</sup>

### **THE STRENTZEL-MUIR RANCH, 1890 TO 1906**

Muir's renewed focus on writing and traveling was made possible when his sister Margaret and her husband, John Reid, left their drought- stricken Midwest farm and moved to California and into the Alhambra ranch house. When Reid took over day- to- day ranch operations, Muir felt he was finally released from the burdens and worries of the ranch:

“After these years I sold part of the farm and leased the balance, so as to devote the rest of my life, as carefree as possible, to travel and study. Thus in 1891, I was again free from the farm and all breadwinning cares.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1893, a family crisis summoned Muir home to Portage, Wisconsin, where his brother David's firm had gone bankrupt because of his business partner's poor land investments. Muir's presence and national prestige protected David and his wife from creditors, and he offered David a portion of the ranch on a share- the- profits arrangement. David accepted, and his family relocated to California and into the Alhambra ranch house, eventually purchasing and leasing some of the ranch's land. On a trip to London in 1893, Muir offered his brother this advice:

Don't work too hard Dave, but keep wide awake and see whether you can't make as keen and as smart a farmer as me. I see nothing to prevent you from making a grand success of this California fruit business, but don't make the mistake of trying to kill yourself with hard work.”<sup>24</sup>

Around 1894, A. B. Coleman, the husband of Muir's niece May, was brought on to help David Muir with the ranch's planting, harvesting, processing, and shipping activities. Coleman also purchased some of the vineyards and eventually served as Muir's business manager.<sup>25</sup>

By the mid 1890s, many parcels of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch had been subdivided, sold, or leased, most notably the hillsides of the old Redfern farm west of Franklin Canyon Road (Figure 3.2). The valley lands, including the Muir House and Martinez Adobe, remained in Mrs. Strentzel's name except for a small sixteen- acre wedge on the north end owned by Coleman. Mt. Wanda was jointly owned by Mrs. Strentzel and Louie at this time except for several parcels at the southeast corner, one of which bears David Muir's initials. Dr. Strentzel's original twenty- acre homestead as well as the gravesite and pear orchard remained in the family.

### **CROPS AT THE STRENTZEL-MUIR FAMILY RANCH**

Management of the ranch under John Reid, David Muir, and A. B. Coleman in the 1890s apparently did not significantly change the types of fruits grown in the

orchards and vineyards at the ranch as a whole. Letters and journal entries from this period, the 1893 Contra Costa County Assessors Book, and historic photographs serve as a confirmation (see Appendix 2):<sup>46</sup>

- Fruits: almond, apple, apricot, cherry, fig, hickory, lemon, orange, peach, pear, plum, prune, quince, and various vegetables
- Vines: mostly table grapes
- Fields: hay and cover crops

#### **CROPS AT THE REDFERN PLACE AND THE GRAVESITE**

Historic photographs from the 1890s and early 1900s show some of the crops mentioned above in and around the area known as the Redfern Place. A photograph from c.1898 shows Franklin Canyon Road lined with board and wire fencing and bordered on the east by lush rows of orchards and vineyards that extend to Franklin Creek and beyond (grape vines on the west side of the road are not part of the ranch at this time) (Figure 3.3). In the distance, to the east of the Muir House, is a field planted in hay or cover crop, and to the south of the house is an impressive view of Mt. Wanda and the pear orchard climbing the lower slope. The same orchards and hay fields are visible in another perspective from this time taken from the north slope of Mt. Wanda (Figure 3.4). This photograph also reveals a few rows of the plum orchard southwest of the knoll and offers a good view of the small grape vineyard on the south side of the knoll. Curiously, there is a small rectangular area of low plantings within the north part of the fish pond space, perhaps grapes or vegetables. Their presence here would suggest that the fish pond space was more often dry than wet.

A closer view of the Mt. Wanda pear orchard is offered in another late 1890s photograph taken from the west slope of the knoll (Figure 3.5). In this view, a three-board and two-wire fence can be seen separating the pears climb from the wooded north slope of Mt. Wanda. The photograph also documents a significant land use change at the Redfern place; a new planting of table grapes on the east side of Franklin Creek, south of the main farm road. The grapes replaced the plums in this area except for two or three rows that were retained along the southeast farm road. As noted earlier, Muir removed his mission grapes in c.1895. However, he still had a favorable impression of table grapes, particularly the late-season varieties, which may explain the reason for this change. According to Mr. Briones:

Mostly all them [sic] grapes of his...they went east, all of them, because they got a big price for them. During Christmas time, you see. He had the only grapes that went out of here at that time, because all the grape picking used to finish along about September – all the other table grapes.<sup>27</sup>

Several historic photographs from the early 1900s document continued growth in the orchards and vineyards as well as some changes. A photograph from late c.1900- 1905 shows orchards and vineyards on the hills to the west (which are not part of the ranch at this time) and provides a good view across the hayfield toward the grape orchard on the south slope of the knoll and the apple orchard on the east slope below the house (Figure 3.6). Notable in this photograph is that the middle part of the slope is relatively free of trees. Another photograph from the same period, taken from the Muir House, shows hay bales in the east field and distinct rows of fruit trees spreading to the north and east (Figure 3.7). Closer to the house, a small clearing beyond the carriage drive- loop separates rows of peaches to the north and west from more distinct rows of fruit trees on the east slope, possibly apples. Mrs. Firth- Thomas recalled lemon and persimmon trees on the ridge north of the house, and they might be some of the unidentified fruit trees in this area.<sup>28</sup>

A c.1905 photograph provides distant views of the apples on the south and east slope of the knoll and grapes on the lower south slope, and a good close up view of the pears on Mt. Wanda (Figure 3.8). The photo also shows that the grape vineyard southwest of the knoll, planted sometime in the late 1890s, had been expanded a little more to the east, displacing more of the plums that were retained along the southeast farm road (except for a single tree opposite the fish pond space).

Another photograph from c.1905 provides one of the few views into the orchards and vineyards west of Franklin Creek and around the Martinez Adobe (Figure 3.9). In this view, the north side of the main farm road is partially lined with figs and a dense grouping of citrus trees, possibly oranges, situated northeast of the Martinez Adobe. Helen Muir, in an interview from 1962, recalled that around this time “the Chinaman, father and I planted the orange and lemon trees at the entrance from the adobe side.”<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Firth- Thomas also remembered, “very distinctly the row of figs trees along the road [the main farm road] between our house and the packing house...”<sup>30</sup>

Mrs. Firth- Thomas had recollections of some of the other spaces around the Martinez Adobe, recalling plum and apricot trees, and more specifically, an orchard comprised of oranges and possibly cherries east of the adobe, where turkeys used to run loose.<sup>31</sup> Figure 3.9 shows plantings of apricots and grapes on



the north side of the main farm road and apricots or cherries on the south side. Although taken from a more distant vantage point, this photograph also provides a glimpse of the small grape orchard on the south slope of the knoll and one of the best views of the rows of pears draped over the Mt. Wanda hillside. Another historic photograph of the Martinez Adobe area, with an earlier date of c.1901, shows two orchards south of the adobe, but the types of trees are difficult to identify because of its poor quality (Figure 3.10).

In the 1962 interview, Helen Muir also recalled the pear orchard at the gravesite; around the turn of the century, when David Muir lived in the Alhambra ranch house, "... he let this little orchard go wild, weeds all over and completely neglected..."<sup>32</sup>

#### **CIRCULATION, BUILDINGS, AND STRUCTURES AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

The imprints of wagon wheels, sturdy sections of both two- and three- board and wire fencing, and telephone poles and lines shown in Figure 3.9 (c.1905) illustrate that by the turn of the century Franklin Canyon Road was a main thoroughfare. The photograph also shows a well- used gated entrance to the Redfern Place winding through the apricot orchard north of the Martinez Adobe and connecting to the main farm road under a grouping of oranges. It is not clear from this photograph if the entrance aligned with the main farm road suggested in Figure 2.7 is still in use at this time.

The main farm road and bridge continued to serve as the primary route between the Muir House and Martinez Adobe, which probably influenced the siting of a new carriage house at the southeast corner of the fish pond space in c.1891. The one- story, wood frame structure featured a wood- shingled gable roof and two bay doors on the south side opening up to the main farm road. Figure 3.4 shows the "Carriage House" in c.1898 as well as a new road across the former dry yard area on the south slope of the knoll. The "Woodshed Road," as it was later called in early park planning documents, connected to the east driveway on the east side of the house, passed next the wall and steps below the Woodshed, and arced around the knoll to intersect with southeast farm road, main farm road, and carriage drive- loop just south of the Carriage House.<sup>33</sup> This created a navigable loop around the Muir House. Although the location of the Carriage House at such an important road junction is not surprising, it is interesting that the building was located on the north side of the lane – and partially into the fish pond space – and not on the flatter south side of the lane. A good view of the southeast farm road heading toward the railroad trestle is provided in Figure 3.9.

The east- west farm lane – discussed in Chapter 2 – appears to be more defined by the late 1890s. Figure 3.4 shows the east portion of this smooth earthen lane connecting to the southeast farm road. A more distant c.1905 view of this section has the lane extending eastward into the hay field, in Figure 3.8. Figure 3.5 shows tracks of the western portion heading west from the southeast farm road and passing between the pear orchard and grape vineyard. The lane appears to pass north of the China House, and it probably continued across Franklin Creek to provide access to the stables, barns, and corrals south of the Martinez Adobe.

Figure 3.10 is the only known photograph of the area south of the Martinez Adobe from this period. As noted earlier, Mrs. Firth- Thomas resided in the Ranch Foreman's House just southwest of the adobe in the mid- 1890s, and she recalled that an eight- foot high vertical board fence with four or five strands of barbed wire enclosed the property. The true extent of this fence is unknown, but a fence close to this description does appear to separate the orchard south of the adobe from a corral and stable area defined by a three board fence, in c.1910. She also recalled that her father made crates in a "packing house just across the road [the main farm road] from where we lived."<sup>34</sup> Figure 3.9 shows that by c.1905 this structure had been removed.

Mrs. Firth- Thomas remembered that the ground floor of the Martinez Adobe was used as a storeroom and the second floor rooms were empty. A historic photograph from c.1901 hints to that type of use and shows a wood cistern and other farm related equipment located next to the adobe lean- to (Figure 3.11). This cistern does not appear in earlier photographs, suggesting it may have been moved to this location from near the fruit packing shed.

Several other infrastructure improvements were visible at the Redfern Place by the late 1890s. Figure 3.3 shows a new well and windmill northeast of the Muir House, at the base of the knoll (hereafter called "Alhambra Well and windmill"). In addition to irrigation uses, it may have supplied water to the water tank in the house addition, possibly aided by a steam engine.<sup>35</sup> Around this time, the cistern on the northeast side of the house was removed. Figures 3.6 and 3.9 show a second well and windmill along Franklin Creek roughly between the Muir House and the China House, upstream (south) from the original Franklin Creek Well and windmill. This water probably irrigated the orchards and served the Martinez Adobe, China House, and barns and corrals south of the adobe.

**PLANTINGS AT THE REDFERN PLACE AND AT THE GRAVESITE**

Historic photographs document the addition and growth of other plantings throughout the Redfern Place. In the late 1890s, six incense cedars were randomly planted northeast of the Muir House just upslope from the west edge of the hay field, in a line extending from the Alhambra Well and windmill to the large cypress to the north.<sup>36</sup> Some of these trees appear in Figures 3.3 and 3.7. South of the Martinez Adobe, Figure 3.5 shows a mass of eucalyptus, which may include some of the eucalyptus trees that Mrs. Strentzel said were planted at the Redfern Place in 1877. These eucalyptus trees may also be the trees that appear in the foreground of Figure 3.10, but the poor quality of the photograph makes that determination problematic.

Vegetation also continued to thrive along Franklin Creek, and as viewed in Figure 3.9, some plantings just north of the main farm road were almost as tall as the blades on the Franklin Creek Windmill. This mass appears to include buckeye trees. Figures 3.5 and 3.9 both show vegetation along the south side of the creek, which is comparatively shorter – generally no taller than the surrounding orchard trees – but clearly denser than what was present in c.1885. Figure 3.9 also shows that plantings around the Franklin Creek Windmill and well did not reach as high as they did in c.1885.

The landscape around the Martinez Adobe was dominated by orchard trees during this period, and according to Mrs. Firth-Thomas, other than a pomegranate tree in the front there was no lawn or even walkways around the building.<sup>37</sup> The exception appears to be the space between the back of the adobe and Franklin Canyon Road, which in Figures 3.6, 3.9, and 3.10 was dominated by a towering mass of cypress or pines. This area was enhanced by Muir sometime in the early 1890s when he helped plant three dozen single Cherokee rose shrubs along the fence next to Franklin Canyon Road. Muir commented that he knew of no other investment that could give such delightful dividends of beauty at so cheap and pleasant a price.<sup>38</sup> The black locust north of the adobe, shown towering over the adobe in Figure 3.11, was upwards of seventy-five feet tall in c.1901, but apparently was taken down by c.1905 because it is no longer visible in Figure 3.9. The fate of the other locust tree, in the middle of the main farm road, is unknown. Figure 3.9 also shows a shrub of some type on the north side of the adobe and wisteria vines growing up around the northeast side of the veranda.

Some of the Cherokee roses were also planted at the grave of Dr. Strentzel. Helen Muir recalled that these and other roses, as well as many other plants and bulbs planted around the graves, were watered by an old well with a hand pump.

Helen also remembered that her parents “planted elderberry and willows to hold the bank opposite the cemetery.”<sup>39</sup> Mr. Briones recollected the gravesite as well: “He used to have a Chinaman keep cleaning all the grass around there all the time, John Muir did. Water came down there real steep one time.”<sup>40</sup>

#### **PLANTINGS AROUND THE MUIR HOUSE**

Throughout the 1890s and into the early 1900s, the plantings around the Muir House continued to thrive, so much so that some plants were apparently removed. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show that the mass of Monterey pines on the west side of the house had been thinned considerably by c.1898, especially towards the back of the house. This was probably done to ease overcrowding and admit more light into the house; especially into Muir’s scribble den (doing so may have also improved the view from that room’s west window). The pines that were retained reached the height of the roofline by this time and were pushing into the adjacent incense cedars. These cedars were also growing vigorously and were just beginning to intertwine, especially those at the northern and southern ends of the arc.<sup>41</sup>

The existing plantings were supplemented with new plantings, which according to Mrs. Firth- Thomas combined to create “a beautiful place with all its mass of flowers, trees, and shrubs.”<sup>42</sup> Figure 3.7 confirms one of her specific recollections, that of the many flowers in the front and in the Carriage drive- loop island. By c.1905, a dense coverage of roses and possibly ice plant and petunias filled and defined the center island space.<sup>43</sup> Roses were plentiful in this part of the grounds; in addition to the plantings in the island and along the east side of the carriage drive- loop, Figure 3.6 shows what appears to be Banksia rose growing up the trunk of the Monterey pine northeast of the house.<sup>44</sup> Notable new additions in this vicinity included cordyline trees flanking the front walk and two California fan palms and a Canary Island date palm along the north side of the carriage drive- loop. These palms added to the inventory of palms growing around the house that continued to do well, namely the Canary Island date palm on the east side of the house and the two California fan palms at the front door.

The installation of new plants was often a family affair; in the 1962 interview, Helen Muir recalled planting “two cedars...mother [Louie] planted sequoias...and there was a camphor tree.” The exact locations of these plants are not known except for the two cedars, which may be the Lebanon and Atlas cedars shown in Figures 3.4 and 3.8, below the row of incense cedars.<sup>45</sup> Between these were two agaves, and below them along the carriage drive- loop was an arborvitae and several other unidentified shrubs. Mrs. Firth- Thomas recalled a

‘banana tree’ in this area; she may have been remembering the agaves, as the specimen next to the fish pond space by this time was quite large and featured its distinctive tall flower stalk.<sup>46</sup> Two black locust trees were growing along the lower end of the Woodshed Road by this time and appear in Figures 3.4 and 3.9. North of the locust trees, in the center of the triangle intersection next to the Carriage House, was a giant sequoia. According to Agee’s core analysis, this tree dates to 1897, but it may have been planted earlier as its location corresponds to a wood crate structure visible in the intersection in earlier photographs (see Chapter 2 and Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

On the south slope of the knoll, Figure 3.4 shows a Monterey cypress on the southwest side of the Muir House. The photograph no longer shows the hedge that wrapped around the south side of the house; it may have removed when the water tank/music room addition was added in 1891 or perhaps because it was no longer needed to screen the dry yard, which by this time appears to be a vegetable garden. The garden, referenced in a letter from Louie to John in 1895, included corn, watermelon, beans, and the like. Further down the hill, Figure 3.8 shows that by c.1905 a Mexican fan palm and two more Canary Island date palms were planted.<sup>47</sup>

Like Muir, Louie and the girls loved the outdoors and spent most of their time in the garden and amongst the trees.<sup>48</sup> In 1953, Helen recalled the Alhambra Valley landscape in a letter to her niece, Jean Hanna Clark, in 1953:

“I wish you could have seen the valley in the 1900’s – that was when it was most beautiful, before the older orchards and vineyards began to die out – they have their span of life, just like people – and other changes began to come. In thinking of it now I often hope the surrounding hills are not disturbed by buildings – I’d hate to think of the big oaks and laurel (California bay) being cut to make room for new houses. And I always loved the Buckeyes too, their blooms in the spring time as sweet as honeysuckle.”<sup>49</sup>

## **PROGRESS, TRIUMPH, AND LOSS**

With the affairs of the ranch in good hands, Muir happily plunged into a life of writing, study, and travel. Among his many projects was a stint with the U.S. Forestry Commission. Beginning in 1896, he was part of a team charged with surveying the forests and timberlands of the west coast and the southwest. The commission’s report to President Cleveland eventually resulted in new scientific forest management policies, changes in timber and mining laws, and the creation of thirteen new reservations and two national parks (Mt. Rainier and Grand Canyon). By the end of his first term in March 1897, Cleveland recommended setting aside twenty-one million acres of land for preservation. Muir responded

to criticisms of lumbermen, stockmen, miners, and like-minded politicians in impassioned articles: “Through all the wonderful, eventful centuries since Christ’s time – and long before that – God has cared for these trees...but he can not save them from fools – only Uncle Sam can do that.” Cleveland’s bill was eventually upheld.<sup>50</sup>

This period was also a time of personal tragedy. In 1896, Muir’s mother, Ann Gilrye Muir, died. In the fall of the following year, Muir returned from Alaska to a gloomy household; Mrs. Strentzel was seriously ill. She passed away on September 24 and was buried at the family gravesite, leaving a great void in the family. Earlier that year, on May 18, 1897, Mrs. Strentzel had transferred her property interests to Louie. It would be the first of several property transfers and land use changes at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch.<sup>51</sup>

#### **RAILROAD TRESTLE AND TUNNEL**

In October 1897, Muir transferred a sixty-foot right-of-way to the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad (later the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway, and then the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad) about a quarter-mile south of the Muir House and Martinez Adobe. Construction of a 1680-foot long wood and steel trestle over the Alhambra Valley, a 300-foot tunnel, and the railroad grade began shortly thereafter and took over two years to complete.<sup>52</sup> (The trestle is shown in Figure 3.9.) Although no references have been found regarding the pear orchard near the construction area, some trees were likely removed, particularly in the area of the right-of-way.

Wanda and Helen diligently monitored the project and provided their father frequent progress reports:

“A great deal of grading has been done on the railroad and the little tunnel back of the house is in a long way, a good deal of track is down near here and we can hear the cars buzzing back and forth all the time.”<sup>53</sup>

In 1899, the *Contra Costa Gazette* predicted, “it is only a question of time before trains that have come all the way from the Atlantic seaboard will be regularly passing beneath the Contra Costa hills.” The project was completed soon after, and because of the land donation, Muir received a life-long pass. The station at the east approach to the trestle was also named in his honor.<sup>54</sup>

In late December 1899, three months short of her nineteenth birthday, Wanda left home aboard one of these trains to attend a college prep school in Berkeley (the

girls had been home- schooled up to this point). By 1901, she was enrolled at the University of California in Berkeley.

### **TRAVELS AND BATTLES**

The year 1901 was a busy time for Muir; in his scribble den he penned *Our National Parks*, and the book was well received. (This was also the year when the city of San Francisco began to consider plans to dam Hetch Hetchy, a valley along the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park, to provide hydroelectric power and water.) In the summer of 1901, Muir invited his now teenage daughters to accompany him and William Keith to the Tuolumne Meadows at Yosemite for the first of the Sierra Club's large, well- organized Outings.<sup>55</sup> In a letter to Louie, Muir wrote, "Wanda and Helen take to this life in the rocks and woods like ducks to water as if born to it."<sup>56</sup> A side trip on their return to Martinez to their father's old haunts in the Yosemite Valley hooked the girls for life; the next year the foursome participated in the second Outing at Kings Canyon.

In May of 1903, Wanda and Helen traveled to the rugged Hetch Hetchy Valley for the third Outing. Muir did not join them for he had made plans to embark on a round- the- world trip with his friend Charles Sargent, but when Muir received a request from President Theodore Roosevelt to accompany him to Yosemite, the trip was postponed so that "I might be able to do some forest good in talking freely around the campfire." The three days and nights of hiking and conversation was a success, for afterward Roosevelt supported the recession of the Yosemite grant and soon proclaimed five new national parks, twenty- three national monuments, and 150 national forests (Figure 3.12).<sup>57</sup>

After the Yosemite trip, Muir and Sargent headed for England on steamship in late May of 1903. In his writings he spoke of the "endless galleries of paintings" in Paris, "wild gardens" in Russia, the "noble famous old Nile stream..." in Egypt, the "far antipodal eucalyptus land" of Australia, and the "strange forest geysers, glaciers, and ferny fiords..." of New Zealand. There were many letters home and a confessed homesickness for his "Wife & Darlings," and anxiety about Helen's recurring bouts with pneumonia.<sup>58</sup>

Wanda and Helen met Muir at the Martinez wharf when he returned in late May of 1904. He spent the balance of the year catching up on correspondences and assuming the role of lobbyist to wrest control of the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, a State grant since 1864, from the interests of mill, mine, sheep, and cattle owners to the federal government. Muir reacted with joy

and weariness when the struggle was finally won in May of 1905: “And now that the fight is finished and my education as a politician and a lobbyist is finished, I am almost finished myself.”<sup>59</sup>

#### **LOUIE MUIR DIES**

By the spring of 1905, Helen’s health had not improved since her latest bout with pneumonia, and a doctor prescribed the dry air of the Arizona desert. Wanda was needed and in May left the university behind – and the affections of an engineering student named Tom Hanna – to join Helen, her father, and a nurse in Arizona. Louie, as usual, stayed behind and anxiously awaited letters.<sup>60</sup>

In late June, Louie’s doctor telegraphed the family that she was gravely ill, and Muir and the girls caught the next train home.<sup>61</sup> When they arrived they learned she too was suffering from pneumonia and other, more serious health issues. However, Helen’s health soon worsened and she had to return to Arizona. Louie Strentzel Muir, fifty- eight years old, lived only until August 6. According to one writer:

An essential part of John Muir was buried with her in the Strentzel family graveyard. She had been not only a loving and acutely understanding partner, but a friend, confidante, critic, advisor, and editor as well. As shown in letters, their periodic separations, necessitated by his work and well-being, had strengthened, not weakened, their love and appreciation of each other.<sup>62</sup>

Soon after the funeral, Muir and Wanda joined Helen and moved to Adamana, a small railroad stop in the northeastern part of Arizona. Near the town were fields of petrified trees, which Muir studied on foot and on horseback rides with his daughters. Muir biographer, Thurman Wilkins, states, “Muir was disturbed by the Santa Fe Railroad’s practice of carting petrified logs away to be hacked and polished into baubles for the tourist trade.”<sup>63</sup> Muir’s interest in preserving these ‘forests,’ along with strong public advocacy, later convinced President Roosevelt to create the Petrified Forest National Monument.<sup>64</sup>

The stark landscape of the petrified forest was a timely distraction for Muir. When estate business called him back to Martinez (Louie’s holdings of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch passed to Wanda and Helen), he took time out to study fossils at the Berkeley libraries and shared his research in letters to the girls. However, the loss of Louie weighed hard; he initially opted to reside with the Colemans (his nephew and niece) in their house north of his own rather than in the house on the Redfern Place. According to a Muir biographer, “...the old



house on the hill was a shelter and a place of work from time to time, but never a home again.”<sup>65</sup>

### **THE GREAT 1906 EARTHQUAKE**

In 1906, Wanda Muir and Tom Hanna decided to marry, and in April she traded places with her father to make wedding plans. Wanda also stayed with the Colemans, and from there witnessed the events of April 18:

At five o'clock this morning the worst earthquake ever known struck Alhambra Valley and left the houses in it a wreck. Every one of four of our five chimneys are down (our own at the big house)...The only house in the valley that is not hurt is the adobe [sic]. Didn't hurt it all except a little plaster in front. Most all of Martinez is in ruins. There are rumors of awful things in San Francisco, but as all the telegraph wires are down and there are no trains running I don't know how true they are.<sup>66</sup>

Soon after the earthquake, Muir returned to the Redfern Place to survey the damage while Wanda, despite her upcoming June wedding date, returned to care for Helen in Adamana. The Martinez Adobe actually did suffer damage to its north wall. However, Muir determined the damage to the house was not as severe as Wanda had reported, although many of the fireplaces were destroyed, especially on the east side of the house. Muir decided to use the opportunity to make some changes, which included the construction of a massive Spanish- style fireplace in the east parlor (Mrs. Strentzel's old room) where he could build a “real mountain campfire” and the addition of a piece of petrified wood over the fireplace in the southwest bedroom.<sup>67</sup> The fireplaces in the dining room and second- floor bedrooms on the east side were not rebuilt. In between these projects, Muir continued his research on what he called the “enchanted carboniferous forests.”<sup>68</sup>

### **MUIR'S DAUGHTERS MARRY**

On June 20, 1906, Wanda married Tom Hanna at the Coleman's house because the Muir House was still damaged from the earthquake. The newlyweds decided to make the Martinez Adobe their first home and lived with Muir while it was remodeled. In August, Helen returned to fix up the big house with her father, and the two lived there happily, although Muir confided to a friend that it was “under- peopled.”<sup>69</sup>

Helen's health problems eventually resurfaced, and by 1908, she was forced to return to the Arizona desert. In 1910, Helen married a gentleman named Buel Funk and moved to Southern California. This left Muir truly alone in the house, which may have prompted him to embark on a year- long trip to South America and Africa in 1911.

## **ORCHARDING IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY**

Commercial orcharding in the United States continued to face challenges at the turn of the century. Labor numbers were falling off because of high paying industrial jobs that attracted even farmers, and as a result labor costs increased. Census data from 1910 revealed that twenty- five percent of bearing fruit trees were lost in this first decade, and half lost between 1900- 1930. However, persevering farmers who incorporated new scientific techniques and planted varieties recommended by the agricultural experimental stations were able to increase their productivity. By c.1910, the diversity of fruit species in commercial orchards across the nation had narrowed from hundreds of varieties in 1870s to tens of varieties.<sup>70</sup>

Accompanying the focus on commercially viable species was new scientific information and field research from the agricultural field stations. This resulted in new orchard management techniques and a change in the form, shape, and layout of orchard trees. In the nineteenth century, fruit trees typically had tall unbranched trunks of five or more feet in height so that the ground underneath could be farmed. The trees were usually unpruned and their form was created by browsing livestock and deer. By the twentieth century, trunks were “headed low” so that the unbranched portion of the trunk was only about 20- 36” high. This change meant that trees were not tossed and bent by the wind as much and could be pruned, sprayed, and picked more easily and cheaply.<sup>71</sup>

New and improved pruning tools and techniques also changed the shapes of trees, and styles were developed for all types of fruit, nut, and citrus trees. Most fruits were trained to two styles – pyramidal (with a distinct central leader) and open bowl (a vase shape) – that let in or captured more sunlight and were favored over the nineteenth century “natural” and unpruned style that bore less fruit and was unwieldy.<sup>72</sup>

The new criteria began to set up a broad distinction between orchards planted in the nineteenth century and those in the twentieth century; the former was characterized by rows of several kinds of fruit with many varieties, while the latter would feature single variety blocks of one kind of fruit with far less varieties. There were exceptions to this pattern however, especially for certain varieties of citrus and nuts when new varieties of orange, lemon, grapefruit, walnut, pecan, almond, and filbert were introduced.<sup>73</sup>

The practice of low heading and the increasing use of tractors that required greater turning radii ushered in modifications to the layout of trees, particularly in tightly spaced rows like peaches and plum. More maneuverability was manifested in more space between rows rather than within rows. Specifically, spacing for peaches and plums was changed to a rectangular layout of fifteen feet within rows and twenty feet between rows. Apples and pears were also spaced wider, ranging from a thirty by thirty square to a forty by forty square because of the belief that the nineteenth century layout had compromised yields of fully grown and mature trees. Citrus trees such as lemons were spaced in a fifteen by fifteen square while Navel oranges were spaced in a twenty- five by twenty- five square.<sup>74</sup>

One of the more interesting practices in new orchards – especially concerning pears and apples – was the introduction of “filler” trees. To make better use of the wider spacing in these orchards, filler trees were planted amongst the “permanent” trees, within the square spacing of forty feet, to form a quincunx system. Filler trees were usually the same species as the permanent trees but of a different variety (smaller and younger bearing). The intent was to provide additional income to the farmer, and that they would be removed in ten years once the permanent trees had grown up. Although filler trees aided in cross pollination, they limited tractor access and sometimes retarded the growth of permanent trees if left too long, which was sometimes the case.<sup>75</sup>

With the technique of low- heading, the practice of grazing livestock in orchards was no longer needed (except for poultry, whose manure was still seen as beneficial) and fences or hedges were erected to keep deer away. In time, though, even chickens were used less and less with the development of synthetic fertilizers and the use of cover crops like alfalfa, buckwheat, peas, and vetch as orchard groundcovers. Manure was typically stockpiled and added periodically rather than on an ongoing basis. Another change was the increasing use of pesticide sprays and powders that were delivered by spray rigs and dusters drawn by horses or tractors. Repeated applications were required, which translated to significant labor and time, but their use was seen as crucial in successfully running a commercial orchard. The laborious nature of pest control eventually lead to new orchard layout conventions after WW2.<sup>76</sup>

In California, the Bartlett pear was emerging as the most widely planted because it was very adaptable, bore young with heavy crops, and could self- pollinate (so it could be planted as a monoculture). Other successful crops at this time included European and Japanese varieties of plums and Navel oranges.<sup>77</sup>

### **THE STRENTZEL-MUIR RANCH, 1906 TO 1914**

In the early part of 1907, the Hannas moved into the Martinez Adobe and soon thereafter had the first of their three children; they were later joined by two foster children – Leonard Dickey and Jose Figuerado – and a nursemaid.<sup>78</sup> Tom Hanna assumed the responsibilities of managing the ranch and redirected some of the ranch resources to grazing. Part of this was accomplished on the western part of the Redfern farm, which by 1908 was back in the family under Muir's name (Figure 3.13). That same year, Wanda transferred the Muir House and 4.83 acres of land around it to Helen, and this parcel became known as the "Muir Homestead."<sup>79</sup> This area generally encompassed the east, south, and west slopes of the knoll, most of the peach orchard on the north ridge, and the fish pond space. (Later, in 1912, Helen and Buel Funk transferred the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead back to Muir.<sup>80</sup>)

Land use changes were not confined to the Strentzel- Muir Ranch. To the north, the town of Martinez was slowly pushing southward into the Alhambra Valley and toward the ranch. Sanborn maps from this period show new residential plats and curvilinear streets in Martinez with names like Azalea Court.<sup>81</sup> In 1912, rumors of oil companies coming to Martinez set off a real estate boom. Just as the Strentzels during the 1870s in Martinez, the Hannas took advantage of the strong real estate market, especially in subdividing and building on the largest of the Strentzel- Muir parcels adjacent to the towns of Valona and Crockett. At this time, however, the lands proximate to the bulk of the Strentzel- Muir landholdings were still farmed.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast to previous land uses under Muir, the Hannas grazed cattle and horses and raised hogs on the adjacent hill lands to the west and south.<sup>83</sup> Mr. Dickey, in a 1975 interview, specifically recalled Percheron workhorses stabled south of the Martinez Adobe and nearly 100 hogs and twenty- five cows corralled west of Franklin Canyon Road.<sup>84</sup> Around this time, 500 head of cattle purchased in Nevada were brought in to fatten up for market and "...were kept on that hill over there (Mt. Wanda), across the railroad track."<sup>85</sup> Mr. Figuerado recalled in a 1976 interview that the Chinese laborers living nearby along Franklin Creek sometimes complained when the horses got out and wandered into their truck gardens.<sup>86</sup>

### **CROPS AT THE STRENTZEL-MUIR FAMILY RANCH**

Despite its new management and changes in land use, the ranch continued to produce and ship many of the same orchard crops as in previous years.

According to Mr. Figuerado, the ranch employed about fifteen workers during harvest time.<sup>87</sup> Mr. Dickey remembered orchards of “apricots, peaches and pears and...all of the best varieties of fruit. They used to haul it down to Martinez, down to the wharf.”<sup>88</sup>

In addition to Mr. Dickey’s information, recollections by Helen Muir and analysis of historic photographs and a 1915 plat map adds several more crops to the list:

- Fruits: almond, apple, apricot, cherry, fig, hickory, lemon, orange, peach, pear, pecans, plum, prune, quince, walnut, various vegetables
- Vines: mostly table grapes
- Fields: hay and cover crops, grain, grazing

#### **CROPS AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Helen Muir offered recollections of the later years of the fruit ranch in a 1958 interview, and recalled peaches along the driveway north of the house, plums at the bottom of the knoll, and pecans somewhere near the house.<sup>89</sup> Two photographs taken c.1910 confirm some of those crops and others referenced above. One view, probably taken from the railroad trestle, shows the pear orchard on the lower slope of Mt. Wanda, the plum orchard and grape vineyard southwest of the knoll, and part of the apple orchard on the east slope (Figure 3.14). The photograph shows orchards, vineyards, and hay fields still extending out across the Alhambra Valley floor and up the lower hillsides to the west. However, according to the 1908 map, parts of these lands are no longer under Muir’s ownership. Of particular interest in Figure 3.14 is the lower south slope of the knoll, where the small grape vineyard has been replaced by a run of wire fence and a swath of some type of cover crop.

The second c.1910 photograph offers a closer view of the fields around the Muir House, revealing grapes south and west of the knoll and peaches draped over the ridge north and northeast of the house (Figure 3.15). By this time, the small planting of grapes or vegetables in the fish pond space has been removed. Mrs. Firth- Thomas remembered quince trees on the way up to the Muir House, and they may be the plants visible in this picture along the north side of the main farm road.<sup>90</sup> Beyond the orchards and vineyards in the distance is the growing town of Martinez. A cover crop appears to fill the spaces in between the trees and shrubs on the west slope of the knoll.

Another view of crops at the Redfern Place is offered in a c.1915 photograph taken from the corral area west of Franklin Canyon Road looking toward the Muir House and the AT&SF trestle (Figure 3.16). The photograph shows rows of grapes north of the main farm road, the oranges at the west end of the road, and the pear orchard at Mt. Wanda, and a glimpse of the vineyard southwest of the knoll. It also documents a significant land use change; a new orchard in part of the hay field east of the knoll. The orchard was likely planted between c.1910 and c.1915 and appears to extend from the east- west farm lane, shown in Figure 3.14, northward past the Alhambra Windmill to existing orchards. It is not clear in the photograph what type(s) of fruit were planted.

Additional recollections of the Redfern Place come from Mr. Dickey who remembered blackberries and walnut trees along Franklin Creek.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, his reference to walnuts and Helen's reference to pecans coincides with the introduction of new nut varieties in the orchard industry. In addition, Mr. Figuerado recalled that, "...grain was planted around the stables [south of the Martinez Adobe], no doubt amongst the orchard trees, during 1908."<sup>92</sup>

#### **BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND CIRCULATION AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Tom and Wanda Hanna began remodeling the Martinez Adobe soon after the 1906 earthquake, and returned the building into a residential use for the first time since 1874 when Thomas Redfern sold his ranch property to Dr. Strentzel. Numerous repairs were required after the earthquake, including a new wooden clapboard wall on the north side of the structure (the old wall failed) and a new chimney and fireplace.<sup>93</sup> Other updates were needed to bring the structure up to twentieth- century standards and tastes, and some of the first projects involved installing electricity and an upstairs lavatory, and removing the lean- to, cistern, and farm equipment.<sup>94</sup>

To ease their increasingly cramped quarters, the Hannas added a veranda to the south side of the adobe and a kitchen on the southwest side around 1910, next to which the Cookhouse was moved for use as a dining room. According to the "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site, California," these changes were similar to those made to other adobes in the area at this time, where open porches and ramadas were enclosed and outbuildings were joined together. This "Americanization" focused family life inside the structure rather than outside of it.<sup>95</sup>

With the relocation of the Cookhouse, a driveway was constructed behind the Martinez Adobe (according to Mr. Figuerado, there was no driveway in front).<sup>96</sup>

Mr. Dickey reported that he helped Tom Hanna dig a thirty- foot well a short distance northeast of the adobe some time between 1907 and 1910 to supply water to the building and water the plants. Mule power was used to haul the dirt from the excavation. The Ranch Foreman's House, most recently the Firth residence, was converted into a bunkhouse for ranch hands and may have housed some of the Chinese, Portuguese, and Italian laborers remembered by Mr. Dickey.<sup>97</sup> Helen Muir, in the 1958 interview, also recalled five houses for the Chinese workers southeast of the adobe, along Franklin Creek.<sup>98</sup>

As noted earlier in Figure 3.14, by c.1910 a post and wire fence was erected along the lower south slope of the knoll. This fence also extended in a northerly direction along the east side of the knoll to north of the Alhambra Well and windmill. In comparing this photograph with a 1915 plat map, the location of the fence roughly corresponds to the east and south boundaries of the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead parcel that was established in 1908. In Figure 3.15, another portion of the fence surrounding the Muir Homestead area is visible; the open gate across the main farm road is connected to post and wire fencing that runs south alongside the grape vines and west alongside the line of quinces. It is unclear if the entire homestead area was fenced; however, the third and fourth incense cedars north of the Alhambra Well marked the northeast corner of the Muir Homestead.

In other improvements at the Redfern Place around this time, a small one- story flat- roof structure was added to the west side of the Carriage House. Its purpose may have been related to irrigation because Figure 3.15 shows what appears to be a cistern- type structure next to it. The addition is also near a new pipe emanating from near the Franklin Creek Well and windmill and heading southwest (and possibly to the sluice); what effect construction of the Carriage House addition had on the old pipe in this area is not known. These structures may have been directed to improve the water supply at the newly set out Muir Homestead.

The variously dusty and muddy farm roads were also the focus of improvement; Muir added gravel to the loop driveway in the early 1910s, and he apparently wished to macadamize the farm lanes but it is unclear if or when this was accomplished (Figure 3.17).<sup>99</sup> Franklin Canyon Road was still unimproved at this time – the local newspaper reporting that on one occasion more than a dozen cars were stuck in the mud.<sup>100</sup> An analysis of Figure 3.16 reveals that in c.1915, a fence of some type was set out along the length of Franklin Canyon Road at the Martinez Adobe; it may be the picket fence that appeared in earlier photographs,

but it is difficult to tell. The photograph also suggests that by this time the main farm road was once again a main entrance into the Redfern Place from Franklin Canyon Road. It is not known if the entrance just to the north, shown in Figure 3.9, was still in use during this period.

This period also marks the construction of a bungalow, corrals, pens, and pasture areas for livestock in a draw on the lower east slope of Mt. Wanda. The bungalow dates to approximately 1910. According to the 1908 atlas, this area was still in Muir's name, but details regarding who lived in it or how Hanna may have managed the area are unclear.<sup>101</sup>

#### **PLANTINGS AT THE REDFERN PLACE**

Vegetation continued to thrive along the banks of Franklin Creek during this period, and there was still a significant difference in height between plants on the north side of the main farm road and those on the south side. Figures 3.14 and 3.16 illustrate this contrast. It is important to note that compared to the mid-1880s, vegetation along the creek south of the main farm road was quite dense by this time. It is also significant that these plants appear to be about the same height as they were in an earlier photograph from the late 1890s – that is, taller than the adjacent grape vines and about as tall as the surrounding orchard trees. This would suggest their height continued to be managed. As for the mass of vegetation encircling the Franklin Creek Well and windmill, Figure 3.15 shows it to be shorter than plantings along the creek, reaching only the midway point of the structure.

Converting the Martinez Adobe from a farm building to a modern residence also included planting flowers and shrubs at the front entrance (Figure 3.18). By c.1912, wisteria vine had engulfed the northeast and especially the southeast corners of the structure and a large fruit tree was thriving in the front, alongside a bed of flowers. This photograph also shows shrubs around the fruit tree and on either side of the front steps. The tree trunk in the foreground of the picture is a black locust tree; it is probably one of the three locust trees recalled by Mr. Figuerado in this area. Some of the tall pine and cypress towering behind the adobe can also be seen. A better view of this mass, taken a few years later, is offered in Figure 3.16. Mr. Figuerado also remembered a redwood tree to the southeast and a pine to the northeast.<sup>102</sup>

The historic photographs chart the growth of some other plantings around the Redfern Place. Figure 3.15 shows a well-established conifer behind the Carriage House reaching above the roofline. Along the east side of the Redfern Place, the



line of incense cedars north of the Alhambra Well and windmill were thriving, and as shown in Figure 3.14, some of them equaled the height of the windmill. (Figure 3.14 also shows three of the conifers along Franklin Canyon Road that appeared in the c.1883 photograph.)

#### **PLANTINGS AROUND THE MUIR HOUSE**

One of the most significant new additions around the Muir House at this time was a planting of eucalyptus on the south side of the knoll. In the 1958 interview, Helen Muir recalled that her father acquired them from neighbor John Swett and that she helped plant the trees; “there used to be a small grove of them, about a dozen, of different varieties.”<sup>103</sup> These trees may be the grouping of trees at the west end of the former grape vineyard on the lower south slope of the knoll, as shown in Figure 3.14. Figure 3.16 offers a distant view of this area from a few years later, c.1915, and shows much taller trees in this area.

For much of this period, however, Muir was away, hiking through the Sierra ranges with President Taft, exploring the Grand Canyon, and visiting friends on the east coast. During his absences, according to Mr. Figuerado, “the Chinese workmen kept the grounds like a park.”<sup>104</sup> Historic photographs capture some of the spaces around the house as lush with trees, shrubs, and flowers. Figure 3.14 shows that by this time, the area southeast and east of the house was dominated by a mass of deciduous and conifer trees. According to Agee’s core analysis, an Oregon white oak and mourning cypress were planted around this time in this area.<sup>105</sup> On the south slope, the Mexican fan palm and two Canary Island date palms – now within the fence line surrounding the Muir Homestead – continued to mature amongst the apple trees. The Canary Island date palm on the southeast side of the house and the Monterey pine northeast of the house also thrived and reached the height of the roofline and cupola, respectively. Additionally, Mr. Figuerado remembered a strawberry tree at the southeast side of the house.<sup>106</sup>

Growth of the tall Monterey pines and Monterey cypress, as well as the arc of incense cedars on the west side of the house was especially vigorous. Figure 3.14 shows that the Monterey pine that anchored the northwest side of the house was cut by c.1910, leaving only the Monterey cypress and a few Monterey pines left from the original mass planting. However, analysis of Figure 3.16 shows that the cypress was removed by c.1915. Figure 3.15, from c.1910, documents growth in the black locust trees along the Woodshed Road, healthy Atlas and Lebanon cedars on the west slope, and a thinned row of incense cedars; the cedars that do remain are almost touching one another at their bases. The rest of the knoll appears to be a cover crop or perhaps grass, but according to Mr. Figuerado, there was no

lawn maintained on the west and southwest slope; instead, there was a thick profusion of the plant known variously as “prickly poppy” or “fried egg.” “This whole hillside [the west and southwest slope] was spotted with those bushes with grass in between...” The poppies referred to were probably Matilija poppy or California tree poppy.<sup>107</sup> These plants were also recalled by Helen Muir in the 1958 interview.<sup>108</sup>

By c.1910, the lower end of the carriage drive- loop featured a tall and dense mass of vegetation along the fish pond space. Figure 3.15 shows these plants opposite the arborvitae. Other plantings were set out along the upper portion, near the palms, and included three olive trees, one of which was cored to c.1910, and a honey mesquite.<sup>109</sup> Turning the corner toward the Muir House, the front façade was framed by thick masses of shrubs and anchored by tall trees. Figure 3.17 shows the center island of the loop completely filled with plants. The space appears to be bordered with ice plant, behind which are roses, quince, and possibly a California bay.<sup>110</sup> Helen Muir remembered this area included an orange tree, large white lilacs, blue lilac, large rose verbana, 5- 6’ - high tea roses, and flowering pomegranate, the latter of which was also recalled by Mr. Figuerado.<sup>111</sup> The photograph also reveals more ice plant creeping into the lane from the outboard side on the west, part of a random planting of shrubs anchored by a fruit tree or possibly an elderberry.

Closer to the house, Figure 3.17 shows the top of one or both of the cordyline trees as well as the two California fan palms on either side of the front entrance; the west cordyline and the west fan palm almost obscure the view from Muir’s scribble den. A mass of shrubs can be seen along the southwest end of the carriage drive- loop, and flowering shrubs, possibly roses, appear to grow along the foundation. The remaining Monterey pines on the west side still towered above the row of incense cedars and dominated the west side of the house. The Monterey pine anchoring the northeast side of the house was completely cloaked in Banksia rose by this time. On the east side, the windmill palm reached up to the second floor. Additionally, Mr. Figuerado remembered a strawberry tree at the southeast corner of the house around this time, while nearby was a myrtle that Agee tentatively core dated to c.1910.<sup>112</sup>

Much like his daughters (and wife) had done when he was on the road, Muir kept Helen updated when she was in Arizona with news about the ranch.

Occasionally, there were references to the plantings around the house:

“Jasmine...it bids to cover not only the conservatory but all the east side...”<sup>113</sup>

Other letters described plants in the garden and around the house, including wild

rose, Cherokee rose, geranium, California poppy, broom, calistemon, sweet pea, salvia, agave, honeysuckle, Rosnniya thicket, and eucalyptus.<sup>114</sup>

Mrs. John Swett, who lived on a ranch on the south side of Mt. Wanda, recalled Muir's opinion regarding flowers: "Mr. Muir's interest in flowers did not extend so much to cultivated, as to wild ones. He called cultivated flowers 'distortions'."<sup>115</sup> In the 1958 interview, Helen remembered some locations of plantings around the house between the years 1890 to 1914 and recalled that "My mother liked sweet smelling flowers."<sup>116</sup> Table 3.1 below summarizes Helen's recollections.

Table 3.1: Plantings around the Muir House from c.1890 to c.1914<sup>117</sup>

East side	carnations, Canterbury bells, lemon tree, honeysuckle.
West side	clump of lavender, amaryllis, orange tree, bridal wreath spiraea, callas, geraniums, gladiolas, Matilija poppies
East front	heliotrope, clump roses, chrysanthemums
West front	crimson geraniums, roses, chrysanthemums, "along walk was something like ice plant."
Under east parlor window	lilies around palm tree, violets, forget-me-nots.
Under west parlor window	camellia, white lamark rose on each side of steps.
West porch	double wisteria, double Cherokee roses (Lady Banksia).
Kitchen side	across from kitchen walk was a broom, a genista and a ?, a shaggy hair from South America.
Back side	herb garden, limes, loquats.
Front walk	pink poppies along walk, two dragon (likely cordyline) trees at top of steps

## MUIR'S FINAL BATTLES

In 1912, Muir returned to Martinez from his year-long sojourn in Africa and South America and put in long hours in the scribble den; "Just now from every direction grim work is staring me hard in the face crying, 'Twill soon be dark,' and urging concentration and haste."<sup>118</sup> Fortunately, Wanda and her family lived nearby and two or three times a day he ambled down to the Martinez Adobe to play with his grandsons. According to Mr. Figuerado, during these later years Muir ate most of his meals with them at the adobe.<sup>119</sup>

Muir was also energized by his daily meetings with neighbor John Swett. According to scholar Nicolas C. Polos, Muir and Swett met every morning at a certain time on the borderline of the two ranches, with one hailing each other with some trivial remark such as, "it's a fine day Johnnie," and the other contradicting him. This launched their regular forensic exercise over the merits of the weather and what it would do to the fruit.<sup>120</sup> Considering his age, Muir probably walked down the southeast farm road and across the level fields to Alhambra Valley Road to meet Mr. Swett.

### **A RARE DEFEAT AND A NEW PURPOSE**

In between travels, Muir continued the quest to save Hetch Hetchy Valley. However, after three wild political battles, the passage of the Raker Act in 1913 permitted the damming of the valley and construction of the O'Shaughnessy Dam. A letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Muir summed up the decision:

...it would be no problem for me to support Hetch Hetchy if nine- tenths of the people were for it – but nine- tenths of the people are not for flooding the valley.”<sup>121</sup>

Muir took the defeat hard. Robert B. Marshall of the USGS later wrote:

“It was sorrowful indeed to see him sitting in his cobwebbed study in his lonely house...with the full force of his defeat upon him, after the struggle of a lifetime in the service of Hetch Hetchy.”<sup>122</sup>

In 1914, Muir suddenly began renovating the house, evidently with the hope that he could convince his daughters to live there again. Going to San Francisco, he bought new carpets and rugs for the first floor and painted some of the dark woodwork lighter. Most amazingly, Muir, who preferred the soft glow of candlelight, had electricity installed in the house.<sup>123</sup> According to a biographer, this was a strange impulse considering the opposition to all changes since his wife's death.<sup>124</sup> On December 3, 1914, John Muir wrote to Helen:

There is no one in the old house except myself. If I could only have you and Wanda as in the auld land syne, it would be lovely. I have got electric light now in the house and everything has been put in comparative order.<sup>125</sup>

### **JOHN MUIR'S DEATH**

Soon after writing the letter to Helen, Muir packed his typed manuscript, *Travels in Alaska*, and went to see her. During the automobile ride, he caught a cold that developed into pneumonia. Wanda was sent for, but the end came suddenly for Muir on Christmas Eve in a Los Angeles hospital. He was 76 years old.

Muir's funeral was held in the house at the Redfern Place with burial on December 27, 1914 next to Louie at the family gravesite. According to the local legend, the service was held under the spreading branches of the massive eucalyptus tree Muir had long admired. Mr. Figuerado apparently cut boughs from an incense cedar northeast of the house and laid them in Muir's coffin.<sup>126</sup> On the subject of death, Muir once wrote:

“Death is a kind nurse saying, ‘Come, children, to bed and get up in the morning’ – a gracious Mother calling her children home.”

## **SUMMARY: DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE IN 1914**

### **THE UPPER ALHAMBRA VALLEY**

Continuing the trend that started at the end of the nineteenth century, commercial orchards in the early twentieth century were increasingly influenced by new scientific information and field research. To offset the decrease in the number of laborers and the increase in the use of pesticide sprays and powders, new techniques were introduced to improve the form, shape, layout, and maintenance of orchards and vineyards. Instead of growing hundreds of varieties of fruits, farmers winnowed down that list to the varieties that were the most productive and the most commercially viable. In California, this included the highly adaptable and prolific Bartlett pear as well as varieties of plums and Navel oranges. New varieties of walnut, pecan, almond, and filbert were also created.<sup>127</sup>

Despite – or perhaps because of – these changes, the upper portion of the Alhambra Valley was still dominated by orchards and vineyards in 1914. According to historic photographs, the scene had not changed considerably from 1890; a patchwork of vines, fruit trees, and crops lay across the valley floor and up the lower slopes like a quilt, stitched together by dusty (or muddy) farm roads, post and wire fences, and tree-lined creeks. By this time, however, this scene was probably accompanied by the sounds of tractors hauling produce to the markets along Franklin Canyon Road and Alhambra Valley Road, and of sprayers and pumpers navigating amongst rows of trees and vines. The most significant sign of progress, though, rumbled overhead along the AT&SF trestle.

Although many tracts of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch had long since been sold or leased to support Muir's life of writing and traveling, the land that would become the three units of the park were still in the family. The most significant change since 1890 was in the use of the land, with ranch manager Tom Hanna's somewhat greater emphasis on grazing and livestock in some of the previously unused upper hill lands to the west and south. Despite these land use changes, the ranch continued to produce and ship many of the same fruits and grapes as in previous years.

### **THE FUTURE PARK UNITS**

#### **House Unit** (Drawing 3.1)

Despite the selling and leasing of land, the lands that comprised the Redfern Place – and that today are part of the House Unit – represented much of what was happening at the ranch in 1914. As was the case in 1890, peach trees and other fruit trees covered most of the east, north, and northwest areas of the knoll, but

by this time most of the plums southwest of the knoll had been replaced by rows of grapes. The small vineyard on the south side of the knoll was also gone, replaced by a grove of eucalyptus and a cover crop or grass that filled in the spaces between the many ornamentals around the Muir House. Hay fields extended from the bottom of the knoll to the east and south.

Along the main farm road, quince trees and fig trees continued to thrive as did oranges near the Martinez Adobe where chickens and turkeys ran. The orchard space between the Martinez Adobe and Franklin Creek was variously comprised of apricots, cherries, lemons, and oranges, along with walnuts and pecans. Pears grew up the lower north and east slope of Mt. Wanda, although some were displaced by the new railroad trestle.

The many trees, shrubs, flowers, and groundcovers planted around the house by the Strentzels and Muirs had matured into a verdant landscape by this time. Some of the towering Monterey pines on the west side were cut, probably to admit more light into the house and ease overcrowding. The number of incense cedars was also reduced, possibly for the same reasons. Their heights generally approached the second floor of the house. Even the two California fan palms flanking the front entrance had grown tall enough to partially obscure the view from Muir's second floor scribble den.

Major new plantings in the landscape around the Muir House since 1890 included two true cedars below the incense cedars, a dozen or so different species of eucalyptus trees on the southwest side of the knoll, a giant sequoia on the lower west side in the triangle intersection, and Oregon live oak, strawberry, and mourning cypress on the east side. The island in the carriage drive-loop was densely planted and included a California bay, roses, pomegranate, quince, and ice plant. The outboard sides of the loop also included ice plant, a fruit tree, and other shrubs that probably included roses from the earlier period. More palms were also planted: two California fan palms and a Canary Island date palm just north of the carriage drive-loop, and two Canary Island date palms and a Mexican fan palm on the southeast side of the knoll. There was also a vegetable garden on the south slope of the knoll.

Historic photographs chart the growth of other plantings at the Redfern Place. By c.1914, the height of the incense cedars along the field edge northeast of the house almost equaled the height of the blades on the Alhambra Windmill. The Franklin Creek Windmill provided a similar gauge of vegetation growth along the creek, where some of the plantings on the north side of the main farm road were

as high as the windmill blades while those on the south side were generally no higher than the nearby orchard trees. Historic photographs suggest some of these trees were buckeyes.

Plantings around the Martinez Adobe reflected its use as a residence. The front of the structure featured wisteria vines climbing to the second story veranda and several foundation shrubs. There was no formal lawn, but in front there were flowers, a fruit tree, and three black locust trees, to the southeast was a redwood and to the northeast a pine. In the back, Cherokee rose and a mass of cypress and pine screened the building from Franklin Canyon Road.

The most significant exterior change to the Muir House during this period was the construction of a two- story addition on the south side to house a new water tank. Damage from the 1906 earthquake was relatively minor, cracking some plaster and toppling some of the chimneys, most of which were rebuilt. The deaths of Mrs. Strentzel in 1897 and Louie in 1905, and later the marriages of his two daughters ultimately left Muir alone in the house and lonely for conversation. In between travels, he spent his time in the scribble den immersed in writing projects or at the Martinez Adobe for meals and company. Just prior to his death, Muir made mostly interior changes to the house – installing electricity, repainting, and purchasing new furnishings and draperies – in hopes of luring his daughters back to the house.

In 1907, the Tom and Wanda Hanna converted the Martinez Adobe back into a residence, removing the lean- to shed, cistern, and farm equipment and adding electricity. To accommodate their growing family, the Cookhouse was moved and converted into a dining room, and a veranda and kitchen were added to the south and southwest sides of the building, respectively. The former Ranch Foreman's House, previously occupied by the Firth family, was now used as a bunkhouse.

Other structures added by this time included the Carriage House at the base of the knoll next to the fish pond space, windmills and wells southeast of the Martinez Adobe and east of the Muir House, and a well northeast of the adobe. A post and wire fence enclosed an area around the Muir House, called the Muir Homestead, and part of this included a gate across the main farm road next to the Carriage House. In addition, there may have been up to five small houses and a vegetable garden area along Franklin Creek, southeast of the adobe, for the Chinese laborers. These structures were located where State Route 4 is now.

Most of the farm roads and lanes on the Redfern Place were compacted earthen and gravel surfaces. By this time, the Woodshed Road extended from the east side of the house and along the south slope of the knoll down to the Carriage House and the main farm road, southeast farm road, and carriage drive- loop. This created a navigable loop around the house. Historic photographs show that the main farm road was a primary means of access into the Redfern Place from Franklin Canyon Road.

#### **Gravesite Unit**

Other than the burials of Mrs. Strentzel in 1897, Louie Strentzel Muir in 1905, and John Muir in 1914, little is known about the Gravesite Unit at this time. Local legend has it that Muir's graveside service was held under the same eucalyptus he had admired when Dr. Strentzel died. Other plantings present at that time may have included the Cherokee roses Muir planted in the 1890s along with other shrubs and flowers. According to Helen Muir, plants were watered by a nearby handpump. During this period, the Chinamen tended the grass that was growing around the graves. At one point, Muir and Louie also planted elderberry and willows along the Arroyo del Hambre to hold the steep slope opposite the gravesite. The orchard was still producing pears at this time but apparently was not regularly maintained.

#### **Mt. Wanda Unit**

Although Mt. Wanda was still a mosaic of grasslands and woodlands in 1914, the land uses had changed somewhat with the reintroduction of cattle grazing on its upper slopes by Tom Hanna. Fences, corrals, and water troughs may have been added to the grazing areas, but the exact location of these features are not known. Regardless, given the steep slopes on the north side, livestock grazing was likely out of view from the Muir House and Martinez Adobe.

The lower north and east slopes continued to accommodate a large pear orchard except for the right- of- way are under the AT&SF railroad trestle. The only other construction at Mt. Wanda was a bungalow built just off Alhambra Valley Road, across the road from Strentzel's Alhambra ranch house. This area included corrals and fences and was possibly used by Hanna.

#### **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE**

<sup>1</sup> Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1983: 27.

<sup>2</sup> Clark 1983: 28.



- <sup>3</sup> Letter from Helen Muir, 4 February 1957. (Cited in Sally Johnson Ketcham, “Historic Furnishings Report, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” Harpers Ferry, WV: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Harper’s Ferry Center, February 1971; revised 1982: 24).
- <sup>4</sup> Clark 1983: 30- 31; Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938: 355.
- <sup>5</sup> Clark 1983: 31.
- <sup>6</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938: 355. (Cited in Ketcham 1971: 24).
- <sup>7</sup> Interview with Mr. Briones by Ernest Lowe and John M. Jenks, no date. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others”.
- <sup>8</sup> Muir’s neighbor on the south side of Mt. Wanda, John Swett, was also struggling to remove his vines because of phylloxera. Wolfe 1938: 336.
- <sup>9</sup> Letter from Wanda to John, 26 September 1893. (Cited in Clark 1983: 45).
- <sup>10</sup> Letter from Louie to John (who is in Europe at the time), 22 August 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>11</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 1 September 1895. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>12</sup> Visitors to the house included the following: John Swett, Superintendent of California Schools and Father of California Public School System; Charles Keeler, Berkeley poet and noted ornithologist; Robert Underwood Johnson, Editor of Century magazine; William Colby, a Sierra Club founder; and John Burroughs, American naturalist and writer. From “Most Often Asked Questions at the John Muir National Historic Site.” JOMU website: <http://www.nps.gov/jomi/qufacts.htm>.
- <sup>13</sup> Clark 1983: 28.
- <sup>14</sup> Letter from Helen Muir to John Funk Muir, 26 July 1963. JOMU files.
- <sup>15</sup> Clark 1983: 28.
- <sup>16</sup> Notes from John Muir’s unpublished Martinez journals, 24 January 1895. Typescript by Linda Moon Stumpff, 9 November 1989. JOMU files.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files; Letter from Lillie Firth Thomas to John E. Jensen, 7 October 1967, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 38).
- <sup>18</sup> Undated typescript, author unknown. JOMU files.
- <sup>19</sup> Letter from Wanda to John, 15 June 1893. (Cited in Clark 1983: 38).
- <sup>20</sup> Interview with Jose Figuerado, 1 September 1976, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 45).
- <sup>21</sup> Letter from Maymie Kimes to Linda Moon Stumpff, 1 March 1983, regarding Kimes’ July 1962 interview with Helen Muir. JOMU files.
- <sup>22</sup> P.J. Ryan, Point Reyes, California, 1977. (Cited in Frederic Turner, “John Muir: Rediscovering America.” Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1985: 270).

- <sup>23</sup> William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume 2*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924: 194. (Cited in John Hussey, Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky, "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963: 23).
- <sup>24</sup> Letter from John to David Muir, 8 August 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>25</sup> Clark 1983: 89; Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site." Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 32.
- <sup>26</sup> County Assessors Book, 1893. Martinez: Contra Costa Historical Society. (Cited in letter from Chief of Interpretation to Superintendent, JOMU, 31 July 1989. JOMU files.
- <sup>27</sup> Interview with Mr. Briones by Ernest Lowe and John M. Jenks, no date. JOMU folder "Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others".
- <sup>28</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>29</sup> Letter from Maymie Kimes to Linda Moon Stumpff, 1 March 1983, regarding Kimes' July 1962 interview with Helen Muir. JOMU files.
- <sup>30</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>31</sup> Letter from Lillie Firth Thomas to John E. Jensen, 7 October 1967, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 38); Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>32</sup> Helen to Jean Hanna DeLipkau Clark (formerly Muir), 2 July 1953. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence 1953 to 1978, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Family.
- <sup>33</sup> National Park Service, "Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 2.
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>35</sup> Jensen posits that the attic water tank may have been inadequate by this time. John E. Jensen, "Historic Structures Report, Part 1, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, November 1966: 6; Undated typescript: 15. (Possibly part of a late 1960s or early 1970s interpretive guide, author unknown). JOMU files.

- <sup>36</sup> James K. Agee, “Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 29.
- <sup>37</sup> Burke 1992: 32; Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>38</sup> Wolfe 1938: 339.
- <sup>39</sup> Wolfe 1938: 339; Helen to Jean Hanna DeLipkau Clark (formerly Muir), 6 August 1953. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence 1953 to 1978, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Family.
- <sup>40</sup> Interview with Mr. Briones by Ernest Lowe and John M. Jenks, no date. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others”.
- <sup>41</sup> James K. Agee and P. J. Ryan, “Historic Trees of the John Muir National Historic Site.” *Journal of Forest History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 1980: 45.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>43</sup> Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> Letter from Maymie Kimes to Linda Moon Stumpff, 1 March 1983, regarding Kimes’ July 1962 interview with Helen Muir. JOMU files; Agee 1978: 11, 43- 44.
- <sup>46</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.
- <sup>47</sup> Louie to John, 1 September 1895. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900; Agee identified the *Washingtonia robusta* with a common name, Mexican- Washington fan palm. Agee 1980: 43- 44.
- <sup>48</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 21 June 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>49</sup> Helen to Jean Hanna DeLipkau Clark (formerly Muir), 11 December 1953. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence 1953 to 1978, Family Series VC, Related Papers, Family.
- <sup>50</sup> Clark 1983: 55.
- <sup>51</sup> Clark 1983: 58; Contra Costa County Deeds (hereafter cited as “Deeds”), Book 76: 149. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).
- <sup>52</sup> John A Keibel, “The Alhambra Valley Trestle, Then and Now: A Centennial.” Brentwood, CA: U.S. Print, 1999: 6, 10.
- <sup>53</sup> Letter from Wanda to John, 23 October 1898. (Cited in Clark 1983: 61).
- <sup>54</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, no date, 1899. JOMU files; Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files “Park Maintenance Binder 1”.
- <sup>55</sup> Clark 1983: 76.
- <sup>56</sup> Letter from John to Louie, 20 July 1901. (Cited in Clark 1983: 77).

<sup>57</sup> Muir campaigned to have this grant, which had been a state grant since 1864, receded to the United States. (Cited in Clark 1983: 81).

<sup>58</sup> Clark 1983: 83.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from John to Theodore P. Lukens, 6 July 1905. (Cited in Clark 1983: 87).

<sup>62</sup> Clark 1983: 87.

<sup>63</sup> David Blackburn, "John Muir and the 1906 Antiquities Act." Typescript excerpted from "The View from John Muir's Window," newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, November 1996.

<sup>64</sup> Clark 1983: 87.

<sup>65</sup> Clark 1983: 87; William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume 2*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924: 353. (Cited in Hussey 1963, 24).

<sup>66</sup> In actuality, the chimney and north wall of the adobe were damaged. Letter from Wanda to John, 18 April 1906. (Cited in Clark 1983: 87).

<sup>67</sup> National Park Service, "Final General Management Plan." Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, September 1976: 6; HABS, Photograph- Data Book Report. CAL- 1890, typescript, WODC, San Francisco, 1961: 6. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 25); Interview with Henry Sax, 20 February 1963 (interviewer and location of source unknown). (Cited in Hussey 1963: 25).

<sup>68</sup> Clark 1983: 92.

<sup>69</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1945: 309. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 24).

<sup>70</sup> Susan Dolan, "A Fruitful Legacy: The Historic Context of Fruit Trees and Orchards in the National Park System." Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Columbia Cascades Support Office, and National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardships and Partnerships. Draft, March 2001: 48, 50- 51.

<sup>71</sup> Dolan 2001: 64- 65. (Cites Auchter 29:210).

<sup>72</sup> Dolan 2001: 65- 66.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 50- 51.

<sup>74</sup> Dolan 2001: 66, 73. (Cites Lowther 14: I,158 and 14: III, 1476)

<sup>75</sup> Dolan 2001: 67. (Cites Auchter and Knapp 29:153)

<sup>76</sup> Dolan 2001: 65, 70.

<sup>77</sup> Dolan 2001: 56, 62, 73. (Cites Lowther 14: III, 1476).

<sup>78</sup> Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 39).

<sup>79</sup> The transactions occurred on May 13. Deeds, Book 137: 157. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).

<sup>80</sup> The transactions occurred on 29 April 1912. Deeds, Book 137: 157. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).

<sup>81</sup> Review of Sanborn maps at University of California – Berkeley, Earth Science Library, by author.

<sup>82</sup> Martinez Chamber of Commerce, undated pamphlet. JOMU files; Clark 1983: 98; Burke 1992: 46- 47.

<sup>83</sup> The Hannas also grazed cattle near the town of Crockett, near Martinez.

<sup>84</sup> Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 39).

<sup>85</sup> Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Jose Figuerado, 1 September 1976, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 45).

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Mr. Briones by Ernest Lowe and John M. Jenks, no date. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others”.

<sup>88</sup> Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files.

<sup>89</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.

<sup>91</sup> Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files.

<sup>92</sup> Ketcham 1971, revised 1982: 338. (Cited in Burke 1992: 39).

<sup>93</sup> Undated typescript: 7. (Possibly part of a late 1960s or early 1970s interpretive guide, author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>94</sup> Information regarding lavatory from Hanna interviews, 8 June 1966 and 13 July 1966. According to an interview with Louis Stein by John E. Jensen on 29 June 1966, a downstairs toilet and lavatory was installed later. This information extracted from a letter from Regional Director, Western Region to Associate Director, Professional Services, National Park Service, 24 September 1975. PWRO Folder “Compliance”.

<sup>95</sup> Burke 1992: 155, 159, 161.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 45, 159, 161.

<sup>97</sup> Burke 1992: 44- 45. Summary of transcript of oral history with Leonard Dickey, 1975 (interviewer unknown), JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 39).

<sup>98</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>99</sup> Driveway reference from *Oakland Tribune*, 12 November 1967. Reference to other road treatments in letter from John to Helen, 3 December 1914, JOMU files. (Both cited in Burke 1992: 46).

<sup>100</sup> *Contra Costa Gazette*, 9 November 1915. (Cited in Burke 1992: 46).

<sup>101</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>102</sup> Burke 1992: 45.

<sup>103</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Jose Figuerado by John Jensen, 31 August 1966. JOMU files.

<sup>105</sup> Agee 1980: 44.

<sup>106</sup> Information from Jose Figuerado, 1967- 1968. JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>107</sup> Information from Jose Figuerado, 1967- 1968. JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>108</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>109</sup> Agee 1980: 44.

<sup>110</sup> Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1;

Information from Jose Figuerado, no date given. JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>112</sup> Information from Jose Figuerado, no date given. JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>; Agee 1980: 44.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from John to Helen, 8 June 1908. JOMU files.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from John to Helen, no date. From typescript list in JOMU files.

<sup>115</sup> Mrs. John Swett's reminiscences of John Muir, 8 January 1916. Typescript in JOMU files.

<sup>116</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>117</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>118</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1945: 335. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 25).

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Jose Figuerado by John Jensen, 31 August 1966. JOMU files.

<sup>120</sup> Nicolas C. Polos, "The Neo Californians: John Muir and John Swett and Their Inner World." From *John Muir in Historical Perspective*, Sally M. Miller, ed. New York, NY: Deter Lang, 1999: 67.

<sup>121</sup> Discussion between Horace Albright, P.J. Ryan, and Peg Plummer about the Muir house. Typescript of taped interview (Reel #1674), 9 May 1974. JOMU folder "Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others".

<sup>122</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1945: 335. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 25).

<sup>123</sup> Letter from John to Helen, 3 December 1914. JOMU folder "Collection of sellers letters".

<sup>124</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1945: 346. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 20).

<sup>125</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 1945: 347. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 20).

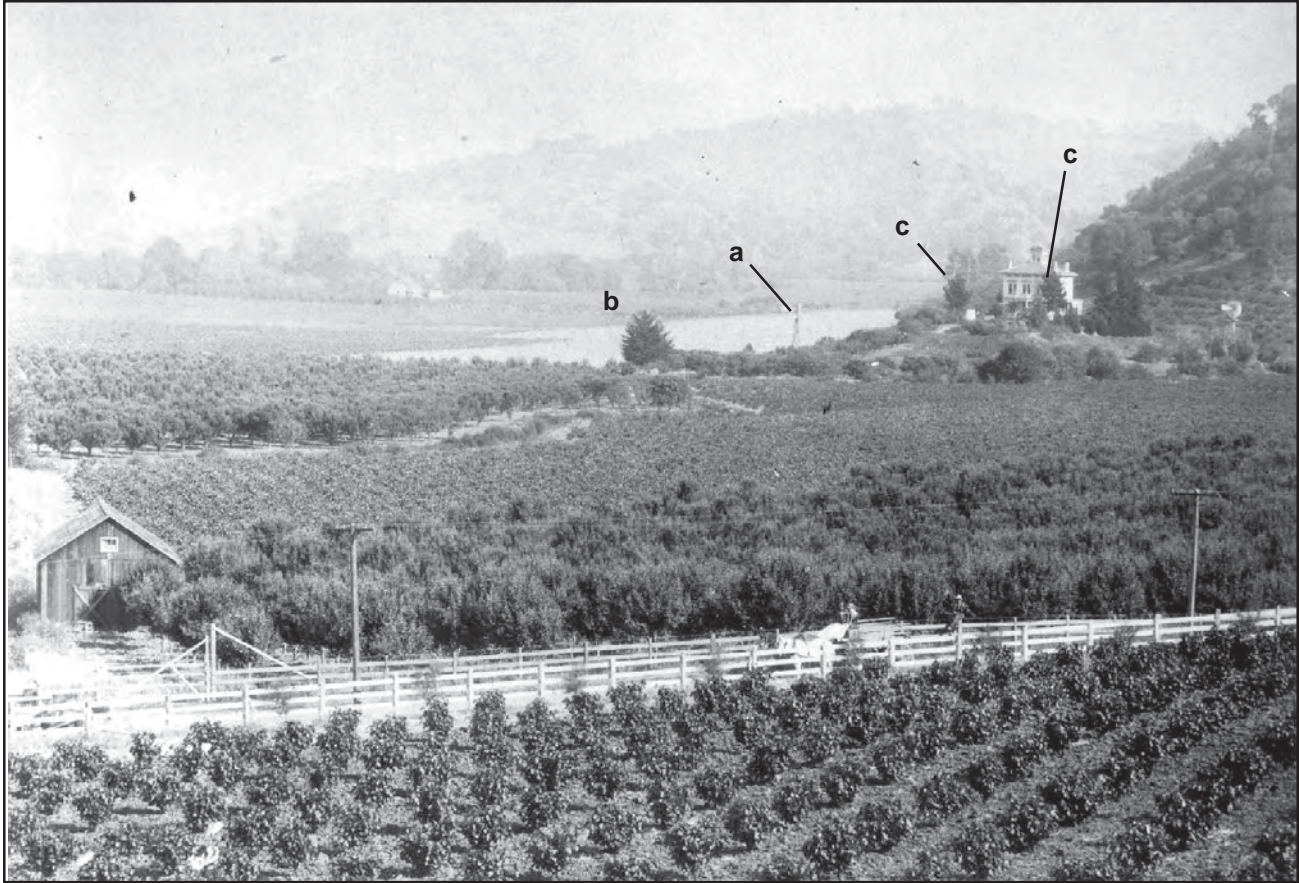
<sup>126</sup> Agee 1980: 40; Statement of Margaret Plummer, long time Alhambra Valley resident and granddaughter of John Muir's closest associate and friend, John Swett. (Cited in P.J. Ryan, "The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979: 1); Interview with Jose Figuerado, 26 May 1979 (interviewer unknown). (Cited Ryan 1979: 1).

<sup>127</sup> Dolan 2001: 50- 51.

This is a detailed historical map of Solsano County, California, showing land grants, ranches, and settlements. The map includes labels for 'SOLANO COUNTY', 'STRAITS OF CARQUEZ', 'BENICIA', 'SUISUN', 'RANCHO CANA DEL HAMBRE', 'RANCHO EL PINOLE', 'MARTINEZ', and 'Gravesite'. It also shows various land parcels with names like 'J. Strenzel', 'H.P. Edwards', 'M. J. Torrey', and 'B. Fernandez', along with acreage. The map is oriented with North at the top.

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**Figure 3.3: The orchards and vineyards on the east side of the road were still in the Strentzel-Muir name when this photograph was taken in c.1898 from a vineyard on the west side of Franklin Canyon Road. By this time, the Alhambra well and windmill (a) was up and running northeast of the Muir House at the edge of the hayfield and several incense cedars were planted between the windmill and a large cypress (b). The two tall trees on either side of the house are Monterey pine (c). (D1-5, JOMU, Ref: 1898c P23).**



**Figure 3.4:** This photograph was taken in c.1898 and looks north toward the Muir House and the orchards, vineyards, and hayfields surrounding the knoll; in this view grapes occupy the lower south slope, plums and pears the field to the southwest, and peaches cover the northwest side. This photograph also shows both the Franklin Creek and Alhambra windmills and provides the first view of the Carriage House and the Woodshed Road on the south slope of the knoll. Additionally, numerous young plantings can be identified around the house: a small Lebanon cedar (a) and an Atlas cedar (b) are visible downslope from the row of incense cedars; a Monterey cypress (c) grows at the south end of what is left of the large planting of pines on the west side of the house; two black locust (d) grow along the Woodshed Road; and agaves (e) and an arborvitae (f) have been planted along the lower portion of the carriage drive loop. There is also a small planting of grapes or vegetables (g) on the north side of the fish pond. (A1-20, JOMU, Ref: 1898c P24).





**Figure 3.5:** This photograph dates from the late 1890s and was taken from the west side of the knoll looking southwest at the pear orchard, China House, and the wooded north slope of Mt. Wanda. The plum trees in the foreground are all that remains of a larger orchard displaced by the grape vineyard shown behind them. Although the waters of Franklin Creek cannot be seen in this photograph, certain plantings hint to its course through this part of the Redfern Place: the light-colored foliage of buckeye trees (a) line the creek as it passes west of the grapes, while further upstream are tall eucalyptus trees along the creek (b) and at the base of Mt. Wanda (c). At lower left are the tracks of the east-west farm lane (d) running roughly between the grapes and pears. This lane probably accessed the China House and crossed the creek to the stables and corrals south of the Martinez Adobe. Another lane (e) runs north-south and is probably a cutoff spur to the southeast farm road and the fish pond area. (JOMU, no file #).



**Figure 3.6: View looking west c.1900-1905 at the hay field east of the Redfern Place and some of the apples and grapes holding the east and south slopes of the knoll. In the distance, the upstream windmill along Franklin Creek can be seen, as can the mass of cypress and pine (a) behind the Martinez Adobe. Notable plantings around the Muir House include: Monterey cypress (b) and Monterey pine (c) on the west side, which now rise above the roofline; the southernmost specimen in the row of incense cedars (d); and banksia rose (e) growing up the trunk of the Monterey pine northeast of the house. The Canary Island palm (f) on the east side of the house now reaches up to the second floor windows. (F13, Fr. #651, Holt-Atherton).**





**Figure 3.7: Circa 1900-1905 view looking north-northeast from around the front porch roof of the Muir House toward adjacent fields, orchards, and vineyards. A small clearing just north of the carriage drive loop separates the peach trees from other fruit trees (possibly apples) that extend down the east slope of the knoll to the hay field. Along the hayfield, the cypress and the pyramidal tops of the third and fourth incense cedars (a) north of the Alhambra well are visible. At the carriage drive loop, two California fan palms (b) and a Canary Island date palm (c) are planted along the north side. A dense mass of roses and possibly ice plant appear to fill the island formed by the carriage drive, but the view is partially blocked by the top of a cordyline tree (d) situated in front of the house. (D3-2, JOMU, Ref: 1900-05cP30).**

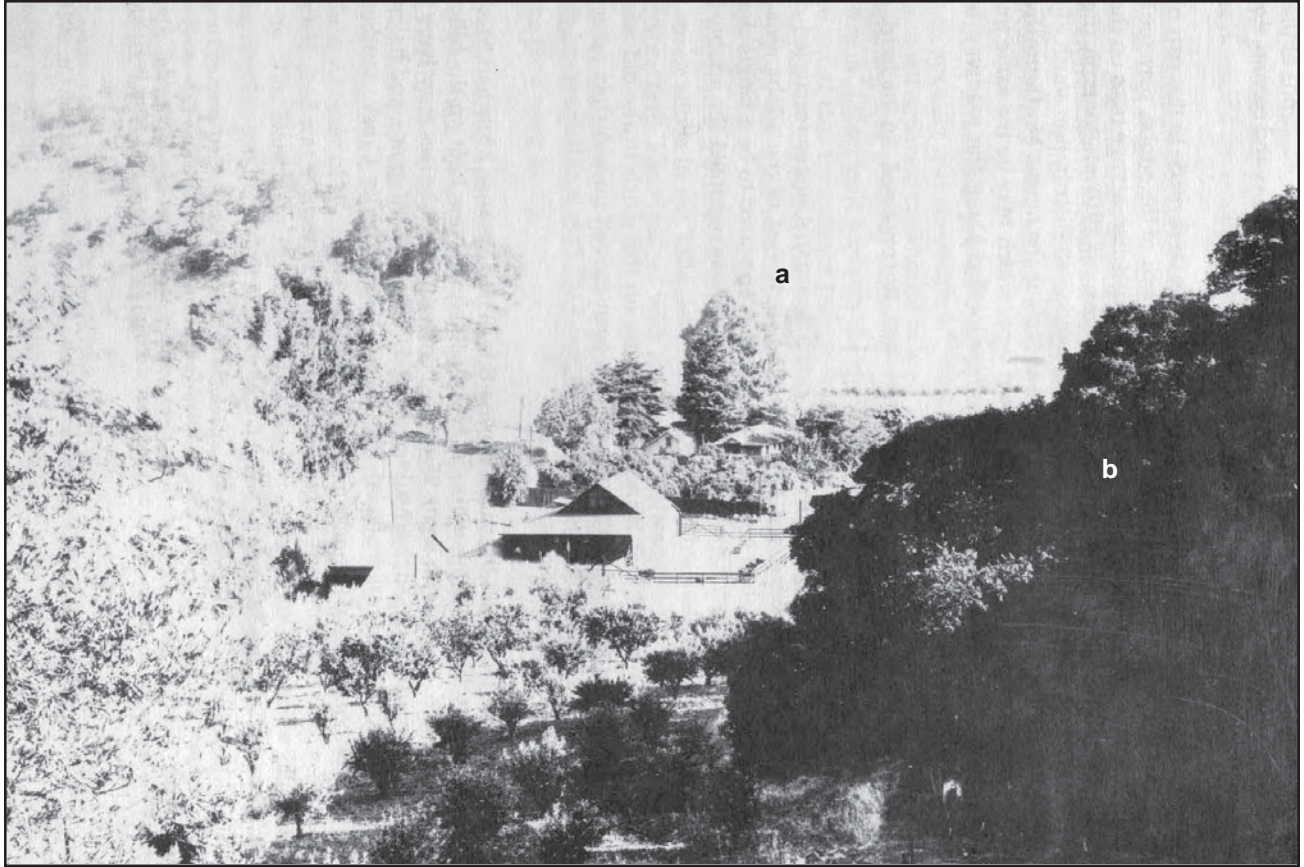


**Figure 3.8:** This c.1905 photograph, looking north from the pear orchard on Mt. Wanda, shows apples and grapes east and south of the Muir House, plums and grapes to the southwest, and more orchards and hay fields extending off to the north and east. Three new plants appear in this photograph: two Canary Island date palms (a) and a Mexican fan palm (b) have been planted between the grapes and the apples. Closer to the house, the two true cedars and two black locust (c) on the west slope are taller, as is the large Monterey pine (d) northwest of the house. Sometime after this photograph was taken, this pine was removed. Also visible is the trace of the eastern portion of the east-west farm lane (e) passing along the south side of the knoll. (A1-14, JOMU, or F13 Fr. # 641, Holt-Atherton).





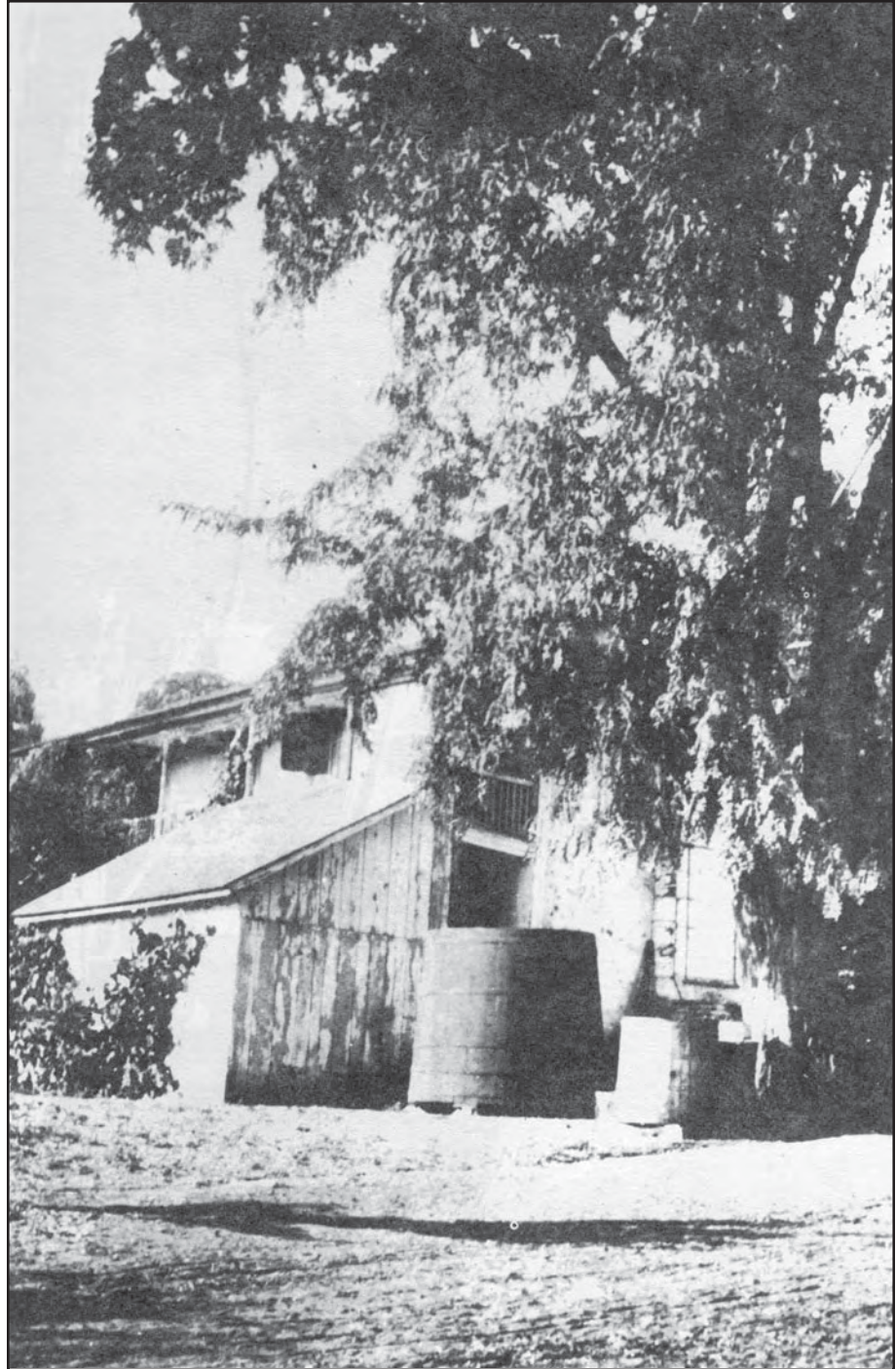
**Figure 3.9: View looking southeast in c.1905 at the Muir House, railroad trestle, and the Martinez Adobe. The grapes and apricots in the foreground are bounded by the main farm road, which is partially lined by figs and a grouping of large fruit trees that appear to be oranges (a). South of the road is an orchard of apricot or cherry, while lands on the other side Franklin Creek are comprised of pears set out around the China House and up Mt. Wanda. Non-agricultural plantings can also be identified, such as the mass of cypress or pine (b) behind the adobe, tall vegetation (c) bordering Franklin Creek, and the two black locust (d) next to the Woodshed Road, to the south of which is the grape orchard. In the foreground is Franklin Canyon Road and a gated entrance posted as a "Private Road." This may have served as the main entrance to the Redfern Place at this time. Note that the tall black locust tree and the packing shed north of the adobe have been removed. In the distance is the southeast farm road (e) heading toward the trestle. (F13, Fr. #645. Holt-Atherton).**



**Figure 3.10:** This photograph, taken c.1901 from a hillside south of Franklin Creek, is the only known picture of the outbuildings and orchards south of the Martinez Adobe. The Ranch Foreman's House can be seen next to the adobe, and both structures are dwarfed by the towering mass of pines and cypress (a). This area is separated from the stables and corrals to the south by an unidentified orchard. The dark mass of trees in the foreground that is shading another small orchard may be the some of the eucalyptus (b) visible in Figure 3.5. (From "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site, California").



**Figure 3.11: View of the Martinez Adobe looking southwest c.1900. The circular wood cistern and pieces of farm equipment are good indicators that the adobe is being used as a storage area. The large deciduous tree on the right is the black locust. (B1-13, JOMU, Ref: 1900cP31, by William Keith).**





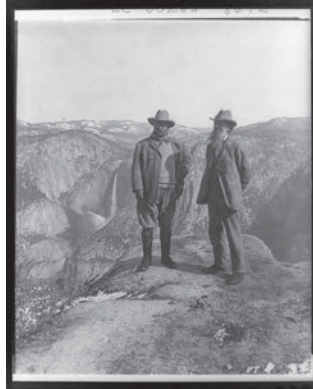


Figure 3.12: John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt at Yosemite, May 1903. (JOMU archives).

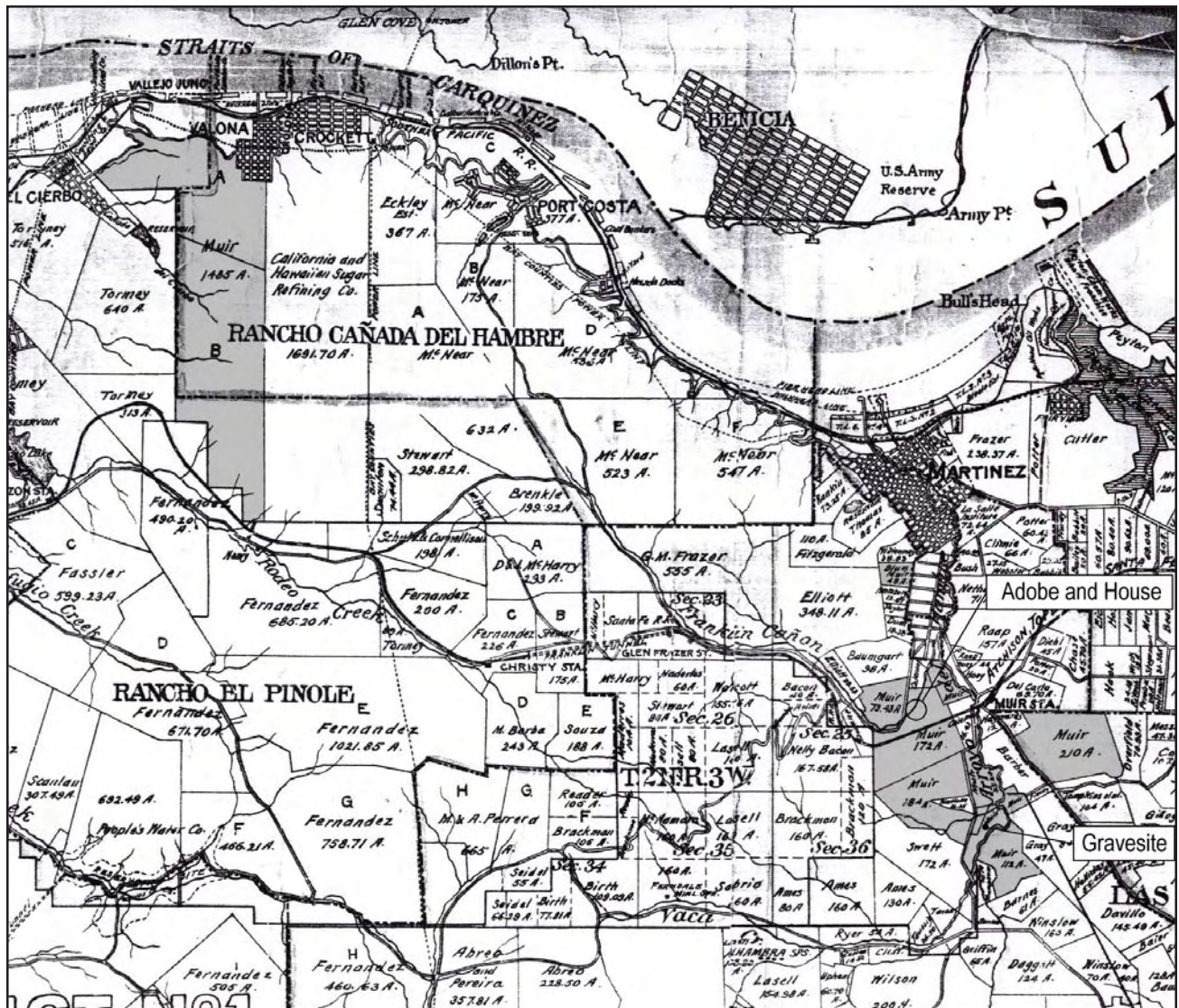
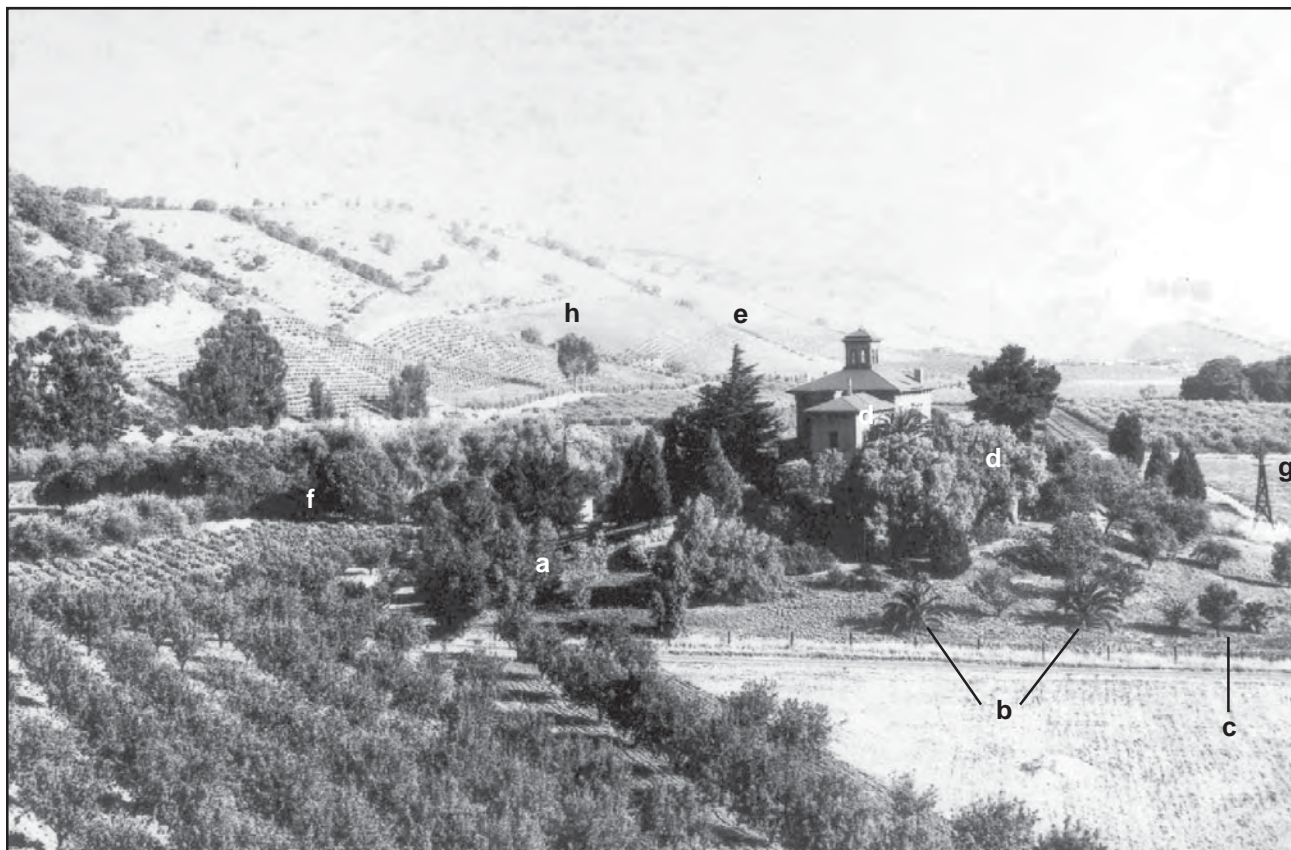


Figure 3.13: This portion of a 1908 Atlas of Contra Costa County shows part of the Redfern Farm west of Franklin Canyon Road has been reacquired in Muir's name. By this time, all of the parcels that make up the Strentzel-Muir ranch bear Muir's name. (Map adapted by OCLP. Original by T. A. McMahon, 1908. Map courtesy Earth-Science Library, University of California - Berkeley).

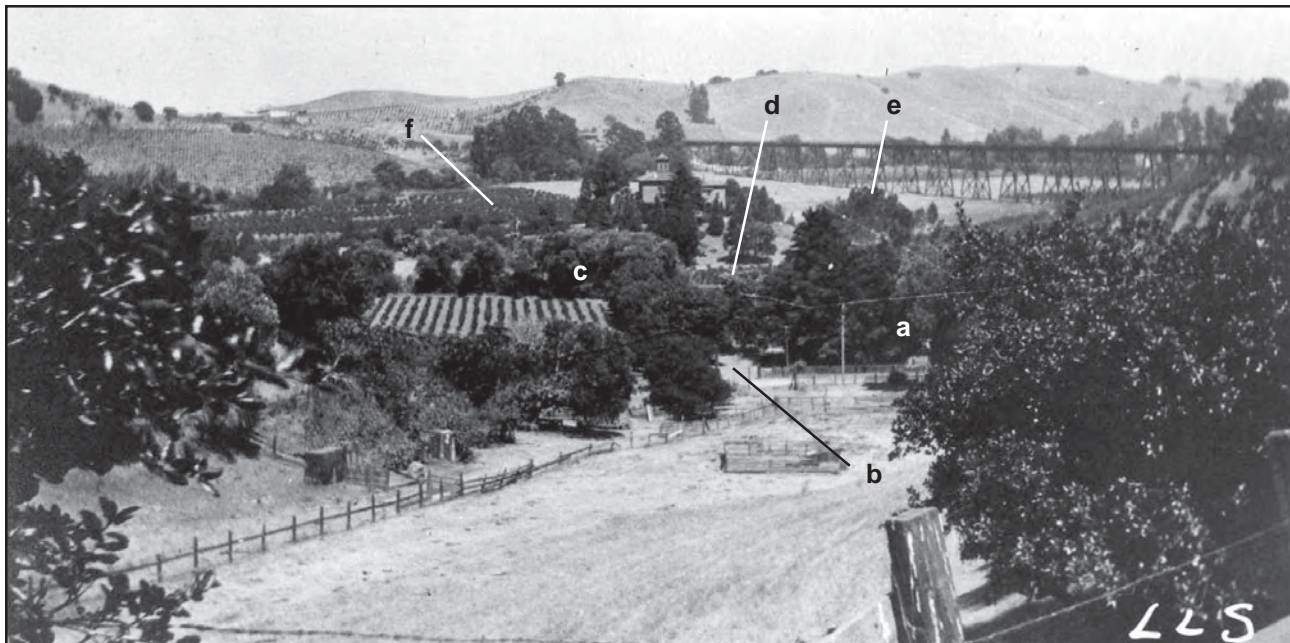


**Figure 3.14:** This view, looking north c.1910, provides good views of the Mt. Wanda pear orchard and the plums and grapes southwest of the Muir House. Several notable changes at the Redfern Place appear in this photograph: the grape orchard on the south side of the knoll has been replaced with a cover crop and a new planting of eucalyptus (a). A fence now separates the this area - which includes the Canary Island date palms (b) and the Mexican fan palm (c) - from the east-west farm lane and a hay field. A dense mass of deciduous and evergreen plantings (d) surround the Woodshed area and the Monterey cypress (e) reigns amongst the evergreens on the west side. Riparian vegetation (f) appears to be relatively dense along Franklin Creek, especially north of the main farm road, and the line of incense cedars (g) continue to thrive north of the Alhambra windmill. The tall evergreens (h) in the distance along Franklin Canyon Road may be the same trees shown in Figure 2.3. (A1-30, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14c P29).





**Figure 3.15:** This view taken c.1910 from Mt. Wanda looks north at the Muir House and towards the town of Martinez and the Straits of Carquinez. Several items are worthy of note around the fish pond: the grapes or vegetables planted in the north part of the pond are gone; three quinces separate the fish pond from the main farm road; vegetation around the windmill is shorter than vegetation along Franklin Creek and a conifer behind the Carriage House; a new addition and possibly a cistern has been built on the west side of the Carriage House, from which a pipe runs to the southwest; and a fence and gate (a) crosses the main farm road. The northeast corner of the Muir Homestead was located at the incense cedar visible behind the cupola. Regarding plantings, some of the incense cedars west of the house have been removed, probably to ease overcrowding. The Atlas cedar (b) and Lebanon cedar (c) continue to thrive, as do the two black locust trees (d) along the Woodshed Road and a mass of plantings (e) at the lower end of the carriage drive loop. The small plants amongst the cover crop or grass on the west slope may be poppies (f). (A1-19, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14cP27).



**Figure 3.16:** In this view looking east-southeast toward the Muir House and the AT&SF trestle, the flatlands and hillsides of the Alhambra Valley are still dominated by orchards, vineyards, and fields. This photograph was taken from the hillside pasture west of Franklin Canyon Road in c. 1915, across from the Martinez Adobe which is hidden by the pine and cypress trees (a). By this time, the main farm road (b) was again a primary route into the Redfern Place and was bordered on the north by a well-maintained vineyard. Even from this vantage, the density and height of riparian vegetation (c) along Franklin Creek north of the main farm road can be compared with the vegetation south of the road, which is short enough to allow a glimpse of the grape orchard (d) situated between the creek and the knoll. A mass of trees that appears to be situated on the southwest slope of the knoll may be the eucalyptus (e) remembered by Helen Muir. A significant land use change by this time occurred north and east of the house when part of the hay field was planted with fruit trees (f). (A1-19, JOMU).





**Figure 3.17:** This view from c.1914 looking south shows the front of the Muir House surrounded by a thick and lush palette of shrubs. From this vantage, the center island features many roses (a) and a California bay shrub (b) at the upper end. Ice plant (c) creeps along both sides of the carriage drive loop, which appears to be macadamized. West of the driveway is a fruit tree, possibly an elderberry (d). The Monterey pine northeast of the house is now completely enveloped in banksia rose (e), and behind this specimen is the windmill palm (f). The tall tree west of the house is a Monterey pine (g), next to which the tops of some of the incense cedars (h) can be seen. The California fan palm and cordyline tree on the west side of the front door almost obscure the view from Muir's "scribble den." Note the roof of a buggy at far left. (A1-32, JOMU).



**Figure 3.18: View from c.1912-13 looking west at the front of the Martinez Adobe. Directly behind Strentzel and John Hanna, two of Wanda and Tom's children, is a fruit tree, and to the right is the trunk of a black locust surrounded by shrubs and flowers. Shrubs are planted on either side of the steps but it is difficult to determine species, and wisteria vines climb up to the second floor veranda, especially at the north end. The tops of the pine and cypress trees behind the adobe are barely visible. (B1-39, JOMU).**





## Plants at John Muir National Historic Site

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)
Aa	Agave americana	Century plant	Ng	Nicotiana glauca	Tobacco tree
Ac	Aesculus californica	California buckeye	No	Nerium oleander	Oleander
Aj	Aucuba japonica	Variegated gold dust plant	Oe	Olea europea	Common olive
Al	Acacia longifolia	Golden Wattle	Oh	Osmanthus heterophyllus	False holly
Am	Acanthus mollis	Bear's breach	P	Perennials	Perennials
Ama	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Pa	Prunus armeniaca	Apricot
Ar	Alcea rosea	Hollyhock	Pap	Papaver spp.	Pink poppy
Ard	Arundo donax	Giant reed	Pc	Pyrus communis	Pear
Au	Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Pca	Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island date palm
Bp	Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote brush	Pcc	Pyraecanthus coccinea	Firethorn
Bs	Buddleia spp.	Butterfly bush	Pce	Prunus cerasifera	Cherry plum
Bu	Buxus spp.	Boxwood	Pco	Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Ca	Cedrus atlantica	Atlas cedar	Pd	Prunus dulcis	Almond
Cae	Casmanthe aethiopica	Chasmanthe	Pe	Pittosporum eugenoides	Pittosporum
Cc	Callistemon citrinus	Lemon bottle brush	Pg	Punica grantum	Pomegranate
Cca	Carpenteria californica	Anemone	Pga	Prosopis glandulosa	Honey mesquite
Cd	Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar	Pgl	Picea glauca	White spruce
Cda	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry cotoneaster	Ph	Pelargonium hortorum	Common geranium
Cde	Calocedrus decurrens	Incense cedar	Pin	Pinus spp.	Pine
Cf	Cupressus funebris	Mourning cypress	Pl	Philadelphus lemoinei	Mockorange
Ch	Chrysanthemum spp.	Chrysanthemum	Ply	Prunus lyonii	Catalina cherry
Ci	Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Pm	Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir
Cj	Camellia japonica	Camellia	Po	Prunus domestica	European plum
Cl	Citrus limon	Lemon	Pp	Prunus persica	Peach
Cla	Crataegus laevigata	English hawthorn	Ppn	Pinus ponderosa	Ponderosa pine
Clg	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Japanese, Flowering quince	Ppu	Picea pungens	Colorado spruce
Cli	Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon	Pr	Pinus radiata	Monterey pine
Cm	Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey cypress	Ps	Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce
Co	Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Psa	Prunus salicina	Japanese plum
Coc	Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	Pv	Prunus avium	Sweet cherry
Cp	Campanula medium	Canterbury bells	Qa	Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Cr	Campsis radicans	Common trumpet vine	Qg	Quercus garryana	Oregon white oak
Cs	Citrus sinensis	Orange	Ql	Quercus lobata	Valley oak, Cal. white oak
Csc	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Qs	Quercus suber	Cork oak
Cse	Cornus sericea	American dogwood	Rb	Rosa banksiae	Lady Bank's rose
Csi	Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	Rc	Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy
Csp	Cupressus spp.	Cypress	Rh	Rosa harisonii	Harison's yellow rose
Cy	Cordyline spp.	Cordyline	Ri	Rhaphiolepis indica	India hawthorn
Dc	Dianthus caryophyllus	Carnation	Rl	Rosa laevigata	Cherokee rose
Ds	Deutzia scabra	Deutzia	Ro	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Ec	Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Rod	Rosa odorata	Tea rose
Ej	Eriobotrya japonica	Loquat	Rov	Rhus ovata	Sugar bush
Eu	Eucalyptus spp.	Eucalyptus	Rp	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust
Fc	Ficus carica	Common fig	Rs	Rosa spp.	Rose
Fca	Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush	Rsp	Ribes speciosum	Fuchsia flowering currant
Fs	Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple guava	Sa	Salvia spp.	Sage
Ge	Geranium spp.	Geranium	Sg	Sequoiadendron giganteum	Giant sequoia
Gl	Gaura lindheimeri	Gaura	Sl	Salix lasiandra	Yellow willow
Gs	Gladiolus spp.	Gladiolus	Sm	Sambucus mexicana	Blue elderberry
Ha	Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Sp	Spiraea prunifolia	Bridal wreath spiraea
He	Heliotropium arborescens	Heliotrope	Smo	Schinus molle	Pepper tree
Ig	Iris germanica	Bearded iris	Ss	Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Jc	Juniperus conferta	Shore juniper	Sv	Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac
Jh	Juglans hindsii	California black walnut	Tf	Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill palm
Jm	Jasminum mesnyi	Primrose jasmine	Tg	Tamarix gallica	Tamarisk
Jr	Juglans regia	English walnut	Ti	Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson clover
La	Lavendula angustifolia	English lavender	Tj	Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star jasmine
Lc	Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	To	Thuja occidentalis	American arborvitae
Ln	Laurus nobilis	Sweet bay	U	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Lo	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California privet	Uc	Umbellularia californica	California bay
Ls	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum	Up	Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm
Lsp	Lampranthus spectabilis	Trailing ice plant	Ve	Verbena spp.	Verbena
Lv	Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	Vm	Vinca major	Periwinkle
Ma	Morus alba	White mulberry	Vo	Viola odorata	Sweet violet
Maq	Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	Vv	Vitis vinifera	Grape
Mc	Myrtus communis	True or Common myrtle	Wf	Washingtonia filifera	California fan palm
Mca	Myrica californica	Pacific wax myrtle	Wr	Washingtonia robusta	Mexican fan palm
Md	Malus domestica	Apple	Ws	Wisteria sinensis	Chinese wisteria
My	Myosolus spp.	Forget-me-not	Za	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Common calla

Cultural Landscape Report for  
John Muir National Historic Site



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

1914, House Unit  
Period Plan

Drawing 3.1

Sources

Base information from John Muir NHS Geographic Information System, January 2002; historic and contemporary maps, plans, and photographs; *Historic Trees of John Muir NHS*, Agee; *Historic Structures Report*, Martinez Adobe, Burke.

Notes

Locations and scale of features are approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by OCLP, NPS.

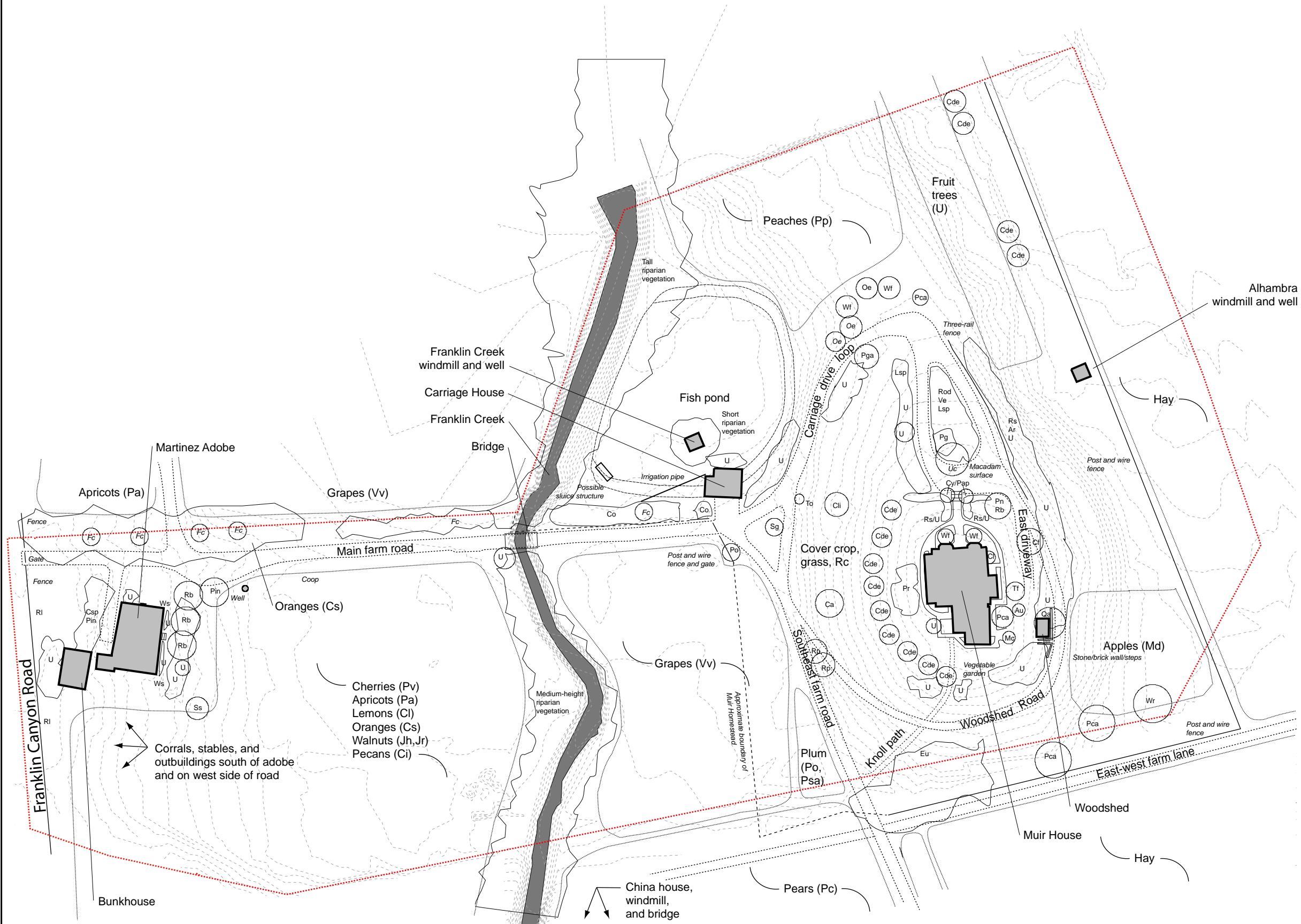
Approximate scale in feet

0 25 50 75 100



Legend

- Contour
- Future Park Property Line
- Paved and Dirt Road / Path
- Building / Structure
- Water
- Mass / Specimen Vegetation



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **SUBDIVISION AND PRESERVATION, 1915-1964**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

With the death of John Muir in 1914, the lands of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch passed to Wanda and Helen. The estate was subdivided, and Tom and Wanda Hanna assumed ownership of the gravesite and most of the ranch lands, including Mt. Wanda. At the Redfern Place, the Muir Homestead, which included the Muir House, stayed in the family until 1919, but the Martinez Adobe and land surrounding the Muir Homestead was sold earlier, in 1915. A period of complicated property transfers involving the house and adobe properties ensued until 1921 when ownership finally stabilized, during which time the buildings were used as private residences. During this period, the orchard and vineyards of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch, and indeed some of other ranches in the upper Alhambra Valley, gradually gave way to new roads and residential subdivisions. The march of development, along with the growing movement to commemorate John Muir, set the stage for establishing the first part of the John Muir National Historic Site in 1964, an area that included the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and 8.9- acres of land.

#### **DIVIDING THE ESTATE**

“The wedges of development are being driven hard and none of the obstacles of nature can long withstand the march of this immeasurable industry.”

This observation, written by Muir at turn of twentieth century, proved to be an accurate description of the lower Alhambra Valley. The early rumors of heavy industry coming to the area were validated when the Shell Oil Company located a plant in Martinez in 1915. The city quickly blossomed into a regional cultural center and marketplace as hundreds of families moved in, spurring a flurry of residential and commercial construction and signaling the beginning of the slow decline of large- scale orcharding in the valley. Population growth was focused on the level lands of the valley floor, which now had greater monetary value for homes than for orchards.<sup>2</sup> While this trend initially affected the lower (northern) valley lands close to Martinez, it would take longer to reach the upper (southern) part of the valley and, specifically, the Redfern Place.

Following John Muir’s death in December 1914, daughters Wanda and Helen inherited and administered their father’s estate. Not surprisingly, most of the orchard and pasture lands passed to the Hannas, including Mt. Wanda and the

gravesite. Other parcels were leased to some of the Chinese laborers or sold to neighbors and other individuals. The land holdings in the town of Valona and Crockett were also sold at this time.<sup>3</sup>

### **PROPERTY TRANSFERS, 1915 TO 1921**

The Muir Homestead initially passed jointly to Wanda and Helen and stayed in the family until c.1919.<sup>4</sup> The Martinez Adobe, however, was sold right away, along with some forty acres of land surrounding the Muir Homestead, to Wallace and Genoa Pond – hereafter called the “Martinez Adobe property.” At this time, the Hannas moved from the adobe to the Alhambra ranch house and Tom Hanna retired as ranch manager.

A 1915 plat map shows the boundaries of the Muir Homestead and the approximate extent of the Martinez Adobe property (Figure 4.1). The map describes land uses and confirms the agricultural character of this part of the Alhambra Valley in 1915. It also identifies the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, a China House, two stables, and shows two other nameless buildings. The Bunkhouse, Carriage House, Woodshed, and southeast farm road are not shown on the plat map; they may have been inadvertently left off, or given the scale of the map, intentionally omitted. Among the roads shown are the two main routes that lead to Martinez: Franklin Canyon Road and the San Ramon/Alhambra Valley Road. According to the *Martinez Daily Gazette*, Franklin Canyon Road was “rocked” in 1916 and renamed Franklin Canyon Highway in April 1921.<sup>5</sup> At this point, the road may have been widened.

### **THE MARTINEZ ADOBE PROPERTY**

The Martinez Adobe property was mostly flat except for the extreme southern portion, which extended up the lower northeast slopes of Mt. Wanda to a fence line, probably the same one shown in Figure 3.9. The 1915 plat map, in Figure 4.1, describes various parcels within the property as “orchard, vineyard, orange grove, pear orchard, fig trees.” The map also shows the main farm road and the east- west farm lane; marked as “private road,” each includes a bridge across Franklin Creek. In a sign of changes to come, the eastern portion of the east- west farm lane is more defined and labeled as “Avenue.”

The Pond family owned the Martinez Adobe parcel from 1915 to c.1917, but did not live in the building. Instead, they rented it to Alexander and Katherine Greerty and the Bunkhouse to the Hirano family, the Hanna’s new ranch manager. This may be because the Ponds had grand intentions for their property,

placing an advertisement in the *Martinez Daily Gazette* announcing the development of a forty- acre subdivision along the proposed southerly extension of Smith Street that would eventually pass along the east edge of the Muir Homestead and connect to Alhambra Valley Road south of the railroad viaduct. The subdivision never materialized, perhaps because of delays in extending the street, the multitude of other subdivisions advertised at this time (including a twenty- two acre parcel near the viaduct), and the onset of World War One.<sup>6</sup>

In December 1917, Pond transferred the Martinez Adobe property to D. L. Thornbury of Oakland for \$10. Exempted from the land transfer was an easement to maintain electric lines.<sup>7</sup> For the next four years, the property changed hands numerous times through a complicated series of mortgages, lawsuits, and other legal actions involving various owners. They included F. D. Prettyman of Berkeley; T. J. Brooke of Stockton; D.A. Hatfield of Portland, Oregon; the Earl Fruit Company of Concord; and finally James Rennie of Stanford in 1921. Apparently, only Rennie, who was a vintner and a member of the Sierra Club, actually lived in the adobe. It is not known if he maintained what was left of the orchards or vineyards.<sup>8</sup>

The Greerty family lived in the Martinez Adobe until c.1917, while the Hirano family lived in the Bunkhouse until c.1922.<sup>9</sup> In a 1966 interview, one of the Greerty children, Ray, recalled some of the plantings and crops present on the property during this period. The front of the structure was heavily shaded by wisteria vines, unpruned shrubs, and three black locust trees, one of which was removed during this period (presumably the northern- most tree). Hollyhocks lined the front steps, large fig trees lined the main farm road, and the field southeast of the orange orchard (east of the adobe) was planted in hay. The Greertys parked their automobile in the driveway behind the adobe.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Greerty remembered a gasoline- powered pump at Franklin Creek with a line that ran across the road to a 10,000- gallon tank east of the creek and to the barns and stables south of the adobe. The road he references may be the east- west farm lane, and this system was probably near the western part of the lane, in Figure 4.1. He also recalled a winery near the Martinez Adobe, barns and pigpens situated on the hills to the west, and a house for the Chinese laborers along Franklin Creek.<sup>11</sup>

#### **THE MUIR HOMESTEAD**

The sections of post and wire fences and gates visible in historic photographs prior to 1915 appear to correspond to the 1915 boundaries of the Muir Homestead

shown in Figure 4.1. The area included the Muir House, Woodshed, Carriage House, carriage drive- loop, Woodshed Road, part of the southeast farm road, the Franklin Creek and Alhambra wells and windmills, and the fish pond space. Most of the peach orchard north and northwest of the house was included, as were the apples on the east slope of the knoll and plantings along the south and west slopes of the knoll.

Little is known about the Muir House during this brief period except that after soon after Muir's death, the family moved its furnishings to the Martinez Adobe, which were then presumably moved again when the Hannas left for the Alhambra ranch house. There are no photographs or personal accounts of the plantings or crops – they were presumably left to their own devices.

One of the few accounts of the Muir Homestead comes from Mr. Greerty. In 1915, the wooden bridge across Franklin Creek, on the main farm road, was washed out in a flood. According to Mr. Greerty, it was caused in part by willow trees further upstream on the Martinez Adobe property:

Back of the barn was all willow trees and the creek ran zigzag. My father said to Tom [Hanna], 'you ought to trim those willow in the creek'. 'No, no' he [Hanna] said, "it washes the bank down into the creek." Sure enough, in 1915, we had an awful rain, an extended rain and the whole valley and the little bridge washed out. The brush was just like a dam.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Greerty also remembered that the main farm road served as the primary entrance into the Muir House. When the Muir Homestead was sold to A. L. and Mary Irish in 1919, the transfer officially included the main farm road and bridge over Franklin Creek as a "right- of- way for ingress and egress to and from the County Road (Franklin Canyon Highway)."<sup>3</sup> The property and right- of- way then passed back and forth between Muir's descendants and other parties: Helen and Buel Funk to A. L. and Mary Irish, A. L. and Mary Irish to Tom and Wanda Hanna, and the Hannas to Constance C. Schoolcraft, the latter transaction marking the end of the Strentzel- Muir ownership of the property. In 1921, Constance C. Schoolcraft sold the 4.83- acre parcel to William B. Waldron.<sup>4</sup>

## **ORCHARDING IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

For the commercial orcharding industry, the Great Depression of the 1930s accelerated the abandonment of orchards that had begun in the 1880s. Some of the abandoned farmlands were reclaimed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, who pulled out neglected fruit trees and reforested fields to kill pest and diseases, conserve soil, and allow for recreational use of the lands. Interestingly, this New

Deal agency also recreated several lost orchards at historic sides managed by the National Park Service.<sup>15</sup>

The procession of the new scientific era also contributed to changes in the industry. Commercial orcharding criteria became more complex and stringent and focused on varieties that displayed abundant productivity, youthfulness of fruit bearing, later blooming periods, pest and disease tolerances, compactness, consistency in size, color, and taste, and tolerances to cold storage and shipment. By c.1945, the number of varieties was down to a small handful that met the accepted standards. The criteria also continued the tendency to planting one kind of fruit in large single variety blocks.<sup>16</sup>

Californian orchardists, however, seemed to fare better than most, especially with pears. By the 1930s, the state was producing almost as many pears as New York, especially the Bartlett variety, primarily because the region's low humidity and cooler temperatures did not favor the devastating Fireblight disease.<sup>17</sup> By World War Two, California had also emerged as a leader in growing almonds, walnuts, and citrus fruits. Similar to other orchards, the trees were headed low. Walnut trees were planted at fifty by fifty feet spacing, almonds were planted more closely at twenty by twenty feet, and Navel oranges were spaced at twenty-five by twenty-five feet.<sup>18</sup>

### **OWNERSHIP STABILITY, 1921 TO 1955**

In the 1920s, the employ and worth of the land in the Alhambra Valley was in a state of flux. Prohibition brought about a change in land use when, according to Mr. Greerty, many farmers pulled out their grape vines and planted pears.<sup>19</sup> Beginning in 1929, ripples from the stock market crash and the Great Depression brought uncertainty and in some cases ruin as land taxes soared and land values plummeted. For large landowners like the Hannas, this reversal was devastating; however, in their case, they persevered because of their diverse business interests.<sup>20</sup>

Despite these economic conditions, or perhaps because of them, the upper Alhambra Valley was still characterized by orchards, vineyards, and grasslands as indicated by an aerial photograph from 1939 (Figure 4.2). However, a harbinger of changes to come was already stretched across the valley landscape by this time in the form of a two-lane road with broad shoulders set out just north of the AT&SF trestle. This road, later called the Arnold Industrial State Highway, more or less paralleled the alignment of the old east-west farm lane, passing directly

over the China House and splitting in two the hillside pear orchard on the lower slope of Mt. Wanda. The road connected the two main roads into Martinez – Franklin Canyon Highway (which ran alongside the Martinez Adobe and may have been widened at this time) and East Pleasant Hill Road (formerly San Ramon/Alhambra Valley Road) – and set the stage for subdividing the upper Alhambra Valley.

Witness to this seemingly conflicting time of uncertain economic conditions and relatively stable land uses were the Martinez Adobe property and the Muir Homestead. From 1921 to 1955, the Martinez Adobe property had only one owner and the Muir Homestead property had two owners.

#### **PARSOWITH OWNERSHIP OF THE MARTINEZ ADOBE PROPERTY**

In 1921, James Rennie sold the forty- acre Martinez Adobe property to Daniel L. Parsowith, a tailor and a musician. Parsowith held the property until 1955 and remodeled the structure, and used the small addition in the back – possibly the old Cookhouse – as a tailor shop. Sometime during this period, he added a one-story wood frame kitchen measuring twelve by fifty- two feet and a one- story laundry room measuring ten by eleven feet. Parsowith apparently had other business interests as well; sometime after 1921, he operated a small lunch stand and dance hall south of the adobe near Franklin Creek, called Muir Gardens, perhaps to satisfy his musical interests. This structure burned in 1927. Sometime in the late 1920s, the Bunkhouse or the Cookhouse was occupied by Charlie Curry, a relative of the owners of the Muir Homestead.<sup>21</sup>

The only agricultural reference associated with Parsowith is a planting of English walnuts somewhere near the Martinez Adobe in the mid 1920s. Some of these were situated in the orchard space east and southeast of the adobe; Agee's core analysis dated a walnut tree between the adobe and the creek to c.1922, next to which were two pecans cored to the 1950s (the pecans may be sprouts from older stems).<sup>22</sup> According to the 1939 aerial photograph in Figure 4.2, most of his land was cultivated in orchards and vineyards, including lands to the west that he had acquired by 1930. Crops also filled parcels not previously planted in fruits and grapes during Muir's time, such as the hillside to the west that was formerly corrals and barns and land southeast of the knoll that was once hay fields and cover crops. The aerial also shows that the barns and stables west of the adobe were removed sometime in the first half of the Parsowith period.

Figure 4.2 reveals several observations worth noting in the area between the Martinez Adobe and Muir House. On the south side of the main farm road, the



orcharding technique of using “filler trees” – discussed in Chapter 3 – appears to be in use in the space between the adobe and Franklin Creek. On the opposite side of the creek, the former grape orchard appears to be planted with rows of fruit trees, which may be pears because their spacing and alignment is similar to that of the pears nearby on Mt. Wanda. The continuity of the riparian plants between these two spaces is broken by a conspicuous gap; this small clearing may have been the site of a bridge that linked the two orchards, since the main farm road was technically part of the Muir Homestead at this time and may not have been accessible to Parsowith. That this gap is visible also suggests that the vegetation along this stretch of the creek was relatively short, especially when compared to the unbroken and wider mass of vegetation to the north, on the other side of the main farm road.

Proximate to the Martinez Adobe, the aerial shows that by 1939, the greatest concentration of plantings around the building appears to have shifted from the west side to the north and east sides. A photograph from a few years later, in c.1945, confirms this change and shows dense plantings around the adobe, which recalls Mr. Greerty’s description of the landscape thirty years earlier (Figure 4.3). The photograph shows the two remaining black locust trees towering over an understory of fruit trees, shrubs, and flowers. The wisteria vine was either pruned or removed by this time, while a large shade tree again grew on the north side of the building. A tall conifer of some type is also visible northeast of the house; it may be the pine recalled by Mr. Figuerado.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, two Monterey pines were planted in the 1940s; one was situated on the southeast side and another, according to Agee’s research, was planted to the in 1944.<sup>24</sup>

Some of the vegetation behind the Martinez Adobe was probably removed when Hanna constructed the driveway. Parsowith may have removed more still when he built a walled red- tinted concrete patio in place of the former driveway and several other brick retaining walls in the 1930s. He also constructed an 18”- wide red- tinted concrete walk on the north side to connect the patio to a new loop driveway in front. This in turn connected to a concrete walk in front of the adobe and a poured a concrete floor on the east veranda. Around this time, an open post and beam ramada was constructed on the west side of the building and small garage/shed to the southeast. A privy was also erected on the south side, possibly as an interim measure when a redwood septic tank, located northeast of the adobe near the well, needed to be repaired.<sup>25</sup>

**CURRY AND KREISS OWNERSHIP OF THE MUIR HOMESTEAD**

On February 13, 1923, William Waldron sold the Muir Homestead to Henry J. Curry.<sup>26</sup> A historic photograph taken around that time shows a somewhat thinned landscape in front of the Muir House (Figure 4.4). Most of the major trees – the California fan palms and cordyline tree at the front; the lemon and windmill palm on the east side; and incense cedars and Monterey pines to the west – continued to dominate the scene. Figure 4.4 also documents changes; the hedge that flanked the front walk has been removed and part of it replaced with small staked rose shrubs; and the edges of the center island are completely absent of plants. Specimens such as the Monterey pine northeast of the house, still wrapped in Banksia rose, appeared to be in decline at this time, and sometime after 1923 it was removed. The only known change to the house itself was painting the exterior brick of the south addition tan.<sup>27</sup>

After Mr. Curry died, the Muir Homestead passed to Millie E. Curry on April 21, 1930. The Muir House was apparently unoccupied for a time, save for occasional transients, and started to show signs of neglect – perhaps fitting considering the area’s plummeting land values.<sup>28</sup> Later, the house was rented to the Kreiss family until October 5, 1937, when Millie Curry officially sold the property to Nellie Kreiss. A few years after that, in 1939, the Muir House was designated a California Registered Historic Landmark (#312).<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no historic photographs of the Muir House or the Muir Homestead for the Kreiss period, which lasted until 1955. However, a close analysis of the 1939 aerial reveals that by this time, the Franklin Creek windmill and the Carriage House had been removed. The windmill was apparently dilapidated by this time, and the Carriage House was relocated to the east side of the Muir House, to the location of the Woodshed. These actions may have been prompted by a devastating flood a few years earlier, in 1937 that left the land around the knoll underwater. The fate of the Woodshed is not known; it was either removed or relocated.<sup>30</sup>

The aerial provides other useful information regarding the Muir Homestead landscape. The orchards that had been included within the boundaries of the Muir Homestead in 1908 – peaches north and northwest of the house and apples on the east slope of the knoll – had largely been removed by this time. In c.1944, a rectangular- shaped swimming pool was constructed in the former peach orchard, near the top of the ridge.<sup>31</sup> A small one- story, flat- roofed wood storage shed that appears in this area in later photographs may have been constructed at the same time as the pool, perhaps for pool equipment. The aerial also shows

several linear masses of vegetation along the north side of the main farm road; these were probably the figs and quinces. Other mass plantings near the creek in 1939 included vegetation along the banks north of the main farm road and a small patch around the Franklin Creek well. Agee also determined that a coast redwood tree at the southwest corner of the Franklin Creek Bridge dated to 1953, but that the original stem was cut and undatable. This tree may be the young specimen barely visible in Figure 2.5, from c.1885.

The aerial also suggests that the Muir House was probably not readily visible as one approached from the main farm road. By 1939, a large area of plants filled the lower western slope of the knoll. The location of this mass appears to stretch from the two true cedars to the two black locust trees. These trees would have been large by this time, and the density of this grouping implies that it probably included other plants added by the Curry and Kreiss families.

Conversely, where there was once a distinct linear mass of plantings along the lower carriage drive- loop next to the fish pond space was by 1939 more or less devoid of plants, save for what appears to be an olive tree. Their absence may also be a result of the 1937 flood. Occasional masses of plants still lined the upper portion of the carriage drive- loop and included specimens from Muir's time such as olives, a Canary Island date palm, and two California fan palms. This mass of plantings continued around to the eastern outboard edge of the carriage drive- loop and probably included some of the roses present during the historic period. The aerial shows few plantings in the center island, but the Kreiss family apparently planted a rose garden there sometime before 1955.<sup>32</sup> The western outboard side was also absent of plants at this time.

On the east and south sides of the house, the aerial shows the mourning cypress, Oregon white oak, and the Canary Island date palm, as well as the distinct arc of incense cedars on the west slope. The number of incense cedars was down to about a dozen specimens by this time, and it appears as though most of the Monterey pines on the west side were gone as well. One of the few records of plantings during this period concerns a Deodar cedar planted in 1939 just north of the arc of incense cedars.<sup>33</sup> Other historic plantings still present at this time included four of the original six incense cedars north of the Alhambra windmill, the three palms along the south side of the knoll, and the grouping of eucalyptus trees on the south slope.

Mrs. Kreiss- Schulz recalled that the only access to the Muir Homestead at this time was via the main farm road, although the 1939 aerial still shows the distinct

trace of southeast farm road and what appears to be an earthen lane leading from the south side of the knoll to the Arnold Industrial Highway. During the flood of 1937, the Muir House was an island surrounded by water and cut off from Franklin Canyon Highway, but the bridge along the main farm road apparently held.<sup>34</sup> The Woodshed Road is not visible in the aerial, suggesting it was not heavily used.

After Nellie Kreiss died, the property was transferred to Andrew J. Kreiss and Barbara E. Kreiss (Schulz) on September 16, 1946 and remained in the family until early 1955, although it stood vacant during the latter two years.<sup>35</sup>

#### **HANNA FAMILY OWNERSHIP OF MT. WANDA AND THE GRAVESITE**

The Hannas still owned most of the Mt. Wanda parcel during this period except for the lower northern and eastern slopes, which were owned by Daniel Parsowith (Figure 4.5). The Hannas grazed livestock on the upper slopes of Mt. Wanda prior to Muir's death, and probably continued this practice during this time as well, although the exact locations are not known.<sup>36</sup> In addition to grazing, at least three natural gas wells were drilled on Mt. Wanda during this period, the last one in 1954, but none of the wells produced and they were subsequently capped.<sup>37</sup>

At the Strain Ranch on the east slope of Mt. Wanda, four barns and several small portable buildings were built between 1930 and 1968 west of the bungalow.<sup>38</sup> This complex is visible in the 1939 aerial and shows these two areas linked by a farm road (Figure 4.6). The aerial also reveals what appears to be a farm road leading to a remnant orchard or vineyard (possibly olive trees) draped over the ridge south of the Strain Ranch. It also shows rows of apricot trees set out just below on an open hillside. This hillside, along with most of the upland areas, was grassland at this time. Beginning around 1950, the Strain family apparently began grazing their cattle, and possibly some of the Hanna's, in some of these areas.<sup>39</sup> A network of farm lanes likely connected grazing pastures to the ranch area.

Other developments at Mt. Wanda during this period included the construction of a frame house and cinderblock structure on the north side, close to the junction of the Arnold Industrial State Highway and the Franklin Canyon Highway. The latter building served as a café. Still another house was built near the railroad viaduct on the northeast slope.<sup>40</sup> These buildings are not visible in the aerial photograph.

The Hannas also retained the gravesite area, and Figure 4.6 shows this part of the upper Alhambra Valley filled with orchards and vineyards. The grave markers and enclosure are hidden under a canopy of riparian vegetation along the Arroyo del Hambre. However, the aerial does show the adjacent pear orchard and, at the southern edge, two large shade trees, possibly the incense cedars or the eucalyptus Muir wrote about. Compared to the surrounding crops, the pear orchard has many missing trees but appears to include some filler trees.

When the Hannas died, Wanda in 1942 and Tom in 1947, they were buried at the family gravesite. Small headstones were set flush with the ground within the low granite enclosure. They were made of part of a granite millstone that had been used at the Hanna gold mine near Lundy.<sup>41</sup>

### **COMMEMORATION AND PLANNING**

In the 1950s, suburban development was pushing closer and closer to the Muir Homestead and the Martinez Adobe property. In 1955 it finally arrived when, after Mrs. Parsowith's death, Daniel Parsowith subdivided and sold much of his land, most of which was soon developed as housing and commercial areas. The Martinez Adobe became part of a 3.8-acre parcel sold for \$25,000 to Louis and Mildred Stein, and was roughly bounded on the north by the main farm road easement for the Muir Homestead, on the east and south by Franklin Creek, and on the west by Franklin Canyon Highway.<sup>42</sup> That same year, Henry V. and Faire S. Sax purchased the Muir Homestead from Andrew J. Kreiss and Barbara E. Schulz (formerly Barbara E. Kreiss) for \$23,000 in order "to block its destruction by a proposed subdivision" as well as have a potential retirement project.<sup>43</sup>

The visions of the Saxes and the Steins made possible the establishment of the John Muir National Historic Site. The groundwork of memorializing John Muir, however, actually began much earlier, at the family gravesite.

### **JOHN MUIR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**

It is sometimes stated that Muir wished his house to go the Sierra Club upon his death, and that the organization apparently rejected the offer because of the anticipated high cost of maintaining it and because the structure could not serve as a fireproof repository for his works.<sup>44</sup> However, for most admirers, the natural gathering spot for remembering John Muir was not at the Muir House but at his grave, and in the 1930s pilgrimages to the Strentzel- Muir cemetery began. One such visit was described by Linnie Marsh Wolfe, a Muir biographer:

“Myrtle and the seal of Solomon ramble unforbidden over the grave. A rose bush trails along the railing, sending forth a wealth of white blooms as it did fifty years ago. An immense white hawthorn rears itself into a blossoming canopy and far up in the branches nestles the home of a wood rat. Perhaps the little creatures know that this nearness to their friend still brings them protection. For he loved every ‘wee skelet, cawrin’, tim’rous beastie.’ Throughout his life he sought to bring again into being ‘Nature’s Social Union’ which man’s blood lust has broken.”<sup>45</sup>

In 1933 the Sierra Club organized a formal hike to the site, and participants placed flowers on the grave and listened to speeches and taps at sunset. More commemorations followed in 1934 and 1938. The Hanna family was supportive, even after Tom and Wanda had died.<sup>46</sup> Since the Muir House was passing through a variety of private owners at this time, it was assumed that a monument for Muir would be erected at the gravesite.

#### **STATE PARK PROPOSAL**

As early as 1938, an organization called the John Muir Association was in existence, but it was not until about ten years later that a group of interested persons began efforts to preserve the Muir House. By 1952, the group was reorganized and supported by William Colby and other members of the Sierra Club as well as several prominent citizens in California. They urged the California Division of Beaches and Parks to assume ownership and administration of the Muir House as part of the state park system. Initially the Martinez Adobe, under separate ownership, was not included. A report by the agency in 1952 concluded that acquisition would be too costly and no action was taken by the agency.<sup>47</sup> Subsequent attempts for inclusion into the state park system also failed.

That same year another organization, the John Muir Memorial Fellowship, was founded at the gravesite during a memorial service with the intent, among others, to erect a memorial near the eucalyptus tree Muir had admired. However, when the Saxes purchased the house in 1955 with the “avowed purpose of holding it for any public entity or group that would maintain it as a Muir memorial for the benefit of future generations...” the momentum shifted to the Muir House.<sup>48</sup> On April 27, 1956, the John Muir Memorial Association was officially organized, and together with the Contra Costa County Historical Society, worked to restore the house as a memorial. In January 1957, the Martinez Adobe was included in this planning effort.

#### **COUNTY PARK PROPOSAL**

By the late 1950s, suburban development was closing in around the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead and the 3.8- acre Martinez Adobe property thanks in part to

new and improved roads. The Arnold Industrial State Highway just to the south was a major east- west corridor. Smith Street, which the Pond family had hoped would accommodate their subdivision in 1915, had by this time pushed southward on the east side of the Muir Homestead and was renamed Alhambra Avenue. It now funneled traffic from the Arnold Highway (renamed State Route 4 around this time) north into downtown Martinez and to points south in the Alhambra Valley. The new street also allowed the development of a new access point from the east into the Muir Homestead, which climbed the east side of the knoll to connect to the carriage drive- loop, near the storage shed. For this report, this path is called the “east access lane.” At this time, the former vineyard/orchard space southwest of the knoll – between Franklin Creek and the Muir Homestead – was owned by a developer.

In response to the rapidly changing landscape, the Contra Costa County Planning Department, along with the Contra Costa County Historical Society and the John Muir Memorial Association, presented a plan for a new county park encompassing the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead, the 3.8- acre Martinez Adobe property, and intervening lands in January 1958 (Figure 4.7).<sup>49</sup> Under this arrangement, the Memorial Association would open the house to the public and the Historical Society would operate the adobe as a museum. The plan was never realized, but it was the first attempt to physically link the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe, despite the fact the proposed area had three different property owners.

The 1958 plan also resulted in the first attempt to understand the historic landscape, especially around the Muir House. Under the guidance of Professor Joseph Muir (no relation), two University of California–Davis students worked on a cooperative education program to record plants on the site. The team determined that the California fan palms, incense cedars, lemon, eucalyptus, walnut, fig, redwood, and sequoia, among others, dated from the time of John Muir.<sup>50</sup>

#### **FEDERAL STUDIES AND LEGISLATION**

By 1960, preservation and commemoration efforts focused on federal acquisition and administration. The Memorial Association and Historical Society, along with a new organization called the “Muir Home National Shrine,” launched a correspondence campaign urging the Secretary of the Interior to assist in making the Muir House a “National Shrine, park, or monument.”<sup>51</sup> In 1960 and 1961, endorsements and support letters came from many prominent individuals and groups, including the City of Martinez, Golden Gate Audubon Society,

Wilderness Society, and the Sierra Club. The Department of Interior replied that the house was being studied as part of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, and until the consideration of the site under “Theme XIX: The Conservation of Natural Resources,” could be completed and reviewed, the Department would withhold any decision.<sup>52</sup> Concurrent with this research was a series of photographs of the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe produced by the Historic American Building Survey.

In the first half of 1961, Louis Stein, the owner of the Martinez Adobe property, purchased the orchard/vineyard between Franklin Creek and the Muir Homestead – a .97- acre parcel – from Walker Built Homes to prevent the area from being developed and separating the two most important structures of the old Strentzel- Muir Ranch. Since the Steins and the Saxes, owners of the Muir Homestead, were supportive of preservation and were willing to sell the properties for historical monument purposes, it became practical to propose a memorial that encompassed the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and intervening lands. This area was essentially the same as the one proposed in 1958.<sup>53</sup>

On January 10, 1962, Representative John Baldwin introduced a bill (H.R. 9492) to Congress to establish the “John Muir National Monument,” but it did not include the .97 parcel between the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe. The Department of Interior again recommended that the measure be postponed until the National Survey was completed for the site and evaluated by the Advisory Board.<sup>54</sup> Concurrent with these actions, the National Park Service was investigating the site under another theme – “Theme XX: Literature, Drama, and Music.”

The Advisory Board concluded that not only did the Muir House meet this criterion, but also that the entire site was eligible for National Registered Landmark status, and on December 29, 1962, the Secretary of the Interior approved the recommendation. On January 9, 1963, Rep. Baldwin reintroduced the bill, but again the .97- acre parcel was not included. On January 27 of the same year, Acting Director Tolson of the National Park Service ordered a feasibility and suitability study for the site, which in turn recommended the orchard/vineyard parcel along with most of the Muir Homestead and Martinez Adobe property – a total of approximately nine acres (Figure 4.8).<sup>55</sup>

In the 1963 “Feasibility Report for John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe,” the southern boundary of the proposed park was determined by the northerly extent of the fill slope associated with the proposed State Route 4



freeway. This new line was situated farther north of the boundary proposed in the 1958 plan, especially at the Martinez Adobe property. The proposed eastern boundary extended to the right-of-way of Alhambra Avenue, which was farther east than the original Muir Homestead boundary. Although this two-parcel area of land may have been compensation for the land lost on the south side, the northern parcel was nonetheless developed in 1963 or 1964 with a small one-story building and parking lot for the Martinez Animal Hospital. The western boundary of the park was along Franklin Canyon Highway and the northern boundaries were essentially those set out in 1908 for the Muir Homestead.

By the early 1960s, residential areas had moved in north, east, and west of the proposed park as well as commercial development nearby on Alhambra Road (Figure 4.9). The “Feasibility Report” warned the proposed park would “very likely become part of the undifferentiated urban sprawl which surrounds it” if it was not preserved in the near future.<sup>56</sup> The report also expressed concerns regarding plans to upgrade the adjacent State Route 4 to a full freeway by 1966 and the increase in commercial development that would likely follow. Specific concerns were the changes to topography and loss of vegetation caused by the broad fill slopes necessary for the freeway’s approach ramp, and cuts necessary on the ridges to the west and south of the Martinez Adobe (Figure 4.10).<sup>57</sup> Additionally, one of the most significant proposed changes was the closure of Franklin Canyon Highway and rerouting the California State Riding and Hiking Trail through the far southwest corner of the park.

The “Feasibility Report” also concluded that the Muir House was exceptional in value in commemorating “Theme XIX: The Conservation of Natural Resources” and “Theme XX: Literature, Drama, and Music,” adding that no other property in the national park system addressed both. Despite adjacent suburban and commercial development and highway expansion plans, as well as deferred maintenance on the structures and grounds, the report noted that the site possessed a high degree of integrity from the Muir period and possessed an adequate area available to preserve the historic setting and permit adequate interpretation.<sup>58</sup>

Additionally, the report recognized the Martinez Adobe as important, not so much as an example of an early California Mexican-style ranch house as for its contribution to the historic setting. In addition to its association with Muir, it could protect the site from further encroachment and provide space and facilities for administrative and interpretive opportunities.<sup>59</sup> There was no mention of Mt. Wanda or the gravesite in the report.

### **THE JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

On August 31, 1964, John Muir National Historic Site was authorized and established under Public Land Law 88- 547 “as a public national memorial to John Muir in recognition of his efforts as a conservationist and a crusader for national parks and reservations.”<sup>60</sup> The site included both the Muir House, the Martinez Adobe, and of the original 2,300 acres of vineyards and fruit trees, approximately nine acres of land as proposed in the March 1963 “Feasibility Report.”

### **IMPROVEMENTS AND PLANTINGS, 1955 TO 1964**

Throughout the almost eight years of planning studies and political limbo that began in 1955, the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe both served as residences and museums. The Stein and Sax families accomplished a variety of projects to improve the structures, and to varying degrees, the plantings and remnant orchards and vineyards around them.

### **STEIN OWNERSHIP OF THE MARTINEZ ADOBE PROPERTY**

On April 17, 1955, the Historical Landmarks Committee of the Contra Costa County Historical Society officially recognized the significance of the Martinez Adobe as a local landmark, and at a ceremony at the adobe Louis and Mildred Stein were presented with a bronze plaque.<sup>61</sup> The Steins appreciated the historical associations and architectural value of the building and had high expectations for its conversion into a museum when that idea was presented in 1958 county park proposal.<sup>62</sup> Initially, however, few changes were made to the Martinez Adobe and the 3.8 acres of land except for the removal of a pump from the well northeast of the house, indicating that the building was probably hooked up to city water and sewer by this time.<sup>63</sup>

As previously discussed, the county’s plan languished and the Martinez Adobe was subsequently rented out to various families and individuals as a residence.<sup>64</sup> However, after the building was rented to the Daniel Chase family from 1960 to 1962, the museum idea was revisited by two new tenants, Charles and Thelma Compton, in 1962 or 1963. The Comptons refurbished the structure and opened it to the public as a “living museum,” serving as hosts and guiding visitors through the building, which was interpreted as a Mexican period structure. Mrs. Compton also conducted music lessons at the house.<sup>65</sup>

Numerous exterior improvements were made to support the Martinez Adobe’s new public role. Around this time, the exterior walls and trim were painted and

gutters and drains installed. The Bunkhouse southwest of the adobe was also removed, except for the concrete foundation slab. Other features present at this time reflected its use as a home, such as the redwood septic tank situated next to the northeast well. It was used for refuse disposal, another indicator that the well was not in use. In front, the earthen loop driveway paralleled the front walk that lead to the garage/shed southeast of the adobe (where Stein stored historic records and papers). A clothesline and an unused outhouse were located on the south side.<sup>66</sup>

Some of these features appear in three historic photographs from the early 1960s. A photograph of the front of the building in 1960 shows a portion of the loop drive next to the front sidewalk lined with bricks (Figure 4.11). The foundation was landscaped with a mass of shrubs and flowers that included a mockorange at the southeast corner, Banksia rose and lilac on the left side of the steps, Banksia rose and cotoneaster on the right side, and more Banksia rose at the northeast corner. Two photographs from 1963 show the front of the building from different angles (Figures 4.12 and 4.13). Figure 4.12 suggests that many of the shrubs and flowers that were in the front yard area of the building in c.1945 were gone by this time, leaving mostly fruit trees surrounded by grass. Although Figure 4.13 offers a more distant view of this area, it does show that the two large black locust trees in front and the conifer to the northeast had been removed by this time. Both Figures 4.11 and 4.13 also show tall deciduous trees on the north side of the Martinez Adobe.

The orchard space between the Martinez Adobe and Franklin Creek was a mix of fruit trees and grass. Figure 4.13 shows the north part of this space had lost a fair number of trees compared to the coverage shown in the 1939 aerial (later photographs show that the south portion featured large walnut trees). The Chase family reportedly picked fruit from the orchards, especially oranges, for their own use. Stein also used profits from the sale of walnuts to help pay the property taxes, and planted a row of Modesto trees somewhere near the adobe.<sup>67</sup>

#### **SAX OWNERSHIP OF THE MUIR HOMESTEAD**

The Saxes purchased the Muir Homestead from the Kreiss family in early 1955 and inherited a structure that had been vacant for nearly two years. During that time, vandals broke windows and destroyed the onyx mantel in the west parlor, but damage to other interior finishes and the structure itself was relatively minor. The Saxes replaced the windows, installed furnace heat, repaired the roof and gutters, rewired, and painted the exterior with paint of the “exact chemical composition of the original paint.”<sup>68</sup> Like the Steins at the Martinez Adobe, they

probably hooked up to city water around this time. The fate of the nearby Alhambra well and windmill is not known; according to historic photographs the windmill was taken down by the mid- 1960s, possibly by Stein or perhaps earlier when the Kreiss family dismantled the Franklin Creek windmill.

Concurrent with structural improvements was implementation of an ambitious plan to restore the Muir House to its appearance in approximately 1900. Using information supplied by Helen Muir Funk, they collected furniture and objects that belonged to Muir or were similar to those that would have been there during his residency. Even before all of the repairs were made to the house, they led tours by appointment.<sup>69</sup> In January 1959, the *Shell News* reported on the progress at the house:

“After three years of painstaking work on a do- it- yourself project, H.V. Sax figures he has seven more to go before he re- creates part of California’s history to his own satisfaction...”<sup>70</sup>

To finance these repairs, the Saxes’ were using their own money and donations from the John Muir Memorial Association.

With time and resources primarily devoted to the Muir House, little attention was paid to the grounds.<sup>71</sup> Many of the plants present at the time of Muir’s death were still thriving, as were plantings installed since then, and the landscape around the house had taken on a ragged and overgrown appearance (Figure 4.14). The photograph shows Strentzel- Muir plants such as the two California fan palms flanking the front door and the Canary Island date palm at the southeast corner had grown to above the roofline of the house. By this time, the cordyline tree and lemon tree had been removed, but the large California bay shrub in the island of the carriage drive- loop was thriving. Figure 4.14 also documents growth in some of the post- Muir plantings such as the roses west of the carriage drive steps, a glimpse of the Kreiss rose garden in the center island, and some new plantings such as two arborvitae and firethorns flanking the front walk.

A photograph from 1960 documents slightly better conditions around the Muir House (Figure 4.15). In addition to a broom plant along the walk, Figure 4.15 shows a camellia under the west parlor window and a Banksia rose at the west porch – the same kinds of plants that Helen Muir recalled (in her 1958 interview) as present between 1890 and 1914. The photograph also shows the southern end of the incense cedars west of the house, which have grown higher than the roofline.

According to Agee's tree analysis, several other historic plantings survived the post- Muir years. The three palms on the south side of the knoll and the three palms on the north side of the carriage drive- loop were still alive, although the trunk of the Canary Island date palm closest to the carriage drive- loop was bent in some type of accident.<sup>72</sup> The four incense cedar specimens north of the Alhambra windmill were also extant at this time and were close to the same height as the roofline of the Muir House. The fig trees along the north side of the main farm road were thriving as well. In addition, the University of California- Davis study in 1958 identified nine varieties of eucalyptus trees on the south side of the knoll, the two true cedars below the row of incense cedars on the west side, and the sequoia at the base of the knoll. The plan also identified willows and coast live oaks on both sides of Franklin Creek.<sup>73</sup>

Several documented new plantings date from the Sax period. Between 1954 and 1962, nine Monterey pines were planted along the main farm road to fill in the gap between the two masses of figs visible in the 1939 aerial.<sup>74</sup> Analysis of another photograph from 1960 shows a pomegranate and a Japanese privet hedge next to the house. Additionally, a second Mexican fan palm was planted on the southwest slope of the knoll by this time, and according to later plant inventories, there were several walnut trees and plum trees north of the fish pond space.

Landscape improvements may have been slowed in 1958 when another severe flood ravaged the Alhambra Valley and inundated the lands around the Muir House, again leaving it temporarily isolated on an island.<sup>75</sup> Mr. Sax recalled that although the Franklin Creek bridge did not wash out in this flood, he did have to replace planks several times when they wore out. At this time, the bridge did not have a railing.<sup>76</sup> Figure 4.13 shows a portion of the main farm road west of Franklin Creek in 1963. The road appears to be a two- track surface, which would suggest the road was not heavily used even though it was the legal ingress/egress to the Muir Homestead. One explanation may be that the east access lane, built in the late 1950s, probably provided a more direct route to the house from Alhambra Avenue, which in turn offered a more convenient access to the town of Martinez and State Route 4. By this time, the southeast farm was also little used, and the triangle- shaped wedge of land that had once defined the intersection of the main farm road, carriage drive- loop, and southeast farm road was probably less distinct.

At some point during the Sax period, or perhaps earlier, a narrow sixty- foot long sidewalk was constructed from the carriage drive- loop alongside the row of incense cedars; its purpose is unclear. On the opposite side of the house, two

narrow paths lead from the kitchen door area to the east and to the southeast, respectively, and down to the Woodshed Road, which by this time was barely visible.<sup>77</sup>

#### **HANNA FAMILY OWNERSHIP OF THE GRAVESITE**

As plans for erecting a memorial to John Muir at the gravesite were abandoned, the spread of new subdivisions had reached the upper Alhambra Valley. By 1962, the gravesite was part of a 1.27-acre parcel surrounded by single-family residences (Figure 4.16). In the early 1960s, a realtor constructed a bridge over the Arroyo del Hambre near the northeast corner of the parcel to provide prospective homebuyers access to new lots on the other side of the creek, along Wanda Way. Soon after, John Hanna, one of the Hanna's sons, surrounded the grave markers and rectangular coping with a 35' by 27' cyclone fence to forestall vandalism from high schoolers who had started to "party" there.<sup>78</sup>

The gravesite continued to hold symbolic interest for many admirers of John Muir. In 1959, the Sierra Club inaugurated a John Muir pilgrimage hike that began at the Muir House, headed south to the eucalyptus tree and the gravesite, passed the Alhambra ranch house, and then headed southwest to the John Swett adobe before turning back north to the Martinez Adobe. The hikes attracted large followings in the 1960s. One of the features of the memorial walk was to link hands around the giant eucalyptus and sing "Auld Lang Syne." The hikes continued until around 1974.<sup>79</sup>

#### **SUMMARY: DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE IN 1964**

##### **THE UPPER ALHAMBRA VALLEY**

Although the Great Depression accelerated a trend of abandoning commercial orchards, Californian orchardists seemed to fare better than most, especially with Bartlett pears. By World War Two, California also emerged as a leader in growing almonds, walnuts, and citrus fruits. New scientific criteria and techniques continued to reduce the number of fruit varieties to a small handful that met the accepted standards, and reinforced the practice of planting one kind of fruit in large, single variety blocks.

In the upper Alhambra Valley, however, the biggest change to the commercial orchard industry came not from industry-wide changes but from a major shift in land uses. By 1964, many of the fields and farm roads had been replaced by busy highways and streets serving tracts of new houses and commercial buildings. Two of the main roads passed alongside the new John Muir National Historic

Site. Preparations were underway to upgrade the east- west State Route 4 – situated between the park and the railroad trestle – to freeway status. Equally as important was the recently constructed north- south Alhambra Avenue, which ran just east of the Muir House and traversed the length of the valley. Relegated to minor status was the original Franklin Canyon Highway, which was about to be dead- ended at the new highway and renamed Canyon Way.

The outbuildings and corrals south of the adobe and on the west side of Franklin Canyon Road had long since vanished in the tide of residential, commercial, and highway developments. However, two of the most visible vestiges of the former 2300- acre Strentzel- Muir Ranch – the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe – were set aside from this dramatically and rapidly changing landscape. The new 8.9- acre park also saved lands that were historically planted with grapes and fruit trees. The park was made possible by the preservation- minded Sax and Stein families as well as the efforts of the John Muir Memorial Association, Contra Costa County Historical Society, Sierra Club, and many other groups and individuals. At this time, the Mt. Wanda area and the gravesite property were not included in the park.

#### **THE FUTURE PARK UNITS**

##### **House Unit** (Drawing 4.1)

Most of the Muir Homestead parcel and the Martinez Adobe property was encompassed within the boundaries of the John Muir National Historic Site. However, unlike 1914, many of the orchard and vineyard areas were in poor condition or had been removed entirely by 1964. The orchard space between the Martinez Adobe and Franklin Creek was mostly a grass meadow amongst a mix of walnuts, pecans, and other remnant fruit trees. The former grape vineyard between Franklin Creek and the Muir House was replanted with pears after 1914, and some of these plants were extant at this time. However, only a scattered fruit trees remained from the former peach orchard north and northwest of the house and the apple orchard on the east side of the knoll. Quinces still grew next to the fish pond space, and figs lined the north side of the main farm road and served as the park's northwestern boundary.

At the Muir Homestead, the many trees, shrubs, and vines planted by the Strentzels and Muirs had become somewhat neglected, presumably because the property's three different owners directed their resources toward repairing the Muir House. By this time, the tops of the two California fan palms on the north side of the house rose above the roofline, while Banksia rose, camellia, and broom grew below along the foundation. The east side of the house was

dominated by Oregon white oak, mourning cypress, strawberry, Canary Island date palm, and myrtle. Historic plants such as the Monterey pines, cordyline tree, lemon, and windmill palm were gone by this time.

Grass covered the space between the house and row of incense cedars, which now numbered nine trees. The cedars – along with the two true cedars and giant sequoia below, black locust trees along the Woodshed Road – anchored a dense mass of vegetation on the west slope. These plants limited views to the Muir House from the main farm road and lower portion of the carriage drive-loop. On the other side of the drive, only an olive remained from a linear grouping of plants that historically grew next to the fish pond space. Farther up the carriage drive, palms, olives, and a honey mesquite thrived along the north side, while roses, pomegranate, and California bay filled the center island. Four incense cedars anchored the lower east slope north of the Alhambra well and the three palms and eucalyptus rounded out the south slope.

Throughout the grounds, historic plants were complemented with a variety of other plantings set out by subsequent owners of the property, including roses and arborvitae adjacent to the front walk; pomegranate and a Japanese privet hedge on the southwest side; and deodar cedar and Mexican fan palm on the west slope. Willows, coast live oaks, and other riparian plants lined both sides of Franklin Creek, with the north side featuring taller specimens.

In contrast to the Muir House, the plantings at the Martinez Adobe received more attention due to its role as a museum. A variety of shrubs and flowers were planted along the front walk and around the steps, including mockorange, Banksia rose, lilac, and cotoneaster. However, many of the shrubs and flowers that filled the front lawn area were gone and the area was much brighter due to the loss of the tall black locust trees.

By the time the NPS acquired the Muir House as part of the new park, the Saxes and the John Muir Memorial Association had invested almost eight years in rehabilitating the structure with a new roof and exterior paint and updated heating, electrical, and plumbing systems. The Muir House served as both a residence for the Sax family and a museum occasionally opened to the public for guided tours. At the Martinez Adobe, the Steins and the Comptons readied the structure for its new role as a museum. Improvements there included gutters and drains, exterior painting, and new utility systems.



Except for the Carriage House, which was relocated from the fish pond space to the east side of the Muir House, most of the other outbuildings and structures associated with this part of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch had been removed. New additions since 1914 included a garage/shed, privy, cistern, and ramada at the Martinez Adobe, and a storage shed north of the Muir House. The newest built feature, though, greatly contrasted with the other historic and non- historic structures at the park and was an example of this period's utilitarian building style – a small one- story concrete and brick structure for the Martinez Animal Hospital. It was located in the far northeast corner of the new park.

The fill slopes and right- of- way of the proposed widening of State Route 4, and specifically its northwest on- ramp from Alhambra Avenue, determined the south and east boundaries of the park. The western- most boundary was Franklin Canyon Highway, and as called for in the new highway plans, would soon be dead- ended with a cul- de- sac. For the first time since Vicente Martinez constructed his adobe, this part of Franklin Canyon Road was about to lose its important association with Franklin Canyon and the town of Martinez.

Just as suburban development had gradually displaced most of the Strentzel- Muir outbuildings and structures; it had also diminished the roles of the old farm roads. Even the main farm road was but a two- track road, even though it was officially the primary route into the Muir Homestead; it was probably used less than the new east access road connected to Alhambra Avenue. The carriage drive- loop built by Strentzel still lead up to the house, but the Woodshed Road and the southeast farm road were essentially abandoned and overgrown by this time, leaving only one side of the triangle- shaped junction at the bottom of the knoll in use. Sidewalks around the house and the two paths to the southeast were presumably still in use. At the Martinez Adobe, a concrete sidewalk and loop driveway provided access to the front and a small patio and ramada in the back. Due to the proposed highway, the California State Riding and Hiking Trail was relocated along the southwest corner of the park.

#### **Gravesite Unit**

The signs of suburbanization present around the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe were also visible around the Strentzel- Muir cemetery. The family gravesite was now encompassed in a 1.27- acre parcel, owned by the Hanna family, in a quiet residential subdivision of single- family homes straddling the Arroyo del Hambre. A bridge at the northeast corner of the property connected this area to more lots on the west side of the creek. Remnants of Dr. Strentzel's pear orchard were still alive at this time, and the southern most portion of it was

preserved within the Hanna property while others were incorporated into adjacent residential landscapes. Although a cyclone fence was erected around the grave markers to prevent vandalism by this time, the gravesite was still a popular destination for memorial walks organized by the Sierra Club. The hikes attracted a large number of Muir admirers, and one of the rituals involved gathering around the eucalyptus tree.

#### **Mt. Wanda Unit**

The steep wooded and grass-covered slopes of Mt. Wanda essentially held back the march of the suburbs from the flatter upland meadows. It is likely that some of the upper hill lands were used for cattle grazing and managed by the Hanna family or the Strain family. Although some of the apricots north of the Strain Ranch were still in existence, it is not known if they – or what may be olive trees to the south – were actively maintained. Few of the former orchards and vineyards occupying the lower slopes of Mt. Wanda were extant at by 1964 due to the construction of old State Route 4 on the north side in the 1930s and Alhambra Avenue along the east side in the late 1950s.

Most development at Mt. Wanda was concentrated in the vicinity of the bungalow at the Strain Ranch in the form of barns and corrals and connected by a farm lanes that lead up to the pasture areas and old orchards. Another residence was built on the northeast slope near the AT&SF trestle and two buildings were situated on the north slope near the junction of Franklin Canyon Highway and old State Route 4.

#### **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR**

<sup>1</sup> From undated brochure “John Muir Nature Trail.” JOMU files.

<sup>2</sup> Martinez Chamber of Commerce, undated pamphlet. JOMU files.

<sup>3</sup> Oral history by Ray Greerty, audited by John Jensen. Typescript dated 29 June 1966. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others”; Case 3877 in the Superior Court of the State of California in the matter of the estate of John Muir, Deceased, Decree settling first and final account of administratrices and distributing the estate. JOMU files. (Cited in Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, “Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site.” Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 46).

<sup>4</sup> Contra Costa County Deeds (hereafter cited as “Deeds”), Book 273: 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Gazette* (Martinez), 29 August 1921. (Cited in Burke 1992: 46).

- <sup>6</sup> *Daily Gazette* (Martinez), 29 September 1915. (Cited in Burke 1992: 46); Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, “Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site.” Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 47.
- <sup>7</sup> Deeds, Book 322: 95- 98. (Cited in Burke 1992: 47).
- <sup>8</sup> Burke 1992: 49, 51.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 47- 48.
- <sup>10</sup> Oral history by Ray Greerty, audited by John Jensen. Typescript dated 29 June 1966. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others.” (Cited in Burke 1992: 48- 49).
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> Oral history by Ray Greerty, audited by John Jensen. Typescript dated 29 June 1966. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others”.
- <sup>13</sup> John Hussey, Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky, “Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963: Appendix C.
- <sup>14</sup> Transactions pertaining to the 4.83- acre parcel known as the Muir Homestead: 22 January 1919, undivided half interest, Helen Muir Funk and Buel A. Funk to A. L. Irish (Deeds, Book 273: 214); 24 March 1919, A. L. Irish and Mary Irish to Wanda Muir Hanna (Deeds, Book 333: 344); 28 March 1919, Wanda Muir Hanna and T. R. Hanna to Constance C. Schoolcraft (Deeds, Book 333: 345); and 25 October 1921, Constance C. Schoolcraft to William B. Waldron (Deeds, Book 377: 499). JOMU files. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).
- <sup>15</sup> Susan Dolan, “A Fruitful Legacy: The Historic Context of Fruit Trees and Orchards in the National Park System.” Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Columbia Cascades Support Office, and National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardships and Partnerships. Draft, March 2001: 72- 73.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 50- 51.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 55- 56.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 73- 74. (Cites Lowerthall 14: III, 1476).
- <sup>19</sup> Oral history by Ray Greerty, audited by John Jensen. Typescript dated 29 June 1966. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others.”
- <sup>20</sup> The Hannas moved to Crockett in 1916. Following World War I, the Hannas also owned and operated a lumber yard in Berkeley and a gold mine in Lundy. “They were full partners in all endeavors, both business and domestic,” recalls their son, Richard Rea Hanna. They were successful enough to send their five boys to college. From Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1983: 98).
- <sup>21</sup> Telephone conversation with Louis Stein, 25 July 1991. (Cited in Burke 1992: 52); Burke 1992: 53.

<sup>22</sup> Burke 1992: 52; James K. Agee and P. J. Ryan, “Historic Trees of the John Muir National Historic Site.” *Journal of Forest History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 1980: 45.

<sup>23</sup> Burke 1992: 45.

<sup>24</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>; Burke 1992: 74.

<sup>25</sup> Burke 1992: 65, 77; Letter from Regional Director, Western Region to Associate Director, Professional Services, National Park Service, 24 September 1975. PWRO Folder “Compliance”.

<sup>26</sup> Deeds, Book 432: 207. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 8).

<sup>27</sup> John E. Jensen, “Historic Structures Report, Part 1, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, November 1966: 8.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Mrs. Strentzel Hanna by Diane Rhodes and Linda Moon Stumpf, 11 January 1911. Handwritten notes, Denver Service Center files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 53).

<sup>29</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975.

<sup>30</sup> In this interview, Mrs. Barbara Kreiss Schulz claimed that the family built the carriage house next to the house. Interview with Mrs. Barbara Kreiss Schulz, former owner of the house, by Linda Moon Stumpf, 23 December 1983. JOMU files.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lillie Firth Thomas by John E. Jensen, 19 March 1968. JOMU files.

<sup>32</sup> Oral history by Ray Greerty, audited by John Jensen. Typescript dated 29 June 1966. JOMU folder “Oral History: Swett, Briones, Evans, Colby, and others.”

<sup>33</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Henry Sax and Andrew Kreiss by John E. Jensen, 19 October 1966. JOMU files.

<sup>35</sup> Hussey 1963: 37.

<sup>36</sup> Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1983: 98.

<sup>37</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: 34.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Inglis, “Watershed Condition Assessment of Sub Drainage Zone No. 1167, John Muir National Historic Site.” Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR-2000/262. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, February 2000: 7.

<sup>40</sup> Memorandum from Regional Archeologist, Western Region: "Brief Assessment of Proposed Additions to John Muir NHS," 30 June 1989. (Cited in Richard Inglis, "Watershed Condition Assessment of Sub Drainage Zone No. 1167, John Muir National Historic Site." Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR- 2000/262. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, February 2000: Appendix C).

<sup>41</sup> P.J. Ryan, "The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979:2.

<sup>42</sup> Contra Costa County Official Records, Book 2474: 407. (Cited in Burke 1992: 56); Pat Thomas, "Louis L. Stein's Legacy." Typescript excerpted from "The View from John Muir's Window," newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, March 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Contra Costa County Official Records, Book 2463: 5. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 3); Jeff Morgan, "Muir Home May Become National Monument." *Oakland Tribune*, 21 January 1962. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 3).

<sup>44</sup> "Our Heritage and Our Tribute," broadside issue for the Fourth Annual John Muir Association Festival, Martinez, April 1960. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 2).

<sup>45</sup> Newspaper clipping, 28 April 1930, quoting Linnie Marsh Wolfe (newspaper unknown). (Cited in P.J. Ryan, "The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979: 2).

<sup>46</sup> *Oakland Post Inquirer*, 22 April 1933. (Cited in P.J. Ryan, "The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979: 3); Wanda Muir Hanna died 29 July 1942 and Thomas Rea Hanna died 26 October 1947. Both were buried at the family gravesite along Alhambra Creek. The Hanna's headstones are flush with ground and made with part of a granite millstone used at their gold mine near Lundy. From Ryan 1979: 2.

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum from E. E. Powell, Land Planner, Division of Beaches and Parks, to Newton B. Drury, Chief, Division of Beaches and Parks, 26 September 1952. Manuscript in Division of Beaches and Parks. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 3); Hussey 1963: 3.

<sup>48</sup> A.F. Bray, "History of the John Muir Memorial Association," JOMU files. (Cited in Ryan 1979: 3- 4).

<sup>49</sup> Hussey 1963: 4; "Legislative History of John Muir NHS." Typescript, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 57).

<sup>50</sup> National Park Service, "Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 1.

<sup>51</sup> Hussey 1963: 4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 5- 6.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 39- 40.

<sup>59</sup> Hussey 1963: 9; John E. Jensen and Koue A. Lewis, "Historic Structures Report, Part 2, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, June 1968: 2. (Cited in Burke 1992: 62).

<sup>60</sup> Section 2, Public Law 88- 547, 31 August 1964. From National Park Service, "General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment," 1991: Appendix 1.

<sup>61</sup> The ceremony took place at the adobe on April 17. From "The Vicente Martinez Adobe Bronze Plaque," Contra Costa County Historic Society Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 7, January 1955: 1- 2. (Cited in Burke 1992: 56).

<sup>62</sup> Another acquisition from Louis Stein involves Contra Costa County court documents dating from 1858- 1920. Some years ago the county put all of their records on microfilm. At this time all paper documents were loaded into trucks and taken to the dump. When news of this got around Mr. Stein, along with the Martinez Historical Society and the County Historical Society, descended upon these trucks with baskets, bags, boxes, etc. and loaded as much as they could carry to save these original documents. Because of these concerned citizens we have these important records (Deeds, Estates and Court Briefs) preserved. One of the documents, a jury verdict, lists Dr. Strentzel, Muir father- in- law, as the jury foreman. All of these items contribute to the background of the years when John Muir lived in Martinez. We are ever grateful that "savers" such as Louis L. Stein exist. From Pat Thomas, "Louis L. Stein's Legacy." Typescript excerpted from "The View from John Muir's Window," newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, March 1997.

<sup>63</sup> Burke 1992: 58.

<sup>64</sup> Hussey 1963: 5.

<sup>65</sup> Kathryn B. Plummer to John A. Hussey, 14 March 1965, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 58).

<sup>66</sup> Burke 1992: 58.

<sup>67</sup> Telephone conversation between Diane Rhodes and Louis Stein, 25 July 1991, handwritten notes. Denver Service Center files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 57).

<sup>68</sup> HABS, Photograph- Data Book Report Part II. CAL- 1890, typescript, WODC, San Francisco, 1961: 1. (Cited in Hussey 1963: 38).

<sup>69</sup> Hussey 1963: 33, 37.

<sup>70</sup> "Shell News," January 1959: 11.

<sup>71</sup> Hussey 1963: 38.

<sup>72</sup> James K. Agee, "Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 30.

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Muir, et al. "Trees and Shrubs at Muir Manor, Martinez." Typescript notes, January 1958. JOMU files.

<sup>74</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –  
<http://memembers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Henry Sax and Andrew Kreiss by John E. Jensen, 19 October 1966. JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 53).

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Henry Sax and Andrew Kreiss by John E. Jensen, 19 October 1966. JOMU files.

<sup>77</sup> National Park Service, "Master Plan for Preservation and Use," 1965: 4.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Sherry Hanna, interviewer unknown, 13 December 1978. JOMU files.

<sup>79</sup> Ryan 1979: 4; Telephone interview with Ann Lage, co- chair of the History Committee for the Sierra Club, 13 February 1979. (Cited in Ryan 1979: 3).





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**Figure 4.2:** This aerial photograph from 1939 shows the Arnold Industrial State Highway passing between the Muir House and the AT&SF trestle and bisecting a landscape still dominated by orchards, vineyards, and pastures. The highway passed directly over the China House along Franklin Creek. Access into the Muir Homestead at this time was from the main farm road (a) crossing Franklin Creek. It appears as though most of the outbuildings associated with the Strentzel-Muir Ranch have been removed. (JOMU, no #).



**Figure 4.3:** Two black locust trees tower over shrubs and understory trees in front of the Martinez Adobe in this view from c.1945. A large shade tree is visible on the north side of the adobe, behind a conifer (a). (HABS, CAL-1913, Jack Boucher).



**Figure 4.4:** This photograph dates from c.1923 (the license plate on the Buick reads 1923). The northern portion of the center island (a) of the carriage drive-loop appears to be free of plants at this time. The front lawn is also relatively open, and is dominated by the cordyline tree (b) and the two California fan palms - the western specimen is shorter than its counterpart and now blocks the view from Muir's old scribble den. The east side of the Muir House features the tall windmill palm (c), while the Monterey pine (d) to the northeast is still cloaked in Banksia rose but appears to be in decline. (Property of Henry J. Curry, Martinez, California. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).



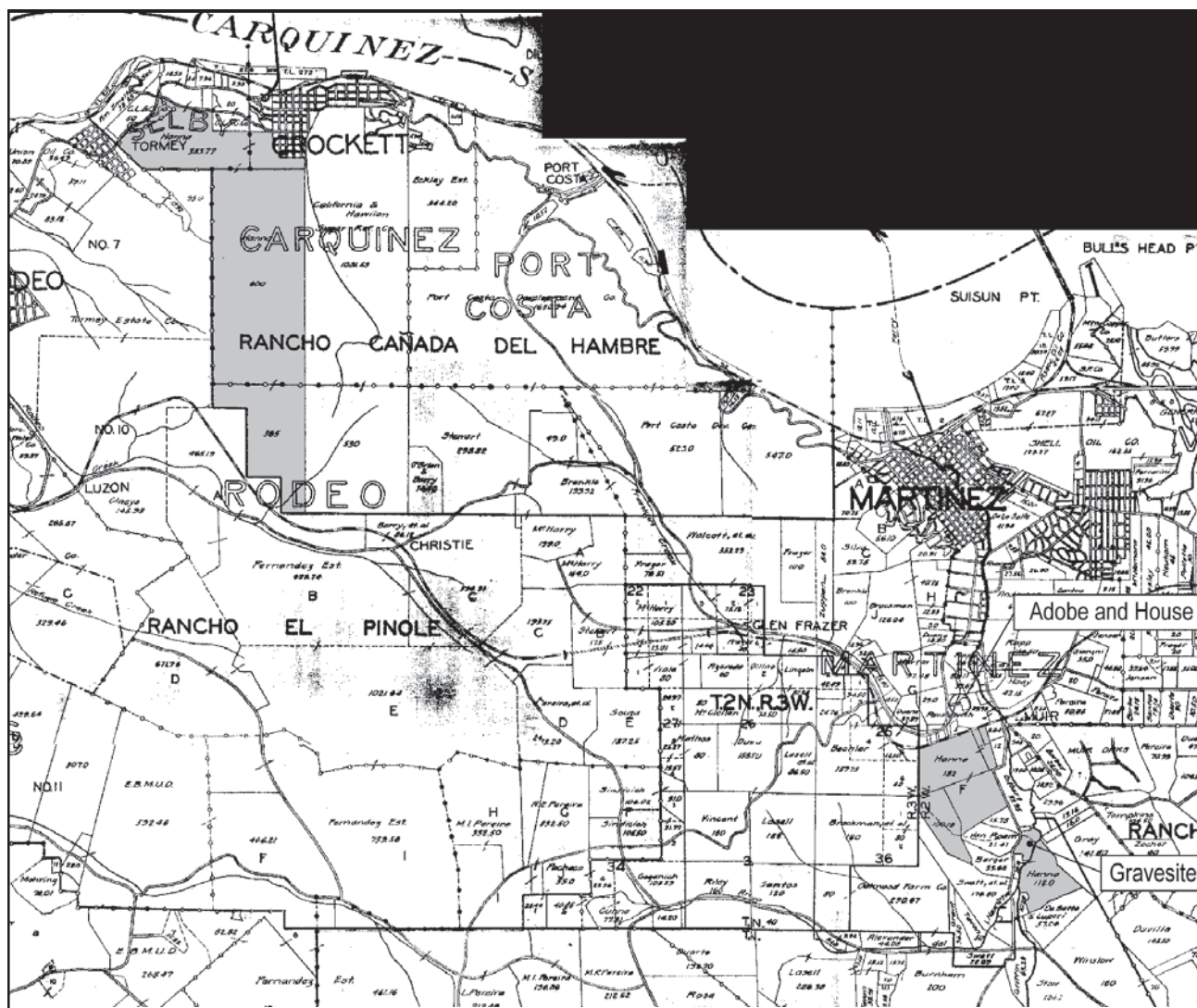
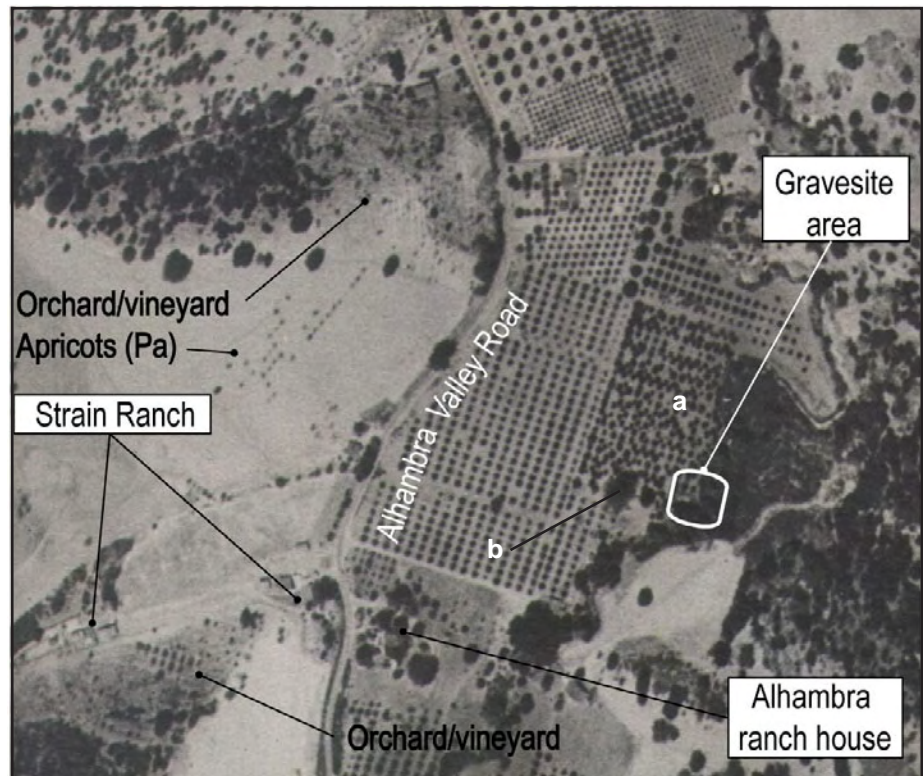


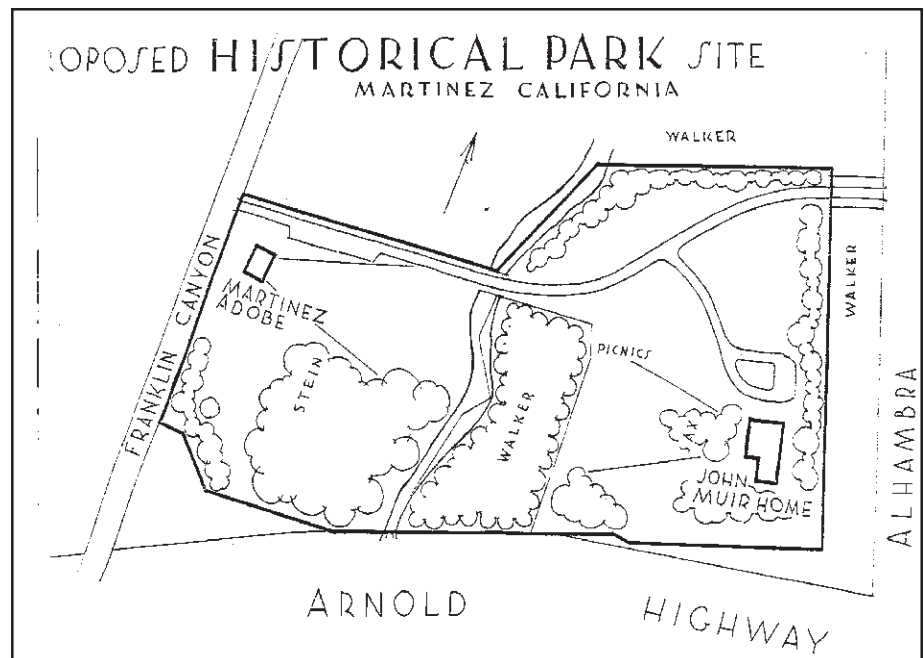
Figure 4.5: This portion of a Contra Costa County atlas from 1930 shows properties formerly in Muir's name are now in Hanna's name. The gravesite and Mt. Wanda are still in the family. Note the former Strentzel-Muir parcel east of Mt. Wanda; it has been subdivided and named "Muir Oaks." (Map adapted by OCLP. Official Map of Contra Costa County, R. R. Arnold, Martinez, California, 1930. Courtesy Geoscience Library, University of California – Berkeley).

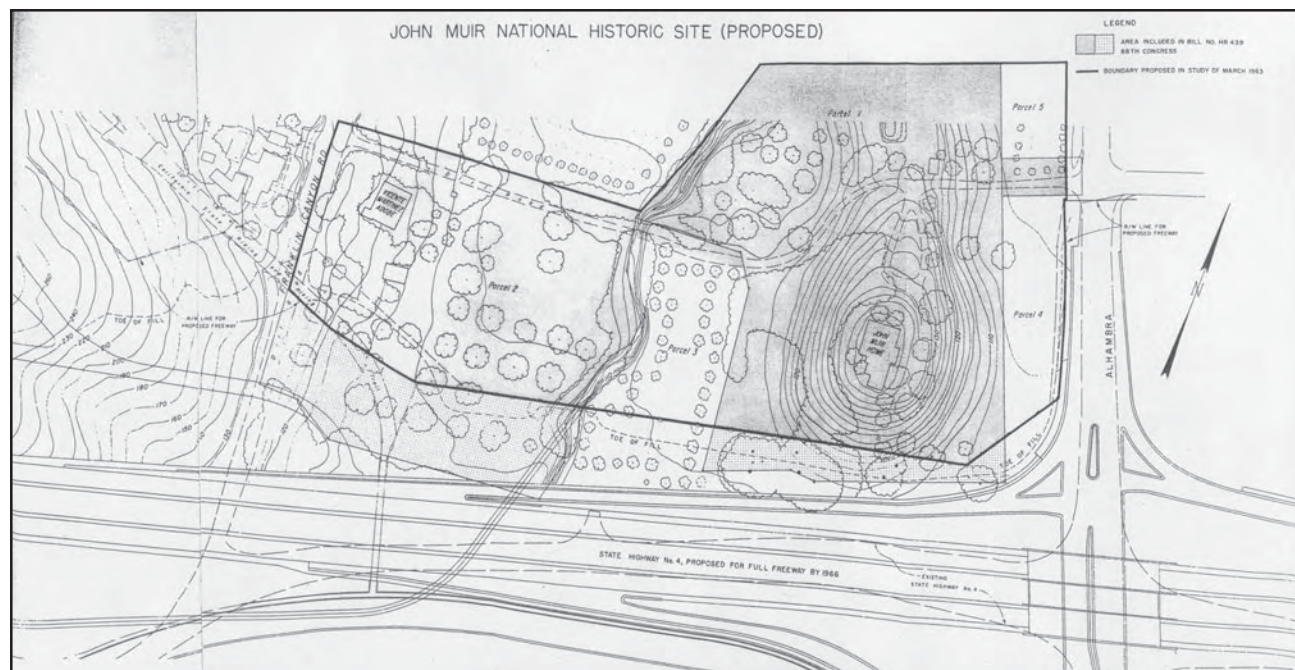


**Figure 4.6:** This portion of the 1939 aerial photograph shows the gravesite area, Strain Ranch, and the Alhambra ranch house (where Muir first lived prior to moving to the Redfern Place in 1890). The gravestones are under riparian plants along the Arroyo del Hambre. Next to it is the Dr. Strentzel's old pear orchard (a), which at this time appears to include filler trees. The two large trees at the southern end of the orchard are probably eucalyptus or incense cedar (b). (JOMU, no #).



**Figure 4.7:** "Proposed Historical Park Site" by the Contra Costa County Planning Department, Contra Costa County Historical Society, and the John Muir Memorial Association, from January 1958. (JOMU files).





**Figure 4.8: Plan of proposed boundaries for John Muir National Historic Site, in 1963. The south and east boundaries are slightly different compared to the 1958 plan, and the eucalyptus south of the Muir House are no longer within the park boundaries. (From Hussey, John and Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky. "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe, Martinez, California." San Francisco, CA: National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963).**



**Figure 4.9: View looking southwest across the upper Alhambra Valley and toward Mt. Wanda and the Muir House (a) in 1963. A remnant orchard in the foreground stands watch over a new subdivision, Alhambra Avenue (b), and old State Route 4 (c). (From Hussey, John and Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky. "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe, Martinez, California." San Francisco, CA: National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963).**



**Figure 4.10: View south from around the south side of the Muir House towards old State Route 4 and the railroad trestle, in 1963. The new divided freeway would be built on twenty feet of fill on alignment with the old highway. According to the "Feasibility Study," the trees in the foreground were to remain. (From Hussey, John and Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky. "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe, Martinez, California." San Francisco, CA: National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963).**





**Figure 4.11:** In 1960, shrubs and flowers provided an attractive setting at the Martinez Adobe. Plants included a mockorange (a) at the southeast corner, Banksia rose and lilac on the left side of the steps, Banksia rose and cotoneaster on the right side of the step, and more Banksia rose at the northeast corner. This view looks northwest. (HABS, CAL-1890, 7-MART, 2-3, by A. Lewis Koue, AIA).



**Figure 4.12:** This view from 1963 shows the narrow concrete sidewalk fronting the Martinez Adobe originally installed by Parsowith, part of which is lined with a single row of bricks. The driveway parallel to the sidewalk connects the main farm road to a wood-frame garage/shed to the southeast. On the right is a walnut tree (a). (R. N. Mortimore, JOMU files).





**Figure 4.13: View looking west from near Franklin Creek at the Martinez Adobe and the orchard space in 1963. Except for a tall tree on the south end, there appears to be much less tall vegetation behind the adobe. In front, part of the redwood septic tank (a) can be seen northeast of the building and next to a fruit tree (b). By this time, most of the former orchard has given way to a meadow of grass. At far right is the main farm road (c), which appears to be a two track road at this time. (R. N. Mortimore, JOMU files).**



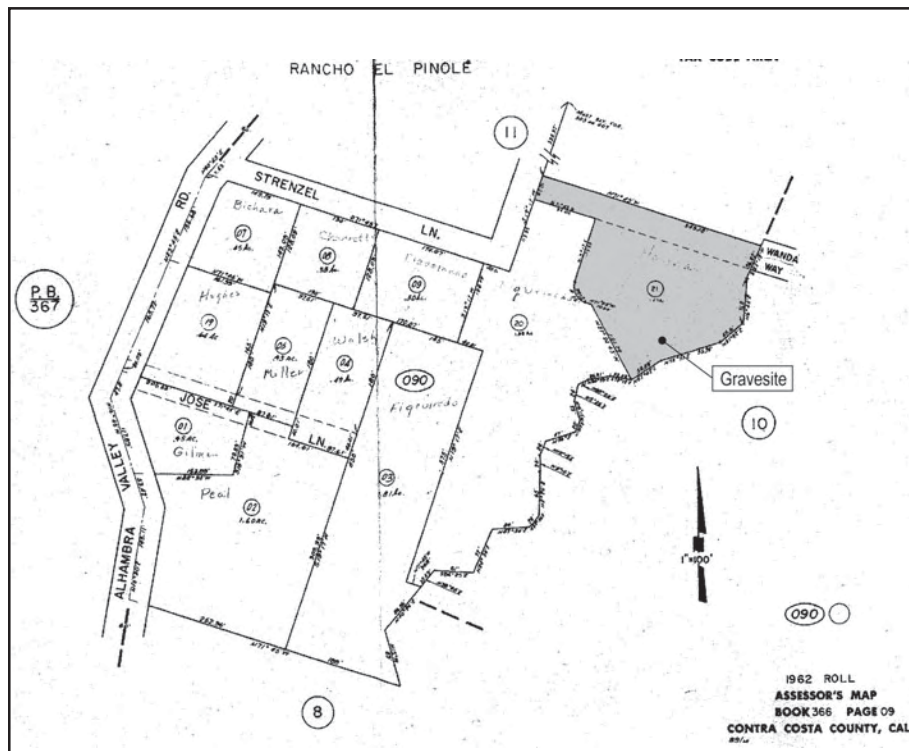
**Figure 4.14: This photograph was taken c.1955-c.1960, some forty years after Muir's death and soon after the Saxes' purchased the 4.83-acre Muir Homestead. Much like the Muir House, the landscape shows the passage of time and has taken on a somewhat ragged and overgrown appearance. Plants dating from Muir's time, such as the California fan palms at the front door, the Canary Island date palm (a) in the back, and the California bay (b) continue to thrive. Post-Muir plants also appear to be growing well, such as the two arborvitaes (c) next to the front porch, two firethorns flanking the front steps, and roses (d) next to the carriage drive loop. (Holt-Atherton, F13, Fr. 652).**



**Figure 4.15: View looking south at the northwest porch of the Muir House, in 1960. A Banksia rose (a) grows along the side of the porch, next to the sidewalk. On the left side of the steps are a small scotch broom (b) and a camellia (c), while in the background are some of the incense cedars (d). The space west of the walkways appears to be grass. (HABS, CAL-1890, 7-MART, 1-6, by Jack Boucher).**



**Figure 4.16: This portion of a Contra Costa County Assessors' map from 1962 shows the gravesite as part of a 1.27-acre parcel owned by the Hanna family. (Map adapted by OCLP. JOMU files).**





## Plants at John Muir National Historic Site

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)
Aa	Agave americana	Century plant	Ng	Nicotiana glauca	Tobacco tree
Ac	Aesculus californica	California buckeye	No	Nerium oleander	Oleander
Aj	Aucuba japonica	Variegated gold dust plant	Oe	Olea europea	Common olive
Al	Acacia longifolia	Golden Wattle	Oh	Osmanthus heterophyllus	False holly
Am	Acanthus mollis	Bear's breach	P	Perennials	Perennials
Ama	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Pa	Prunus armeniaca	Apricot
Ar	Alcea rosea	Hollyhock	Pap	Papaver spp.	Pink poppy
Ard	Arundo donax	Giant reed	Pc	Pyrus communis	Pear
Au	Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Pca	Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island date palm
Bp	Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote brush	Pcc	Pyraecanthus coccinea	Firethorn
Bs	Buddleia spp.	Butterfly bush	Pce	Prunus cerasifera	Cherry plum
Bu	Buxus spp.	Boxwood	Pco	Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Ca	Cedrus atlantica	Atlas cedar	Pd	Prunus dulcis	Almond
Cae	Casmanthe aethiopica	Chasmanthe	Pe	Pittosporum eugenoides	Pittosporum
Cc	Callistemon citrinus	Lemon bottle brush	Pg	Punica grantum	Pomegranate
Cca	Carpenteria californica	Anemone	Pga	Prosopis glandulosa	Honey mesquite
Cd	Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar	Pgl	Picea glauca	White spruce
Cda	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry cotoneaster	Ph	Pelargonium hortorum	Common geranium
Cde	Calocedrus decurrens	Incense cedar	Pin	Pinus spp.	Pine
Cf	Cupressus funebris	Mourning cypress	Pl	Philadelphus lemoinei	Mockorange
Ch	Chrysanthemum spp.	Chrysanthemum	Ply	Prunus lyonii	Catalina cherry
Ci	Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Pm	Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir
Cj	Camellia japonica	Camellia	Po	Prunus domestica	European plum
Cl	Citrus limon	Lemon	Pp	Prunus persica	Peach
Cla	Crataegus laevigata	English hawthorn	Ppn	Pinus ponderosa	Ponderosa pine
Clg	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Japanese, Flowering quince	Ppu	Picea pungens	Colorado spruce
Cli	Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon	Pr	Pinus radiata	Monterey pine
Cm	Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey cypress	Ps	Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce
Co	Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Psa	Prunus salicina	Japanese plum
Coc	Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	Pv	Prunus avium	Sweet cherry
Cp	Campanula medium	Canterbury bells	Qa	Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Cr	Campsis radicans	Common trumpet vine	Qg	Quercus garryana	Oregon white oak
Cs	Citrus sinensis	Orange	Ql	Quercus lobata	Valley oak, Cal. white oak
Csc	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Qs	Quercus suber	Cork oak
Cse	Cornus sericea	American dogwood	Rb	Rosa banksiae	Lady Bank's rose
Csi	Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	Rc	Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy
Csp	Cupressus spp.	Cypress	Rh	Rosa harisonii	Harison's yellow rose
Cy	Cordyline spp.	Cordyline	Ri	Rhaphiolepis indica	India hawthorn
Dc	Dianthus caryophyllus	Carnation	Rl	Rosa laevigata	Cherokee rose
Ds	Deutzia scabra	Deutzia	Ro	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Ec	Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Rod	Rosa odorata	Tea rose
Ej	Eriobotrya japonica	Loquat	Rov	Rhus ovata	Sugar bush
Eu	Eucalyptus spp.	Eucalyptus	Rp	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust
Fc	Ficus carica	Common fig	Rs	Rosa spp.	Rose
Fca	Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush	Rsp	Ribes speciosum	Fuchsia flowering currant
Fs	Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple guava	Sa	Salvia spp.	Sage
Ge	Geranium spp.	Geranium	Sg	Sequoiadendron giganteum	Giant sequoia
Gl	Gaura lindheimeri	Gaura	Sl	Salix lasiandra	Yellow willow
Gs	Gladiolus spp.	Gladiolus	Sm	Sambucus mexicana	Blue elderberry
Ha	Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Sp	Spiraea prunifolia	Bridal wreath spiraea
He	Heliotropium arborescens	Heliotrope	Smo	Schinus molle	Pepper tree
Ig	Iris germanica	Bearded iris	Ss	Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Jc	Juniperus conferta	Shore juniper	Sv	Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac
Jh	Juglans hindsii	California black walnut	Tf	Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill palm
Jm	Jasminum mesnyi	Primrose jasmine	Tg	Tamarix gallica	Tamarisk
Jr	Juglans regia	English walnut	Ti	Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson clover
La	Lavendula angustifolia	English lavender	Tj	Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star jasmine
Lc	Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	To	Thuja occidentalis	American arborvitae
Ln	Laurus nobilis	Sweet bay	U	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Lo	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California privet	Uc	Umbellularia californica	California bay
Ls	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum	Up	Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm
Lsp	Lampranthus spectabilis	Trailing ice plant	Ve	Verbena spp.	Verbena
Lv	Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	Vm	Vinca major	Periwinkle
Ma	Morus alba	White mulberry	Vo	Viola odorata	Sweet violet
Maq	Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	Vv	Vitis vinifera	Grape
Mc	Myrtus communis	True or Common myrtle	Wf	Washingtonia filifera	California fan palm
Mca	Myrica californica	Pacific wax myrtle	Wr	Washingtonia robusta	Mexican fan palm
Md	Malus domestica	Apple	Ws	Wisteria sinensis	Chinese wisteria
My	Myosolus spp.	Forget-me-not	Za	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Common calla



Cultural Landscape Report for John Muir National Historic Site



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

1964, House Unit  
Period Plan

Drawing 4.1

Sources

Base information from John Muir NHS Geographic Information System, January 2002; historic and contemporary maps, plans, and photographs; *Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe*, Burke.

Notes

Locations and scale of features are approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by OCLP, NPS.

Approximate scale in feet

0 25 50 75 100



Legend

- Contour
- Future Park Property Line
- Paved and Dirt Road / Path
- Building / Structure
- Water
- Mass / Specimen Vegetation



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **NPS STEWARDSHIP, 1964-PRESENT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

When authorized on August 31, 1964, the John Muir National Historic Site included the Muir House, the Martinez Adobe, and intervening lands, which together comprised approximately 8.9 acres of the original 2,300-acre fruit ranch. Many of the proposals introduced in the 1963 “Feasibility Study” were expanded in the park’s first master plan in 1965. The plan identified basic management and interpretive strategies aimed at conveying the spirit and setting in which Muir lived and wrote while at the ranch. Subsequent plans in 1976 and 1990 updated the park’s goals and objectives. Major projects during this period included interior and exterior restoration of the Muir House and Martinez Adobe, relocation of the Carriage House, reconstruction of the Franklin Creek windmill, restoration of orchards and vineyards, and development of visitor and maintenance facilities. The most recent accomplishments have come in the form of land purchases: 326-acres on Mt. Wanda in 1993 and the 1.27-acre gravesite parcel in 2000.

#### **FORTUNATE TIMING**

The John Muir National Historic Site was established as a memorial to John Muir and his accomplishments as a conservationist, writer, and advocate for national parks and national forests. Many of Muir’s preservation efforts were undertaken in advance of a growing and land-hungry population. It seems appropriate, then, that a park in his honor was created under similar circumstances.

As described in the previous chapter, adjacent suburban and commercial developments and proposed highway plans influenced the location of the park’s boundaries (Figure 5.1). By 1966, the upgrade of State Route 4 on the south side of the new park was well underway, and Florence Street and a new residential lots were platted north and west of the park a year later (Figures 5.2 and 5.3).<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, the park had an ally in preserving the historic scene at the park; in 1966, the City of Martinez established the John Muir National Historic Site District – a multiple block area surrounding the site – which required a review of development plans by the town planning commission.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these external conditions, the interior of the park included several easements: a drainage easement at the outfall of the new Franklin Creek culvert,

and two utility easements at the southwest corner of the park for pipelines and surface valves of the Union Oil Company and for an eight- inch underground gas line of the Southern Pacific Pipelines.<sup>3</sup> Fencing was erected around the Union Oil valves and alongside the California State Riding and Hiking Trail, which crossed this area via an easement to connect with a tunnel under the new highway.<sup>4</sup> In January 1967, these easements and the boundaries of the park were officially recorded in a survey (Figure 5.4).<sup>5</sup>

The boundaries of the nine- acre John Muir National Historic Site preserved the Muir House, the Martinez Adobe, and remnant vineyards and orchards of the 2300- acre Strentzel- Muir Ranch. Soon after the park was established, the NPS began the tasks of protecting, preserving, and interpreting the site. The first master plan was completed in 1965 and was updated in 1976 and 1991. Numerous other reports and studies have been completed in the last forty years of NPS stewardship and are reflective of the changes in management and attitudes both at the park and within the NPS. This chapter will summarize the three master planning efforts and the proposed and documented physical changes directed towards the park's cultural landscape.

## **GETTING STARTED, 1964 TO 1976**

### **1965 MASTER PLAN**

The 1965 "Master Plan for Preservation and Use" developed the recommendations in the 1963 Feasibility Report and offered a broad overview of the new park and its existing and potential resources. Specific recommendations regarding structures, furnishings, and especially the landscape were purposely deferred to future studies and plans. However, the Master Plan identified basic management and interpretive strategies aimed at conveying the historic setting in which Muir lived and wrote during a part of his life. The report also established many of the visitor and staff support facilities still in use today (Figure 5.5).

The park's primary resource was, of course, the Muir House because of its direct connection with John Muir, while the Martinez Adobe was considered a secondary resource associated with the Muir family and the operations of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch. The plan recommended the house and adobe be restored to the 1906- 1914 period because at the time (in 1965) the house still reflected Muir's repairs and alterations following the 1906 earthquake. Other recommendations included restoration of the Franklin Creek windmill and pump to aid in irrigation and relocation of the Carriage House to its original location at the fish pond space.

The plan also called for converting and expanding the former Martinez Animal Hospital at the northeast corner of the park into a visitor center and administrative/maintenance offices. The low- profile building was new and was located in a low flat area of the park, so concentrating the support facilities in this area was viewed as the most economical, and in relation to the rest of the park, the least physically obtrusive option. Visitor and staff parking lots accessible from Alhambra Avenue were consequently proposed for this area as well as a fire and service road leading to the carriage drive- loop. The main farm road – no longer the primary means of access to the Muir House – as well as the Franklin Creek bridge and Woodshed Road were to be restored to their historic appearance as part of a self- guided history trail. The southeast farm road was not tapped for reuse, presumably because its destination was well beyond the park’s boundaries.

One of the most pressing issues facing the park at this time was the possible effects of adjacent developments on the visitor experience. The 1965 Master Plan, as well as earlier reports, worried about the noise, pollution, and visual presence of the new highway, and recommended working with the California State Highway Department to add additional plantings along the south boundary fence and to preserve as many of the large eucalyptus trees on the south side of the knoll as possible. Similarly, buffer plantings were proposed along the north boundaries to screen adjacent developments and around the visitor center and parking lots. The report did not recommend specific species of plants, stating only that they should be of a character similar to the historic period.<sup>6</sup>

In regards to restoring and preserving the orchards, vineyards, and other plantings inside the park, the 1965 Master Plan recognized the difficulty in recreating the exact landscape scene as it existed during Muir’s time. Orchards, vineyards, and the herb garden were to be restored to the setting of the historic period even though their exact sizes and locations were not known.<sup>7</sup> Although the plan recommended creating a comprehensive landscape plan in the future based on historical research, at this time it called for restoration of known trees and flower beds and removal of some “non- historic” plantings. Neat but not meticulously maintained plantings of meadow grasses were proposed for open areas, particularly on the west slope of the knoll. Among the trees listed as historic were the Washington fan palms, incense cedars, eucalyptus, fig, walnut, redwood, lemon, and others identified in the 1958 University of California- Davis study. Interestingly, the Master Plan presented two historic periods concerning landscape treatment; at one point it recommend restoring the “...Muir House and grounds to their 1906- 1914 appearance” and then later recommended the



period "...in which the house was occupied by John Muir," which would be 1890- 1914.<sup>8</sup>

Another issue at the park concerned the threat of flooding along Franklin Creek, particularly in the adjacent subdivision and developed areas further downstream. The location and design of the new freeway and associated fill slopes resulted in the need to channel Franklin Creek through an underground culvert under the highway. As shown on the 1965 Master Plan, the Army Corps of Engineers proposed extending the culvert from the highway to an outfall at the northernmost boundary of the park. In order to preserve the historic character of the creek area, a leaping weir was proposed near the south boundary fence to provide a nominal flow of water in the creek. The plan recognized the need to replace lost vegetation from this project but did not offer specifics.<sup>9</sup>

Section 3 of Public Law 88- 547 authorized "...no more than \$300,000 for land acquisition and restoration of the buildings thereon." The 1965 Master Plan predicted that after the site and buildings were restored, the combination of continued population growth, visits to nearby historic sites, easy access from the new highway, and the growing prominence of Muir would translate to upwards of 200,000 visitors annually.<sup>10</sup>

#### **ORCHARDS AND VINEYARDS**

Restoration of the orchards and vineyards were a high priority at the park because of Muir's association with the fruit ranch, and the 1965 Master Plan showed conceptual layouts along with general recommendations to clear and restore these areas (Figure 5.5).<sup>11</sup> In 1968/69, the proposals were followed up with a detailed "Historic Planting Plan" showing the location and spacing of specific fruit trees and vines (Figure 5.6).

Unlike the earlier recommendation to clear and restore all of the old orchard and vineyards lands, the Historic Planting Plan proposed retaining some of the extant fruit trees, particularly on the west side of Franklin Creek where blocks of oranges, lemons, apricots, and two kinds of pears (Bartlett and Winter Nelis) were shoehorned amongst the remnant walnut and pecan trees. The west side of the creek was shown with three varieties of grapes (Muscat, Catawba, and Tokay) as well as plums and prunes (Figure 5.7). On the ridge north and northwest of the Muir House, almonds, cherries, and three kinds of peaches (Muir, Crawfords, and Elberta) were proposed east of old walnut trees. Three varieties of apples (Gravenstein, Yellow Newton, and Jonathon) were planned for the east slope below the Muir House.

There are, unfortunately, no known supporting documents for the planting plan, so it is unclear how park planners arrived at these decisions. However, the proposed types of fruits and vines were raised at one time or another on the Strentzel- Muir Ranch, and in most cases, were grown at the proposed locations during Muir's time. This would suggest that historic photographs, diaries, letters, and interviews were used to inform the Historic Planting Plan.

As with any agricultural setting, strategies to plant and manage the crops were altered over time (Appendix 3). Although details are somewhat vague, it appears that when compared with the Historic Landscape Plan, fewer of the almonds and cherries were planted while the numbers of apples and lemons were increased. The apricots, pears, peaches, oranges, plums, and grapes were planted, but some of the varieties were changed and were installed over several years time. Diseases were a problem, such as the discovery of an oak root fungus in the grape vineyard which resulted in pulling out the entire crop.<sup>12</sup> In the winter of 1972/73, over 150 trees were lost to a severe freeze. The event caused significant damage and the park submitted notice to the western director that it would be unable to absorb the cost of replanting and continue its regular maintenance program.<sup>13</sup> Despite these challenges, the general layout of the Historic Planting Plan was followed.<sup>14</sup>

Park interpretive strategies were also reviewed and updated during this period; in 1968 the park decided to cease the practice of allowing visitors and neighbors to pick fruit from trees because of "past unfortunate experiences and possibility of accidents." However, they were allowed to gather fruits that had fallen. Many of the agricultural and domestic plantings were keyed to numbered posts along the trails and interpreted in the "The Orchard Trail" guidebook, which offered information about the plants and their relationship to Muir. Other programs were aimed at children and local schools; throughout the 1970s, youngsters enrolled in the States and National Parks of California and Arizona Environmental Living Program stayed overnight in the Martinez Adobe and worked in the orchards under NPS supervision.<sup>15</sup>

## **PLANTINGS**

In addition to orchards and vineyards, the Historic Planting Plan also addressed trees, shrubs, and flowers throughout the park. The plan identified and numbered individual plants, and although some of them corresponded to the general masses of plants shown in the 1963 Feasibility Report, it unfortunately did not distinguish between existing and proposed plants.

Maintenance work during this period focused primarily on improving the appearance of the park and reducing safety hazards. Many of the trees and shrubs were long- neglected, overgrown, and in some instances infested with mistletoe, posing a hazard not only to the public but to themselves. In a 1968 memo, fifteen were identified as candidates for removal, but it is unclear where these trees were. The stumps of these trees as well as twenty- eight existing stumps were also removed.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Muir House and Martinez Adobe**

Several photographs document some of pruning undertaken around the Muir House. Figure 5.3 illustrates some rather radical activity on the Atlas cedar on the west slope of the house. Fortunately, better results were achieved with the arborvitae and California fan palms in the front of the house (Figure 5.8). Compared to conditions in the mid- 1950s, by this time the landscape around the house had taken on a much tidier look with pruned shrubs, trimmed grass, and even a bench on which to admire the surroundings. Some of the plantings shown around the foundation of the house in the Historic Planting Plan were consistent with the recollections of Helen Muir in her 1958 interview with Faire Sax (Figures 5.9 and 5.10) (see Table 3.1: Plantings around the Muir House from c.1890 to c.1914, in Chapter 3). However, it is not exactly clear what was existing, proposed, or installed. The only datable record of plantings at the house concerns the mass of ice plant that was installed in the island of the carriage drive- loop, which was subsequently lost to the 1972 freeze.<sup>7</sup>

The Historic Planting Plan departed from the Master Plan in that it showed the west slope of the knoll full of existing and/or proposed plants, whereas the earlier plan recommended opening up the slope and planting meadow grasses. This would suggest that although renewing the visual relationship between the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe was important, the park was hesitant in taking out the many trees needed to achieve it. It may explain why only certain trees were pruned, such as the topped Atlas cedar shown in Figure 5.3, which created a narrow viewshed for visitors to see the Martinez Adobe from the cupola. Figure 5.7 shows some of the large historic and non- historic trees present on the west slope in 1969.

The Historic Planting Plan proposed minimal landscaping around the Martinez Adobe, noting that there were very few plantings there historically and that additional plantings in this area were to be derived from the historic plant list. A photograph from 1968 shows a walnut and Monterey pine flanking lilacs and other shrubs, along with a white spruce and Colorado blue spruce, in the center

island of the loop driveway (Figure 5.11).<sup>18</sup> The two spruce trees were part of a memorial recognizing Basil Winslow planted in c.1967. Another tree, a Douglas fir, was planted north of the adobe in 1972 for Mr. Winslow.<sup>19</sup> Figure 5.11 shows mockorange, roses, cotoneaster, and flowers along the foundation. Another photograph shows the back of the adobe with walnuts, wisteria on the ramada, and a large deciduous tree (Figure 5.12).

### **Other plantings and boundary areas**

Some of the visual buffer recommendations in the Master Plan were addressed in the Historic Planting Plan. Along the south boundary, a donation of redwood trees from Jose Figuerado was planted on the east side of Franklin Creek near the boundary fence to screen the Franklin Creek culvert from the Muir House and act as a sound wall.<sup>20</sup>

On the other side of the south boundary fence, the park worked with the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) to preserve Muir's historic eucalyptus grove and palms south of the park boundary and another mass of eucalyptus and oak trees southwest of the former quarters of Chinese workers (Figure 5.13). As part of a larger CALTRANS landscaping plan for the new highway interchange developed in 1967/68, additional plantings of eucalyptus, redwood, oak, buckeye, redbud, and even Mexican fan palm trees and a variety of shrubs and groundcovers were proposed between the boundary and the on-ramp. Both groupings of historic trees were saved, fortunately, but most of the new plantings were not installed. This was unfortunate, as some of the eucalyptus were lost in the December 1972 freeze.<sup>21</sup>

Neither the Master Plan nor Historic Landscape Plan articulated plans to screen the east boundary. It was not until 1969 that a planting plan for the Visitor Center and east boundary area was completed (Figure 5.14). Most of the plantings, particularly acacias and eucalyptus, were intended to screen Alhambra Avenue and the parking lot, but they too succumbed to the 1972 freeze. That same year, two incense cedars and two coulter pines were planted north of the Visitor Center in recognition of Mr. Winslow.<sup>22</sup>

### **BUILDINGS**

One of the primary objectives in the 1965 Master Plan was to restore the Muir House to the 1906- 1914 period so that visitors could see an "accurate portrayal of the environment in which Muir did his most productive work" (Figure 5.15).<sup>23</sup> To that end, the "Historic Structure Report, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California," was prepared by John Jensen in November

1966 (Part 1) and Jensen and A. Lewis Koue in 1968 (Part 2). The reports provided details and construction cost proposals for electrical, plumbing, and heating system updates, fire and smoke detection equipment, and original, reproduction, and period furnishings. Many exterior improvements such as painting, a new roof, and foundation stabilization, were completed in 1969.<sup>24</sup> Other changes proximate to the house included installation of underground utilities and reconstruction of a concrete step from the front walk to the carriage drive- loop, in 1967.<sup>25</sup> In 1971, the “Historic Furnishings Report, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California” was completed by Sally J. Ketchem. The Muir House was listed as “contributing” in the 1975 National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form.<sup>26</sup>

Plans regarding the use and role of the Martinez Adobe were not as straightforward as the Muir House (Figure 5.16). The adobe apparently continued to be used as a rental property for a short time after NPS acquisition, and then, as suggested in the Feasibility Report, for administrative purposes.<sup>27</sup> However, inadequate space and parking at the adobe, combined with the need for major repairs, apparently advanced plans to retrofit the Martinez Animal Hospital.<sup>28</sup> The decision was then made to restore the interior and exterior of the building and its furnishings to the 1906- 1914, when Wanda and Tom Hanna lived there.<sup>29</sup>

In 1969, the “Historic Structure Report, Martinez Adobe, Part 1, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California” by Jensen and Koue, and several other reports recommended using the adobe for employee housing. However, the idea was abandoned because of concerns from local citizens and the John Muir Memorial Association that the adobe’s Hispanic history should be interpreted and that “the adobe, too, belongs to the public.”<sup>30</sup> Throughout this period, then, the adobe was used variously as storage, exhibit space, and occasionally as sleeping quarters for children enrolled in the States and National Parks of California and Arizona Environmental Living Program (ELP). In the spring of 1972, the Memorial Association sponsored a clean- up campaign for the adobe and its immediate surroundings. The building was painted white with bright blue trim, and when it reopened some 2000 people attended on the first day to see five living history displays and a book binding demonstration.<sup>31</sup> The Martinez Adobe was listed as historically significant in the National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form.<sup>32</sup>

The addition to the former Martinez Animal Hospital building proposed in the 1965 Master Plan was not constructed, and the structure was used primarily for

staff offices and visitor information and orientation. As a result, maintenance activities were spread throughout the park in whatever space was available. Few improvements were made to the building until around 1974 when the interior was remodeled and new exhibits were installed. One feature included “Big John,” a 700- pound redwood burl donated by Muir Woods National Monument.<sup>33</sup>

## **STRUCTURES AND OTHER BUILT FEATURES**

### **Carriage House and Woodshed**

Although plans were made to relocate the Carriage House to its historic location for use as an exhibit space and rest area, the structure was modified for use as a park maintenance building.<sup>34</sup> The NPS replaced the wooden shingles with a sheet metal roof and the large doors at the south gable end with a solid wall. The “Historic Structures Report, Part 1, Carriage House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California” was completed in 1969 by Jensen and Koue and in 1975 the structure was listed as a historic feature in the National Register of Historic Places Nomination- Inventory Form.<sup>35</sup>

According to the 1965 Master Plan, the site of the old woodshed was to be interpreted at its original location on the east side of the house, with reconstruction a possibility if adequate documentary evidence was located. However, as the Carriage House was converted to maintenance uses and not relocated during this period, the Woodshed was not reconstructed.

### **Windmills, Wells, and Franklin Creek Bridge**

In 1967, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Adams donated a windmill from their farm near Walnut Creek to replace the missing Franklin Creek windmill. The structure was dismantled that year by the NPS and brought to the park, but was not reconstructed. Nevertheless, in 1975 the feature was noted as historically significant in the National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. According to the 1965 Master Plan, reconstruction of the eastern windmill was not recommended because of development, which presumably referred to the plans for a parking lot in this area. The Alhambra well, however, was repaired at some point during this period.<sup>36</sup>

The 1965 Master Plan recognized that the Franklin Creek Bridge and main farm road not only dated from the Muir period but were also the only means of direct circulation between the two main parts of the park. The latter point was confirmed in 1965 when a sudden flood washed the bridge out because gophers had dug behind the rough stone cemented abutments.<sup>37</sup> A “Historic Structures Report, Part 1, Franklin Creek Bridge, John Muir National Historic Site,

Martinez, California” prepared by Jensen proposed a new span that would support pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In 1966/67 the bridge was reconstructed using hidden steel beams and wood plank flooring and railings to retain the historic appearance.

An additional part of the construction project was the building of a small concrete and stone check dam just downstream from the bridge. The idea was that this would prevent undercutting of the rebuilt abutments and new wingwalls. The dam would also raise the level of the streambed one or two feet, which would be nearer to the historic level of the stream, although still below the original shallow bed.<sup>38</sup> This idea apparently superseded the earlier proposal of a combination leaping weir/underground culvert. Despite these efforts, flooding problems again plagued the bridge and creek in 1970 (Figure 5.17).

#### **Other structures**

Several structures and features around the Martinez Adobe were removed beginning in the late 1960s. The 1965 Master Plan recommended preserving the non- functioning privy south of the adobe and interpreting it to the Muir period, but it was removed in 1976 after it was dated to the Parsowith period. The foundations of the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse were removed or covered, and the pumphouse northeast of adobe was removed and the well filled and covered. Parsowith’s post and beam ramada was still extant at this time and was not removed. It was repaired in 1975.<sup>39</sup>

Despite its “debatable historical significance,” the old garage/shed southeast of the adobe was initially used to store gardening tools and materials. By the late 1960s, the building was known as the shop and equipment building and contained an office and restroom. After researching the building, the NPS determined it was a non- historic structure dating from the Parsowith period and in poor condition, and consequently had it burned by the Martinez Fire Department in 1969. By 1975, a one- story, rectangular metal maintenance shed was installed in this area.<sup>40</sup>

The storage shed south of the Muir House was removed soon after NPS acquisition because of its poor condition and the lack of documentary evidence as to whether it was historic. In addition, sometime during this period the NPS installed a small one- story drying shed north of the fish pond space. The shed was later used for maintenance storage. Additionally, Figure 5.2 offers the first glimpse of the retaining wall along the Woodshed Road, which also appears to be part of the substructure for the Carriage House.

### **Fencing**

In 1967, the entire park was enclosed with fencing. Extension arms and barbed wire were added to a chain link fence erected earlier by the State of California on the south property line.<sup>41</sup> The rest of the property was enclosed with a 7- foot tall Hartman grapestake (Rustake) fence with concrete post foundations by the NPS and CALTRANS. Various gates included a turnstile at the park's main entrance, a breakaway gate at the main farm road entrance at Franklin Canyon Road to accommodate service and emergency vehicles, and a swing gate adjacent to the Franklin Creek bridge to raise during high water events.

For additional security, a second fence and gate were installed in February 1968 inside the original fence that surrounding the Union Oil Company easement. In 1970 the Union Oil Company installed a manhole and valve box in the easement. That same year, part of the north boundary fence was temporarily removed to facilitate construction of a retaining wall on an adjacent residential property. In 1975, a water line was installed for fire protection.<sup>42</sup>

### **CIRCULATION**

The main farm road, carriage loop driveway, and Woodshed Road were incorporated into a self- guided walking trail, all of which were reached from the Visitor Center via the steep east access lane. This configuration renewed a second side of the former triangle intersection at the bottom of the knoll. As noted earlier, the main farm road and Franklin Creek Bridge were the only means of conveyance across the creek. In 1974, plans were produced to build a second pedestrian- only bridge across the creek at the south boundary fence, directly above the outfall of the highway culvert (Figure 5.18). The bridge was apparently part of a proposed interpretive trail on the south side of the park. Neither was built during this period.

Also noted earlier, the California State Riding and Hiking Trail was rerouted because of the State Route 4. Operated by the California Beaches and Parks Division, the trail descended from the west hills and passed along the southwest corner of the park, where it was then conveyed through a tunnel under the freeway. No access to the park was provided from the trail during this period. Nearby, the Franklin Canyon Highway entrance was closed to the public and became a gated entrance for service and emergency vehicles. Although the use of the main farm road as a primary route to the Muir House had essentially ended in the late 1950s with the increased use of the east access lane, the closure of this entrance ended a historical connection that had been in place since the Muir House was built in 1882.



In addition to the proposed parking areas, the Master Plan recommended obtaining then- vacant land north of the park for future expansion. Perhaps for that reason, only the northern portion of the visitor parking area was constructed during this period, as shown in Figure 5.14. In the early 1970s, completion of the southern half was proposed but the design was viewed as adverse to the visitor experience because it would destroy a young apple orchard and would be the first thing visitors viewed as they rounded the back of the Muir House on their way back to the Visitor Center.<sup>43</sup> The proposed staff and bus parking lots were not built at this time.

Other circulation- related construction included a short driveway/path extending from the southeast side of the Muir House northward to the carriage drive- loop. The driveway loop in front of the Martinez Adobe was also abandoned during this period.

#### **ARCHEOLOGY**

The park's first archeological survey, undertaken in 1967 by Karen Lundquist and Marion Riggs, found dump sites from several historic periods but no evidence of aboriginal occupation or artifacts. According to the authors, a review of available literature suggested that the Ohlone settlements were located in the hills or closer to water, particularly near the salmon runs. Occurrences of salmon in Franklin Creek, if there were any, would have been farther downstream. The report added that remaining potential aboriginal sites would probably be confined the vicinity of the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe where they would not have been impacted by centuries of agricultural work or flood events.<sup>44</sup>

An archeological report in 1974 noted scattered and fragmented historical refuse deposits caused by recurrent disking of weed and orchard areas, particularly south and east of the Martinez Adobe, but found no other archeological resources. The report added that relocation of the Carriage House to its original location would require the use of photographs since no foundation constructions remained.<sup>45</sup>

#### **GRAVESITE AND MT. WANDA AREAS**

With the support and permission of the Hanna family, organized Sierra Club pilgrimages to the Strentzel- Muir gravesite continued until around 1974. The park's first superintendent, Ernie Schulz, also led hikes there in the 1960s. His successor, John E. Jensen, did not direct any hikes, but began pursuing acquisition of the gravesite. The archeological study in 1974 reported that the fence and graves were in good condition at that time and that no surface artifacts

were seen in the adjacent pear orchard. The orchard had recently been raked and disked, but it is not known by whom.<sup>46</sup>

Although there is no specific information regarding the Mt. Wanda area during this period, it was presumably used for hay production and grazing on an occasional basis. However, the ownership history of Mt. Wanda is vague, and it unclear when it passed out of the Hanna family. At the Strain Ranch, the development of barns and pastures that began in the 1930s ended by the late 1960s.<sup>47</sup> In the late 1960s, presumably after State Route 4 was completed, a small parcel of land above Alhambra Avenue and immediately south of the railroad viaduct was developed by CALTRANS for a park and ride lot. This project involved the removal of a house.<sup>48</sup>

## **PROGRESS AND REFINEMENT, 1976 TO 1991**

### **1976 GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In 1975 and 1976, three reports – “Final General Management Plan (GMP),” “Environmental Assessment,” and “Final Interpretive Prospectus” – were developed to update the park’s management and interpretive goals and objectives. In the first years of NPS administration, visitation to the park jumped from 6200 visitors in 1967 to over 27,000 visitors in 1975. This healthy increase was attributed to educational programs in conjunction with local schools and was a far more realistic number than the 200,000 annual visitors predicted in the previous plan.<sup>49</sup>

Another significant change by the mid- 1970s was the increased density of development in the upper Alhambra Valley. Commercial development along Alhambra Avenue dominated lands to the north and east, housing tracts spread northwest and west, and the completed six- lane State Route 4 loomed just to the south. This development trend may have influenced the GMP to list as its highest priority a feasibility study aimed at preserving the Strentzel- Muir gravesite.<sup>50</sup>

The park’s primary goal and objective continued to focus on the spirit and essence of John Muir through the preservation of the Muir House and related resources (Figure 5.19).<sup>51</sup> Although never stated exactly, the favored period of interpretation in the GMP was 1906- 1914 for the Muir house and adobe, and pre- 1915 for the grounds.

The GMP proposed several measures to enable the site to better reflect a general appearance during Muir’s residency. The plan recommended acquiring original

furnishings for the Muir House, especially in the scribble den, using the attic as an exhibit space, and removing maintenance storage areas from the basement. To interpret the Martinez Adobe as part of the historic scene, the GMP proposed a wayside exhibit covering the adobe's Spanish influence and early history, and use of the front two rooms and second floor for interpretive purposes. The remainder of the structure, including the ramada, would be used as for special programs related to Muir. To complete the historic scene, the GMP reiterated the goals of rebuilding the Franklin Creek windmill and relocating the Carriage House to its historic location at the fish pond space.<sup>52</sup>

The GMP identified serious shortcomings in the park's support facilities. The Visitor Center suffered from poor circulation that often caused overcrowding, noise, and a generally bad first impression for visitors. Among the remodeling and expansion proposals for the building were spaces for a staff and visitor library/reading room, private offices, a curatorial workroom, storage, and a common workroom, all of which would be universally accessible. Space was also an issue in the parking lot, where the fourteen visitor spaces and one bus stall were deemed inadequate because of a poor layout and the use of at least half of the spaces by park staff. The GMP recommended expanding the visitor lot southward and locating staff parking on the north side of the building, much like the proposal in the 1965 Master Plan. This north side was also proposed as a location for a new maintenance facility to consolidate maintenance activities away from the historic scene and out of the basement of the Muir House, Carriage House, drying shed, and the metal shed southeast of the Martinez Adobe.<sup>53</sup>

The orchards, vineyards, and plantings at the park were viewed as contributing to the historic scene and as speaking indirectly of Muir's involvement in commercial orchards and vineyards and his interest in native plants. The Environmental Assessment noted that visitors had few opportunities to walk through the orchards during the year because of wet conditions and mud. To this end, the GMP proposed expanding the trail system (the roads) with a meandering loop trail through the orchards and compacting the size of the trail brochure related to the plants and grounds.<sup>54</sup>

The Interpretive Prospectus reemphasized the importance of the landscape and the trail expansion, noting that the park was all that was left of the former Strentzel- Muir Ranch. The Prospectus also explained some of the interpretive challenges at the park, such as how the large Victorian- style Muir House made it difficult to interpret a man who declared that his supreme purpose in life was "to

entice people to look at Nature's loveliness."<sup>55</sup> The Martinez Adobe, on the other hand, had the longest association with ranching and orchards of any of the buildings on the site. The loop trail, and the self-guiding leaflet, "The Orchard Trail," were seen as a means of tying the two themes together:

"the Victorian house, which signifies Muir's family and writing endeavors, his highest compromise with settled living, and the agricultural fields and adobe, which represents the compromise Muir made with "breadwinning activities."<sup>56</sup>

Other landscape goals in the GMP included replacing exotics plants along Franklin Creek with native plants to communicate Muir's interest in botany and screening intrusive features with plants where it was feasible.<sup>57</sup> The Interpretive Prospectus also promoted the idea of developing – with the East Bay Regional Park Trail System – a trail from the park to the gravesite with waysides and benches to encourage visits.<sup>58</sup>

In the 1972 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the park identified higher than expected acquisition, restoration, and development costs as a serious constraint on implementing many of these proposals. The 1976 GMP reiterated the request and sought to increase its appropriation from the \$300,000 limit set in the enabling legislation to \$800,000.<sup>59</sup>

### **ORCHARDS AND VINEYARDS**

Inventories of the park's orchards, vineyards, and plantings were completed in 1976 and 1989 (Figures 5.20 and 5.21). During this period, the most significant change to the agricultural landscape was the planting of orchard trees in and around the fish pond space. By 1989, a small pear orchard occupied the southwest portion and dozens of apricot trees filled the north part and extended up the hill to the north. Flood abatement work along Franklin Creek in 1982 created favorable planting conditions in this low area, which historically was the first to flood. Most of the scattered walnut trees and cherry plums previously in this area were removed, in part, for the new plants.

In 1984, an accumulation of twenty years of experience in maintaining and managing the park's agricultural landscape was written down in the first Orchard Management and Integrated Pest Management Plan. Completed by John Donahue, the plan aimed to manage the historically representative orchards and vineyards to reflect, where possible, the historic scene as it was during John Muir's residency from 1890- 1914.<sup>60</sup> In 1986, funding was received through the Rotating Resource Base program to implement the plan and establish systems to monitor Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures, population curves for

each orchard, and insect incidence; and examine the viability of disease resistant stock and biological controls.<sup>61</sup> Subsequent parts of the plan were implemented in 1988: most of the nine varieties of insects that had been monitored were ecologically controlled using the IPM plan.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the Orchard Management and Integrated Pest Management Plan, the health and future of the orchards and vineyards also benefited from contributions from local colleges and businesses. In 1984, the University of California- Berkeley conducted research in the vineyard to study the effects of cover crops on the dynamics of insect populations and on soil fertility relations. The park noted that if successful, it would reduce the need for some chemical pesticides and fertilizers.<sup>63</sup> In 1983/84, the park and the University of California-Davis worked together to trim some of the fig tree branches overhanging the main farm road and propagate the trees from cuttings.<sup>64</sup> In 1984, students from Diablo Valley Junior College horticultural class pruned some of the orchards, and in 1986, the California Conservation Corps planted orange and lemon trees around the adobe.<sup>65</sup> Throughout the 1980s, local garden centers donated seeds, flowers, and soil conditioners for children's gardening projects with public schools and the ELP.<sup>66</sup>

Weather and diseases were constantly battled; a severe drought threatened all of the trees in 1988, and both the peach orchard and grape vineyard were plagued by diseases during part of this period.<sup>67</sup> For the most part, according to available records, the apple, almond, apricot, lemon, orange, and pear orchards continued to thrive during this period (Appendix 3).

The problem of some visitors picking fruits and hanging in trees continued into this period. One suggestion, in 1984, proposed building a fruit stand near the Martinez Adobe. Another recommendation a few years later proposed installing an interpretive sign with orchard rules and regulations near the Visitor Center.<sup>68</sup>

## **PLANTINGS**

One of the most valuable reports regarding the park's historic trees was produced in 1978 by James K. Agee, a NPS forest ecologist. The "Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California," identified historic and potentially historic trees at the park (Figure 5.22). Historic photographs and increment coring were used to date the trees, and limitations for both methods were identified; namely, incorrect dating of historic images and growth patterns of certain trees that prevented ring counts (the figs) or had no growth rings at all

(the palms). On many trees, repeated cores failed to penetrate the exact center of the trees so that established dates were minimum dates.<sup>69</sup>

Interestingly, Agee's report suggested that the park's historic scene spanned a thirty- four year period, from 1880 to 1914. This longer time frame captured, for example, the planting and subsequent thinning of the Monterey pines on the west side of the Muir House. The report also recommended establishing a small nursery to propagate cuttings and grow seedlings.<sup>70</sup> A comparison of the 1976 and 1989 plant inventories shows that most of the historic trees survived during this period, except for one of the incense cedars north of the Visitor Center.

#### **Muir House and Martinez Adobe**

Several additions were made to the landscape around the Muir House during this period. In 1984, the Muir Garden Club purchased plants for a new Victorian flower garden situated in a wedge formed by the two paths on the southeast side of the house.<sup>71</sup> (The garden was likely an aesthetic response to improve the east side of the house, which around this time was opened up considerably with the relocation of the Carriage House and was made more visible with the construction of a new access trail nearby – this will be discussed in the sections that follow). In 1987 the California privet hedge on the southwest side was removed and in 1988 a small herb garden was planted on the south side of the house.<sup>72</sup>

The scene at the Martinez Adobe in the mid- 1970s featured open views across young orchards and neatly planted shrubs along the front walk.<sup>73</sup> In 1977, however, the adobe was fumigated with “Vikane” that killed many of the shrubs. The superintendent's report for that year noted that plants would be replaced with “historic” specimens. Eventually, cuttings and donations were used to replant the area and by 1989, some of the same plants as before – rose, mockorange, lilac, and many flowers – graced the front.<sup>74</sup>

#### **Other plantings and boundary areas**

In 1976, Western Regional Director Howard Chapman commented on the view from the front door of the Muir House to the suburban development on Alhambra Avenue. At this time, the right side of his view would have been mostly open because most of the eucalyptus and acacias planted earlier along the east boundary fence and around the parking lot had been removed after a killing freeze in December 1972. The left side would have been partially screened by the California bay tree in the center island of the carriage drive- loop, the three tall incense cedars down the hill, and to a lesser degree, the peach orchard.

Additionally, according to the Historic Tree Report, the incense cedars were in declining condition at this time because their roots were cut when the retaining wall and patio on the west side of the Visitor Center was constructed. Chapman noted that additional screening in these areas would require tall, mature, and non- historic plantings.<sup>75</sup> Around this time, the City of Martinez began a beautification project to revegetate Alhambra Avenue and chose coast redwoods, among others, because the tree was a California native plant.<sup>76</sup> Plantings were also installed around the Visitor Center in 1984 by the Garden Club.<sup>77</sup>

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, boundary plantings were again addressed due to the loss of numerous historic trees. Along the main farm road, most of the historic figs, except for one, were removed because of their hazardous conditions. They were replaced with fig clones and were interspersed with California buckeye, Pacific wax myrtle, English Hawthorne, and toyons. These new plantings were intended to be a temporary solution until newly planted figs matured.

Along the south boundary fence, many of the historic eucalyptus trees succumbed to a killing freeze in 1990 and were gradually replaced by native oaks and coast redwoods, some of which were installed as part of an Eagle Scout project. Two eucalyptus trees south of vineyard were not removed after the freeze because they screened the highway on- ramp. Other boundary plantings planted during this period included a mass of Cherokee roses along the west boundary fence.<sup>78</sup>

Screening issues also influenced the GMP recommendation to replace exotic plant species with native species along Franklin Creek. A 1981 report, “Natural and Cultural Resources Management Planning Overview,” surmised that the only portion of the park that could be considered a natural resource was Franklin Creek and its immediate banks. The report went on to say that Muir occasionally removed vegetation along the creek, citing the historic photograph from c.1885 (Figure 2.5). Since the creek was the one element of the site that could give the impression of Muir’s love of wild things, it was determined to let it flourish as a native plant area rather than remove the creekside growth.<sup>79</sup>

Another report, “Management Recommendation for the Removal of Introduced Woody and Prominent Herbaceous Perennials Along Franklin Creek,” relayed a similar message and took the idea a step further by identifying the woody and herbaceous perennials along the creek and recommending the removal of non-native species such as giant reed, vinca, poison hemlock, English walnut, and

cherry plum. The report also provided a phased schedule to remove the non-native plants over time so that bank erosion would be minimized. The report recommended plantings of Oregon ash, white alder, big leaf maple, and box elder to produce a representative native riparian community along the creek.<sup>80</sup>

Concurrent with the reports and as mentioned earlier, flood abatement work was completed along Franklin Creek in 1982. The park constructed a low earthen berm on the east side adjacent to the grape orchard and a shallow bypass channel on the east end of the bridge that continued northeasterly along the boundary fence to a new scupper wall and diversion wall. The east bank was further stabilized with concrete filled sandbags, and a large willow in the creekbed was removed.<sup>81</sup> In 1987, a crew from the East Bay Conservation Corps removed debris and weeds from the creek channel.<sup>82</sup>

In 1982, plans were made to implement the recommendations in the reports and create a native plant garden. The first step was plant removal, and although they were not in the creek bed per se, the cherry plums and walnuts were removed, probably because of their propensity to seed. However, there apparently were concerns that the extent of new plantings might block views between the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe, so the plans were scaled back. When installed in 1984, the native plant garden covered a 1000 square foot area along the west bank of Franklin Creek and consisted of native shrubs, herbaceous plants, annuals, and bulbs. The garden greatly benefited from the help and advice of the California Native Plants Society, and according to staff meeting notes the following year, was “doing well and is blooming.”<sup>83</sup>

By 1988, the planning and planting of the remainder of the native plant garden was underway; the area was covered with deep protective water conserving mulch and plant identification signs were installed. According to NPS correspondence, the plan for the garden was informed by the GMP; Historic Tree Report; the park’s Chief of Maintenance, Herb Thurman; the historic photograph from c.1885; and the 1958 interview with Helen Muir. Regrettably, neither the original or revised layout plans have been located.<sup>84</sup>

## **BUILDINGS**

In 1982, the interior of the then- 100- year old Muir House was addressed with a revised Historic Furnishings Plan. Exterior improvements during this period included repainting in 1978 and 1982, installation of a porch lift on the east side in 1978 to provide wheelchair access, and replacement of underground gutter drains on east side in 1983.<sup>85</sup>



The Martinez Adobe was used primarily for exhibit space and special events during this period. By 1979, the building was opened to public on daily basis for the first time, and that same year an exhibit of historic photos, “A Walk in the Past at the Martinez Adobe,” was shown.<sup>86</sup> In the 1980s, some of the exhibits were revised to include agricultural themes.

Throughout the 1980s, the adobe continued to serve host meetings as well as weddings and anniversary celebrations. The park preferred to accommodate such functions there to protect the Muir House from overuse. “Posadas,” featuring a Christmas tree and Spanish refreshments were also held at the adobe. The building continued to accommodate overnight guests in the ELP until 1989 when a structural engineer determined that damage sustained in the October 17, 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake had rendered the structure unsafe for overnight use. Although the overnight component of the educational program was dropped, the curriculum was modified to a one- day workshop format, and the adobe hosted daytime activities.<sup>87</sup> Exterior improvements during this period included repainting in 1978 and 1983.<sup>88</sup>

## **STRUCTURES AND OTHER BUILT FEATURES**

### **Carriage House**

The role of the Carriage House as the park’s primary maintenance facility ended in 1983 when it was relocated to its original location at the fish pond space and restored.<sup>89</sup> The occasion, along with the park’s twentieth anniversary, was celebrated the following year with speeches and music. The event attracted some 450 people, and in the evening about 725 persons attended Lee Stetson's performance of “Conversations with a Tramp - An Evening with John Muir.”

### **Windmills, Wells, and Franklin Creek Bridge**

In 1978, the Franklin Creek windmill and well were replaced using the 1932 windmill that had been in storage since 1967. Its assembly consisted of an eighteen- blade wheel, a vane labeled Aerometer, gear and pump components, and several pieces of the wooden frame structure. The supporting wood structure, designed by historic architect Louis Koue, was erected by Cowart Well Drilling of Petaluma in 1979. The windmill was dedicated in 1979 by US Congressman, George Miller. However, the restored structure was not adapted for irrigation purposes until 1983. In 1990, an electric pump was installed and the irrigation network was expanded to the northern half of the park.<sup>90</sup>

The Alhambra well, alongside the parking lot, was improved in 1989 with an electric pump and an irrigation network for part of the southern half of the park.

The earlier decision not to reconstruct this windmill was upheld because of the well's proximity to the eastern boundary fence.<sup>91</sup> In other projects, the Franklin Creek bridge was replanked in 1981.<sup>92</sup>

### **Other structures**

As part of the plans to restore the Martinez Adobe to the 1906- 1914 period, and to give the building a "human, lived in feeling," former residents were contacted to recall childhood pets of the Hanna children as well as types of livestock raised. Chickens, roosters, turkeys, pea hens, rabbits, guinea pigs, and peacocks were acquired, and pens and cages were erected southeast of the adobe near the creek. However, the "Ranch Pet" exhibit soon became an issue with the staff who had to corral chickens at the end of each day, and with neighbors who complained about the peacocks' early morning serenades of the pea hen. The pet pens and cages, except for chicken coop, were removed around 1978. By the early 1980s, the exhibit was discontinued.<sup>93</sup>

In July 1983 a public dedication ceremony was held to erect California Historic Landmark plaques for the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe.<sup>94</sup> They were set into a wedge- shaped stone structure on front of the Visitor Center. Other structure- related changes to the landscape during this period included the removal of the redwood septic tank from the front lawn of adobe in 1977 and replacement of the ramada in 1988.<sup>95</sup>

### **Fencing**

In 1976, a rupture in the sewer system resulted in installation of a new line from the Martinez Adobe northeast to an existing manhole on Florence Drive, on the other side of the north boundary fence. The excavation damaged some of the concrete walkway in front of the adobe and a section of fencing. A 35- year old Monterey pine in the front lawn of the adobe was removed for the work as well as several redwoods and Monterey pines next to the fence along Florence Drive. In 1987, negotiations commenced with Southern Pacific Pipe Lines regarding their installation of a new sixteen- inch pipeline within the easement. This work was completed in 1991 and involved the removal of four lemon trees. Trenching work for a new electric line to the Muir House and Carriage House was completed in 1987.<sup>96</sup>

In early 1982, Franklin Creek flooded some of the orchard and an adjacent residential property in part because of overgrown vegetation that lodged against and eventually displaced the swinging boundary fence over the creek.

**CIRCULATION**

One of the management objectives of the GMP was to eliminate barriers that discouraged the use of the site by persons with disabilities. Another such obstacle was the east access lane connecting the Visitor Center to the carriage drive- loop. The steep asphalt path was shared between staff vehicles and visitors and was inaccessible to those in wheelchairs because of the thirteen percent slope; although an electric cart was available, it was ineffective when a tour bus arrived.<sup>97</sup> As a result, plans were drawn in 1982 to construct an accessible trail from the main pedestrian entrance to the Muir House via new and existing routes (Figure 5.23).

The new construction portion of the Easy Access Trail consisted of a winding five- foot- wide bituminous walkway along the east slope of the knoll, from the lower end of the east access lane up to the Woodshed Road. At this point, the accessible route headed north on the Woodshed Road and then turned south on a narrow drive/path (that once led to the Carriage House) to its termination at the wheelchair lift at the kitchen door. The trail was completed in 1984 and landscaped.<sup>98</sup> In 1987, the East Bay Conservation Corps planted ice plant along the new part of the trail to stabilize the hillside, and in 1989 the path was repaired.<sup>99</sup>

Simultaneous with the Easy Access Trail project, the soil cement surface of the carriage drive- loop, the upper Woodshed Road around the Carriage House, and the east driveway was overlayed with a hot asphalt plant mix in 1982/83. The surface had apparently worn off by this time, creating a hazardous condition for pedestrians and causing unsafe operation of the electric cart used to transport disabled visitors. The new surface was colored brown and covered with a thin layer of sand to minimize the appearance of the asphalt surface. In addition, an area of non- historic cobblestones was removed from near the front steps of the Muir House because they were unsafe to walk on.<sup>100</sup> Beginning in 1983, work commenced on repairing and replacing some of the historic walks around the Muir House with exposed aggregate to match the existing walks and a raised rolled edge. This work was completed around 1992.<sup>101</sup>

Completion of the Easy Access Trail brought into question the need to keep the east access lane. A Comprehensive Site Plan in 1985 suggested removal because the road gave the visitor the erroneous impression of the historic access to the site and intruded in the historic scene.<sup>102</sup> Despite this observation and recommendation, the plan nonetheless proposed a short walkway from the Easy Access Trail to the carriage drive- loop in essentially the same location. To

maintain service access, the 1985 plan and a Statement for Management in 1989 proposed construction of a new service road from the proposed staff parking lot on the north side of Visitor Center up to the carriage drive- loop, via the orchards on the north ridge. Figure 5.21 shows both paths as well as a proposed orchard loop trail paralleling the south boundary fence, from the Woodshed Road to the Martinez Adobe.<sup>103</sup>

None of the three proposed roads and trails were built during this period. Implementing the recommendations for the east slope were probably contingent on reconfiguring and expanding the visitor and staff parking facilities, which also did not happen at this time.<sup>104</sup> However, the site inventory shown in Figure 5.21 shows that a new farm lane was in place in the east orchard by 1989.

In the late 1980s, the park leveled and asphalted some of the roadways around the Martinez Adobe, presumably the main farm road and the remnant driveway on the east side, along the front sidewalk. The NPS also removed some of the Parsowith- era red- tinted concrete walkway on the north side of the adobe and a portion of the concrete- capped brick retaining wall at the patio. This work coincided in 1989 with the installation of an accessible path from the main farm road to the rear patio area by a local Eagle Scout candidate.<sup>105</sup>

### **ARCHEOLOGY**

Although the proposed orchard trail along the south boundary fence was not constructed, the idea was cleared by the NPS regional archeologist in 1976, who reported that the entire park had been examined for historic and prehistoric resources and that none were found for that area.<sup>106</sup>

In 1981, Roger E. Kelly of the Division of Cultural Resources Management, Western Region, produced two archeological reports for the park: “Historical Archeological Artifacts: South Porch Project, Martinez Adobe” discovered children’s toys, building hardware, personal items, and household objects.<sup>107</sup> In a report entitled “Sensitivity Maps for Historical Archeological Resources: John Muir National Historic Site,” only the area immediately surrounding the Martinez Adobe was identified as a ‘known resource with documented integrity.’ Other possible resource areas were identified and were evaluated for their integrity (Figure 5.24).<sup>108</sup>

### **GRAVESITE AND MT. WANDA AREAS**

While the gravesite continued to coexist with its residential neighbors, there were many behind the scene discussions regarding its future. The number one priority

in the GMP was the initiation of a feasibility study for preserving and possibly acquiring the gravesite, and so, in the beginning of 1978 the descendants of Muir and the surrounding neighbors and landowners were contacted.<sup>109</sup>

The study was completed in 1980, and most parties favored federal acquisition but harbored reservations regarding management of the site.<sup>110</sup> The concerns were in line with the residential setting: the impact of increased visitation on noise, congestion, crime, and trespassing. There were also questions about access, parking, and effects on the creek and on the graves themselves. The NPS predicted that annual visitation would be low, perhaps twenty- five percent of total park numbers. Access to the site would necessarily pass through the neighborhood along Sheridan Lane, Strentzel Lane, and Wanda Way, although one option proposed visitor parking at the John Swett School one- quarter mile away, which would necessitate construction of a sidewalk along Alhambra Valley Road.<sup>111</sup>

Several management alternatives were explored for the gravesite property. In one scenario, the site would continue to remain in private hands, but this was regarded as problematic because future owners may decide to relocate, or worse, destroy the graves. Although the graves could be moved to the park, the loss of integrity would be high. Another alternative established a trust, with or without federal participation, to prohibit development of the parcel and ensure cemetery preservation. In this option, there would be no public access and the opportunity to include the site as part of the larger Strentzel- Muir story would be missed.<sup>112</sup>

The preferred proposal had the NPS acquire the site and manage it as a discontinuous, but integral part of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch story. Development and use would be kept to a minimum to preserve the serene setting, and with the exception of maintaining the remnant historic pear orchard, the site would be maintained as a natural area. The report also recommended fencing the entire property for security, which could in the future justify removing the fence around the graves and restoring the scene to a more authentic condition.<sup>113</sup>

Progress in preserving the gravesite tract was coupled with decisions to acquire Mt. Wanda. By this period, most of the lower slopes of Mt. Wanda were owned by the Strain family and the upper flat lands by the Lo family. These lands featured rolling hills of grass and dales of oaks, accessed by a winding post-WWII fire road.<sup>114</sup> Most of the development – two residences (a second house was built in c.1978 west of the bungalow), barn, and outbuildings – was associated

with the Strain ranch on the south side where thirty or so head of cattle were grazed.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from limited grazing activities, the balance of Mt. Wanda's grasslands and woodlands, for the most part, had been spared from housing developments and new highways. In the late 1980s, these natural and undeveloped qualities inspired the NPS to pursue acquisition of Mt. Wanda. Not only was the land once owned by Muir – he roamed and picnicked here with his family and friends to enjoy the plants and admire the views – the hillsides offered an unimpaired background for the park that closely resembled conditions when Muir lived here and the upper Alhambra Valley was dominated by orchards and vineyards.<sup>16</sup>

### **Initial acquisition of the gravesite and Mt. Wanda**

On October 31, 1988, Section 5 of Public Law 100- 563 expanded the boundaries of the John Muir National Historic Site to include the gravesite and Mt. Wanda (Figure 5.25). The new lands totaled approximately 330 acres, 326 acres of which were embraced in the hillsides and uplands of Mt. Wanda. At this time, the land was owned by the Strain family (186 acres) and three members of the Lo family (140 acres). The remaining acreage included the 1.3- acre gravesite parcel, still owned by the Hanna family, and a 3.3- acre area situated along Franklin Canyon Road, opposite the south end of the pedestrian tunnel beneath State Route 4. The last piece, called the city tract, featured two mostly flat areas of land that included a house and a small café, above which was a small area of steeply sloped land that extended up the north slope of Mt. Wanda to the Santa Fe right- of way. The parcel was owned by the City of Martinez.<sup>17</sup>

The new lands – hereafter called the Gravesite Unit, Mt. Wanda Unit, and city tract – were envisioned as places to interpret Muir's life, lifestyle, and philosophy and to introduce new uses related to recreation, education, and operations. The new lands, together with the original nine acres of the park – the House Unit – increased the size of the John Muir National Historic Site to about 340 acres.<sup>18</sup>

## **MANAGING NEW AND EXISTING LANDS, 1991 TO PRESENT**

### **1991 GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The park's third (and latest) comprehensive planning document – “General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (GMP/EA)” – was produced in 1991 to update park goals and objectives and to reflect the acquisition of the Gravesite and Mt. Wanda units. In the previous fifteen years, park visitation averaged around 30,000 visitors annually, slightly above the figures reported in

the mid- 1970s. Development of the lands surrounding the park continued, although at a slower pace than the beginning years of the park. Traffic on Alhambra Avenue and State Route 4 was on the rise, however, due to their important linkages to the City of Martinez and regional interstate systems, respectively. Alhambra Valley Road, on the south side of Mt. Wanda, was also heavily used by this time because of new suburban developments to the south and west.<sup>119</sup>

Like previous planning documents, the GMP/EA acknowledged the ongoing build up of development around the park and the possibility in continued changes in character, especially around the House Unit. The plan noted that the addition of Mt. Wanda would likely protect the view from the House Unit to the south. However, a special boundary area was created to address lands and viewsheds to the west, north, and east (Figure 5.26). The intent of the “Area of Concern” was to monitor future developments regarding building heights, night lighting, signs, and noise; communicate park concerns to the city and other land use regulating agencies; and encourage scenic easements on these lands. The area included the John Muir National Historic Site District established by the City of Martinez in 1966, as well as much of the hillside to the west. Fortunately for the park, the city had proven to be a good neighbor; in one example, they successfully removed a large Exxon sign on Alhambra Avenue near the park, and in a series of public meetings in 1987 reiterated their commitment to keep the hillsides around the park zoned for open space. Additionally, the three houses closest to the House Unit’s north boundary as well as the post office property (also to the north) were identified as potential acquisitions that could contribute to the management objectives if at some time the park sought another boundary change.<sup>120</sup>

Most of the other discussions in the GMP/EA regarding the House Unit concerned visitor facilities in the designated Development Zone (Figure 5.27). As in 1976 GMP, this plan noted numerous problems with the Visitor Center such as inadequate size and configuration, overcrowding when buses arrived, small restrooms, a lack of adequate office space, and poor access for the disabled. The plan recommended major expansion and renovation of the building. It also proposed using the back room of the Martinez Adobe or constructing a kiosk near the west gate as a visitor contact station, contingent on construction of the city tract parking lot.<sup>121</sup>

Understandably, the primary focus of the GMP/EA was the acquisition and eventual development of the city tract, gravesite, and Mt. Wanda parcels. Not

only was the size of the park about to exponentially increase, but the new lands were seen as providing solutions to some of the park's long- standing deficiencies; in particular, visitor and staff parking facilities were reiterated as grossly inadequate, and the scattered maintenance and gardening operations were deemed inefficient and overcrowded.<sup>122</sup>

The GMP/EA Preferred Alternative recommended acquisition of the Gravesite Unit through a less- than- fee interest. The property would be managed as a historic zone to retain the existing scene, and a gated parking area for NPS staff, a trail, and a sign would be the only developments (Figure 5.28). The proposal eliminated boundary fencing and a larger parking area as recommended in the 1990 draft GMP because of opposition from adjacent residents. The park agreed to defer fencing until a security need was identified and to generally consult with neighbors regarding use and development of the area.<sup>123</sup>

For the Mt. Wanda Unit, the GMP/EA proposed a fee interest acquisition of the Lo parcel and most of the Strain parcel. In the plan, Mt. Wanda would remain undeveloped and managed to retain its natural character as part of the historic scene (Figure 5.29). A vegetation management plan developed in the future would aim to preserve the natural appearance and work towards a long- term objective of restoring native plant communities. The Strain Ranch would be a part of a development zone to reflect its private uses and potential future public uses, which could include a greenhouse for propagation of orchard plants and native plants on Mt. Wanda and a new Environmental Education Program facility for overnight stays. Public comments regarding the earlier draft GMP also shaped this part of the plan; the East Bay Regional Park District and several residents cited the value of grazing as a means to control vegetation and achieve desirable species composition. As a result, the plan was revised to use grazing as a tool for achieving vegetation management goals.<sup>124</sup>

The GMP/EA also proposed fee interest acquisition for the city tract area (Figure 5.30). Recommendations for the western flat area of the parcel included a new maintenance facility with offices, workshops, storage, and garages. On the eastern end, the plan proposed a fifty to seventy- five space parking lot for access to the regional trail network and existing fire roads/trails on Mt. Wanda and a supplemental parking for the House Unit. The lower slope of Mt. Wanda would remain part of a natural zone.<sup>125</sup>

Several educational opportunities were tied into the new lands as well, such as interpreting hillside agriculture near the Strain Ranch where historically those



techniques were used extensively. The GMP/EA also proposed that if a new maintenance facility was built, to replace the metal shed southeast of the Martinez Adobe with a rustic, open-sided farm shed to display several large items of donated farm equipment such as a historic horse drawn sprayer, wagon, and a harrow.<sup>126</sup>

### **ORCHARDS AND VINEYARDS**

According to available records for this period, the apple orchard and grape vineyard appeared to enjoy success, while the almond orchard apparently began to decline (Appendix 3). New orchard plants – carob and white mulberry – were introduced in the empty spaces of the almond orchard. Diseases were mostly confined to some of the apricot trees near the large pecans east of the Martinez Adobe and to a few of the walnut trees southeast of the adobe, which was also the location of a new grouping of apricot trees. Additionally, a freeze in 1998 adversely affected some of the lemon trees.

In the early- 1990s, as part of the “Historic Structures Report for Martinez Adobe,” plans were proposed to extend the orchard east of the Martinez Adobe westward to the edge of the driveway. The intent was to complete the “rows” (Figure 5.31). Beginning in the mid- 1990s, the park began hosting a group of volunteers associated with the Master Gardener program run by the University of California Extension Service. As part of their required fifty hours of community service, the enrollees or recent graduates of the program assisted park staff in pruning and harvesting the orchards.<sup>127</sup>

### **PLANTINGS**

#### **Muir House and Martinez Adobe**

Throughout this period, upkeep of the plantings around the Muir House has relied on the volunteers with the Master Gardener Program, who replanted the rose garden in the island of the carriage drive- loop, planted Matilija poppies, and watered plants around the house. In 1996 they also replanted the Victorian garden and repaired the irrigation system and stone wall along the Woodshed Road.<sup>128</sup> Records note several new plantings in 1998: Oregon grape holly and a common myrtle (replaced a damaged historic specimen) on the east and southeast sides of the house, respectively, and three incense cedars trees next to the fire road to honor Frank Bray, Wakefield Taylor, and John Davis – founding members of the John Muir Memorial Association. Plants were also removed during this time, including ice plant that had died in the extended drought of the early 1990s and the two arborvitaes at the front steps in 2000.<sup>129</sup>

At the Martinez Adobe, the 1992 landscape improvement plan called for new plantings around the foundation of the building but did not specify species. Records indicate that some of plants were installed by 1998 and included Oregon grape holly, American dogwood, toyon, and bearberry cotoneaster.<sup>130</sup> The plan also recommended the removal and relocation of the two memorial spruce trees in the front to make possible the orchard expansion in this area. The non-historic trees had long been the subject of concern amongst regional staff concerned about the historic vista to the east.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps for this reason, neither action has been completed.

#### **Other plantings and boundary areas**

Around 2000, CALTRANS produced plans to improve the State Route 4 and Alhambra Avenue interchange with new plantings and remove weeds and volunteer trees (Figure 5.32). The new plan proposed a gateway planting area in front of the boundary fence at the southeast corner of the park, and among the lengthy preliminary list of trees and shrubs were several associated with the historic period: California bay laurel, Coast redwood, Coast live oak, California buckeye, and toyon. Although this area was relatively small, larger gateway areas were proposed for other sections of the interchange. Concerns were raised by NPS officials about the use of plants native to California but not native to the site and how doing so might affect vegetation management strategies at the park and especially on Mt. Wanda.<sup>132</sup>

In the area immediately west of the gateway plantings, the plan proposed groundcovers and “accent plants” and the removal of volunteer trees and weeds. In particular, CALTRANS wished to remove the historic Canary Island palm on their side of the fence to eliminate the need of having to prune and maintain it, but the park convinced them to transfer its care to the park. CALTRANS agreed and implemented the planting plan in 2003.<sup>133</sup>

In 1995, the northernmost specimen of the three historic incense cedars adjacent to the Visitor Center was lost to a windstorm. A few years later, in 1996/97, the final two specimens closest to the patio wall, that had long been in poor health, finally died and were removed. The wood from the trees was salvaged and used to make benches. In 1998, six saplings were planted in this area.<sup>134</sup>

Numerous plantings were installed in 1998 along the south and west boundaries: twenty dwarf coyote brush plants south of the walnuts and pecans, five false holly along the west fence, and ten western redbud around pipeline easement area. Other plantings around the park included: toyon in 1998, blue oak in 1998,

California white oak in 1995- 1997 (also along Franklin Creek), and coast redwoods.<sup>135</sup>

## **BUILDINGS**

Extensive work was completed on the exterior of the Muir House from 1998-2000. The building was painted to reflect a scheme from the 1890s, the first decade of Muir's residence in the home, and the description given by Wanda to her father in a c.1893 letter: "They are painting it a light soft gray and I think it will look very pretty..." Paint analysts from Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco examined the layers of paint history and selected Benjamin Moore's "Smoke White" for the siding and "Country Red" for the window sashes, and an enamel paint matching the flat latex "Smoke White" for the metal roofs. The work was completed by Z.K. Painting of Castro Valley, who used brushes rather than sprayers to create the lines and textures that would have been visible in the 1890s.<sup>136</sup>

The Historic Structures Report was initiated soon after the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. When completed in 1992, the report presented proposals to rehabilitate the structure to meet seismic and other safety standards. This work was completed by 1998. Exterior projects included relocation of the brick wall and expansion of the brick patio on the west side, new stone surfaces on the walkways; improvements to the irrigation system and drainage; and removal of Parsowith's decorative wall and path on the south side.

At the Visitor Center, with the exception of drainage and resurfacing work on the patio area and replacement of the turnstile in 1996/97, no other changes were made to the building.<sup>137</sup> However, in 2000, after decades of reiterating the same issues and problems regarding the building, plans were made to construct a new \$2.2 million Visitor and Education Center. As of this writing, preliminary plans for the one- story complex include a reception area, exhibit space, reading room, staff offices and work areas, bookstore, and auditorium. Plans also call for new patios and a reconfigured entrance gate area. The building will be located within the park's development zone and will be approximately 2.5 times larger than the present facility, which will be removed. Construction is anticipated in the next five to seven years.

## **STRUCTURES AND OTHER BUILT FEATURES**

### **Carriage House, Windmills, Wells, and Franklin Creek Bridge**

In 1993, an accessible ramp was installed in front of the carriage house.<sup>138</sup> Nearby, in 1996, the Franklin Creek Bridge was reconstructed a second time, again using

modern materials and techniques to simulate the appearance of a wooden bridge as it may have looked during the historic period.<sup>139</sup> Upstream from the bridge, repairs were made to the concrete sandbag wall at the culvert in 1995 and to the culvert itself in 1997.<sup>140</sup> In 1998, El Nino rainstorm events caused localized flooding on several streets downstream from the park. The creek has been regularly cleaned out since then, in some instances as part of an Eagle Scout project.<sup>141</sup>

#### **Fences and other structures**

In 1998, most of the park's gates and boundary fencing were rehabilitated.<sup>142</sup> Other work in the landscape included construction of a beehive oven south of the Martinez Adobe in 1992 for use by the ELP. The structure was constructed by park employee Brian Garrett with federal funds associated with the 400th anniversary celebration of the sailing of Columbus. In 1998, the wood stage, a temporary structure assemble for special events, was replaced.<sup>143</sup>

#### **CIRCULATION**

Beginning in the early 1990s, several recommendations were prepared regarding pedestrian access into the park from Canyon Way and the California State Riding and Hiking Trail. A plan from 1991 proposed paving the hiking trail from the south end of the tunnel under State Route 4 to Canyon Way, and then constructing a new and slightly elevated five- foot- wide sidewalk along the east side of Canyon Way to a modified pedestrian gate at the existing service gate at the main farm road (Figure 5.33). The plan also proposed curbing around the cul- de- sac; benches; and plantings of black locust, blue and valley oaks, and deodar cedars along the way.<sup>144</sup> By 1992, plans were changed and a pedestrian gate was installed in the west boundary fence just south of the service gate, presumably to separate pedestrian and vehicular uses. A small path connected the gate to the sidewalk system around the Martinez Adobe. Other improvements were not made at this time, possibly because of utility easement issues.

Recently, park administration proposed construction of a combination service road and pedestrian trail from just east of the pipeline easement to the front of the Martinez Adobe (Figure 5.34). The new path was part of a larger project to pave the tunnel and hiking trail and construct a trailhead parking lot. The intent was twofold: to provide access to the original part of the park for maintenance vehicles and equipment not licensed for on- street operation on Canyon Way (a new maintenance facility was constructed in 1997 on newly acquired lands to the southwest, to be discussed below); and to provide pedestrian access to the park

from the tunnel area rather than using the gate on Canyon Way. A “Technical Assistance Report” produced in 2002 by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation recommended delaying the pedestrian path segment of the project pending the completion of this CLR, noting that the proposed route could cause pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and adversely impact the historic setting of the orchards.<sup>145</sup>

Other circulation- related work at the park since 1991 has included leveling the sidewalks in front of the Muir House in 1994; application of a slurry seal to the trails (it is unclear which routes) in 1997; and completion of new patios and walks at the Martinez Adobe as recommended in the Historic Structures Report, in 1998. In 2000 discussions were renewed regarding a new fire road to the Muir House.<sup>146</sup> Around 1991, a bus shelter for the Contra Costa Transit District was erected on Alhambra Avenue, just north of the Visitor Center, as part of a special use permit. The shelter was removed around 1998.

#### **ARCHEOLOGY**

In 1991, a report by Linda Scott Cummings and Kathy Puseman entitled, “Pollen, Phytolith, and Macrofloral Analysis at the Martinez Adobe, California,” analyzed the adobe brick of the Martinez Adobe to identify plants growing near the adobe at the time of construction in 1849. The authors identified the presence of aster, snakeweed, rabbitbrush, and sunflower as well as grasses, sagebrush, poison ivy, and pine in the brick. This suggested, among other things, that the adobe clay was collected near a riparian area. The report also noted the presence of date palms before the bricks were made, indicating that Mexican settlers probably planted them in this area.<sup>147</sup>

A brief archeological assessment of the Mt. Wanda and gravesite parcels was compiled in June 1989 by the NPS regional archeologist. The memorandum noted the land associations with Muir and Strentzel, the Martinez family, and given the sweeping views from the top, the potential use by Spanish explorers as a viewpoint. The author did not believe there was any physical evidence left of these land uses – archeological or historic buildings or structures – although noting that some of the higher elevations had been cleared of trees for hay production. Other potential archeological resources included a cave on the west side, a c.1930s- 1950s trash dump near the CALTRANS park and ride lot, and twentieth century farm buildings at the Strain parcel.<sup>148</sup>

**GRAVESITE AND MT. WANDA AREAS**

Many of the residents contacted for the 1978 “Gravesite Feasibility Study” were still living in the neighborhood when public meetings for the draft GMP were held in the summer of 1990. As noted previously, their comments were influential in adopting a low- key development and management approach for the property.<sup>149</sup> In 2000, the NPS acquired the gravesite property from the American Land Conservancy, which had held the cemetery since 1993 to enable purchase by the federal government.

Although few additions were proposed for the gravesite in terms of visitor facilities, the larger effects of urban development and other adjacent land use changes on the area’s watershed were slowly beginning to erode the banks of the Arroyo del Hambre and potentially threaten the graves. A report completed in 2002 by Richard Inglis, “Stability of Alhambra Creek at the John Muir Gravesite,” concluded that the increased stream flows at the gravesite parcel were generally caused by the urbanized watershed and specifically by the concrete rubble along the banks. The report added that riparian vegetation along the creek – comprised mainly of California buckeye, sycamore, along with eucalyptus and Ponderosa pine – was the main factor in holding the banks in place. Recommendations included plantings of additional riparian trees of various ages and species and construction of a gradient check structure as proposed in the Strentzel Lane storm water project.<sup>150</sup>

Acquisition of the Mt. Wanda properties was completed in 1991 and 1992, and by the end of the decade, the park had implemented many of the goals outlined for the new land in the GMP/EA. One of the most pressing needs for the park, a new maintenance facility, was completed in 2002 at the west end of the city tract where a house and café once stood. As noted previously, however, this detached location created some logistical issues regarding vehicles and equipment not authorized for street operation.

Regarding the park’s long- standing parking deficiencies, preliminary plans were developed in 1999 for a trailhead parking lot on the north side of Mt. Wanda, in the east half of the city tract parcel. The layout included space for thirty- three vehicles (including two handicapped spaces) and two buses. In addition to new crosswalks, signal lights, and plantings, the proposal called for the removal of two massive blue gum eucalyptus trees (Figure 5.35). The 2002 Technical Assistance Report concluded that the trees may be historic and noted that the 1991 GMP/EA recommended retaining large existing trees on this tract unless determined to be hazardous. To this end, the report recommended consultations with an arborist

to determine their age, condition, and anticipated health if surrounded by a parking lot. The report also included an alternative parking lot layout that preserved the trees in a protected island.<sup>151</sup> Later, archival research associated with the CLR uncovered several historic photographs (one of these is Figure 3.5) and a diary entry that suggested the trees were part of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch and may have been planted by Muir himself.

Numerous natural resource studies and projects have been completed during this period, or are underway. Beginning in 1993, plans were made to reduce and possibly eliminate the invasive tree- of- heavens, particularly those in the oak woodlands of Mt. Wanda; today, the much has been removed and replaced with natives such as coast redwood and oak. Other invasive plants identified in 1993 included artichoke thistle, Scotch broom, yellow star thistle, and field bindweed.<sup>152</sup> That same year, a NPS plant identification study was initiated by Ben Mosley and Herb Thurman.

A small stock pond was breached on the west side of Mt. Wanda by the NPS in 1993. The breach was thought to have contributed to localized downstream flooding in the Strentzel Lane neighborhood around the gravesite during 1998 El Nino rain events. However, a report by Richard Inglis, “Watershed Condition Assessment of Sub- Drainage Zone No. 1167,” in 2000 concluded that the breach had minimal effect on flooding. Inglis determined that a large detention basin would have the most significant effect in reducing flooding but that such mitigation was unlikely given the management policies and mandates for Mt. Wanda.

Inglis also recommended that the NPS work with homeowners and local and county planning authorities to address flood control.<sup>153</sup> Such cooperation occurred recently in the Strentzel Lane Sediment Reduction Project. The project will slow the course of an intermittent stream passing through a horse pasture just north of the ranch buildings and corrals through a series of switchbacks and retention areas. The water will then pass through a long underground pipe that eventually outfalls at the headwall of the old pedestrian bridge near the gravesite.<sup>154</sup> The portion of the culvert and trench passing through the gravesite tract considered the location of the remnant historic pear trees, and construction in the fall of 2003 was carefully monitored so as not to damage the trees with stockpiles of soil or with equipment.

In the early 1990s, the existing fire roads on Mt. Wanda were incorporated into the regional trail network extending from the Martinez shoreline to the Briones

Regional Park south of Mt. Wanda. The Mt. Wanda segments were cooperatively managed by the NPS and the East Bay Regional Park District. In 1996, repairs were made to the fire road and included culverts, catch basins, and concrete masonry pipes.<sup>55</sup> Other roads/trails were improved with new concrete low water crossings.<sup>56</sup> In subsequent years, other trails branching off the fire road were developed, one of which was a nature loop trail on the upper north slope that featured wood footbridges, benches, information kiosks, and marked guideposts. Several locations along the trail provide glimpses of the orchards and windmill at the House Unit below.

In 1995, the US Board on Geographic Names approved the request to give official status to Mount Helen and Mount Wanda, named for Muir's two daughters.

Existing Condition Plans for the park's three units are presented in Chapter 6.

## **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE**

<sup>1</sup> Several small parcels of the Stein property were condemned by the State of California for freeway construction and for the interchange at Alhambra Avenue. Information from *The People of the State of California versus Louis L. Stein, Jr., Henry V. Sax, Faire E. Sax, City of Martinez etc.* in the Superior Court of the State of California, Case No. 91734, Final Order of Condemnation, filed 15 March 1965, JOMU files. (Cited in Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site." Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 60).

<sup>2</sup> National Park Service, "General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment." Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: 22.

<sup>3</sup> In November 1965, the Steins granted an easement and right- of- way to Southern Pacific Pipelines, Inc. to install an eight- inch gas line through the southwest corner of the adobe property. In August 1966, another easement was conferred to the Union Oil Company for underground pipelines and surface valves across the same area. The Steins officially transferred the 3.63- acre adobe property, consisting of land in Parcels 2 and 3 of the Rancho El Pinole, to the US Government on 15 August 15 1966. The transfer is recorded in Contra Costa County Deeds (hereafter cited as "Deeds"), Book 5188, 108- 109. (Cited in Burke 1992: 60- 61).

<sup>4</sup> Grant deeds, correspondence, and title insurance policy, filed L1425, "Holdings, Stein." JOMU files. See also Deeds, Official Records, Book 4904: 319; Official Records, Book 4994: 351; Official Records, Book 5186: 352; and Official Records, Book 2860: 418. (All cited in Burke 1992: 60).



<sup>5</sup> Land was acquired from the following: 4.11 acres from Henry V. and Faire. S. Sax (Parcel 1); 3.63 acres from Louis L. and Mildred R. Stein (Parcels 2 and 3); 1.88 acres and right- of- way from Walker Built Homes (Parcels 4 and 5A); and .16 acres from Dr. Carl Monser (Parcel 5B). (Cited in National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 7).

<sup>6</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 6.

<sup>7</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3- 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>12</sup> The vineyard was outfitted with drip irrigation, but was not effective because of low water pressure and clogging. Typescript dated 4 September 1975, author unknown. JOMU files.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum from Superintendent Omundson to Director, Western Region, 11 May 1973. JOMU files.

<sup>14</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 97.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Superintendent to Park Staff: fruit policy, 31 January 1968. PWRO files; National Park Service, “Final Interpretive Prospectus.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, September 1976: 3; National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975: 8- 2 and 8- 3. (Cited in Burke 1992: 70).

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum from Superintendent to Regional Director, Western Region, 9 February 1968 (Reference No. W14,WR APG). JOMU files.

<sup>17</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>18</sup> The orchard irrigation project, initiated in 1972, included installation of a sprinkler system in the front lawn area of the adobe. Burke 1992: 70.

<sup>19</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>20</sup> “Superintendent’s Report,” 2 May 1967: 2. JOMU files.

<sup>21</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>22</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>23</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 4.

<sup>24</sup> John E. Jensen, “Historic Structures Report, Part 1, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, November 1966. John E. Jensen and Koue A. Lewis, “Historic Structures Report, Part 2, John Muir House, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, June 1968.

<sup>25</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources National Park Service. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, April 1993: 96.

<sup>26</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975: 1.

<sup>27</sup> John Hussey, Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky, “Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963: 40; Memorandum from Harold F. Johnson to Superintendent Schultz, 22 June 1966. (Cited in Burke 1992: 62).

<sup>28</sup> Burke 1992: 62.

<sup>29</sup> Utility systems, some installed by the Hannas in the early part of the century, were replaced at this time. National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Oakland Tribune*, 16 April 1972. (Cited in Burke 1992: 63).

<sup>31</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975: 1. (Cited in Burke 1992: 70).

<sup>32</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 2- 3.

<sup>33</sup> David Blackburn, “Days of Future Past.” Typescript excerpted from “The View from John Muir’s Window,” newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, December 1997.

<sup>34</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 4.

<sup>35</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 2.

<sup>36</sup> “Superintendent’s Report,” 2 May 1967: 2. JOMU files; National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 3; National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 6.

<sup>37</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 4; Interview with Henry Sax and Andrew Kreiss by John E. Jensen, 19 October 1966. JOMU files.

<sup>38</sup> John E. Jensen, “Historic Structures Report, Franklin Creek Bridge, Part 1, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California.” Martinez, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, August 1966: 1.

<sup>39</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 98; JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1; Burke 1992: 65.

<sup>40</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 4; Memorandum from P. J. Ryan to Denver Service Center Planning Team, 30 May 1974. (Cited in Burke 1992: 65).

<sup>41</sup> Burke 1992: 60.

<sup>42</sup> Burke 1992: 64, 67; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 96.

<sup>43</sup> In 1970, bituminous pavement was installed in the parking lot and on the east access lane. This project also included curbs around the lot. “Improvement of Parking Area,” John Muir National Historic Site, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80002B, August 1970; National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use,” 1965: 4; National Park Service, “Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Proposed Legislative Ceiling Increase.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, 1972: 10.

<sup>44</sup> Karen Lundquist and Marion Riggs, “Archeological Survey, John Muir [House] National Historic Site,” 22 November 1967. (Cited in National Park Service, “Environmental Assessment/Master Plan.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, March 1975: Appendix D).

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Acting Chief, Division of Historic Preservation regarding archeological resources at John Muir National Historic Site, 15 August 1974. (Cited in National Park Service, “Environmental Assessment/Master Plan,” March 1975: Appendix E).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Inglis, “Watershed Condition Assessment of Sub Drainage Zone No. 1167, John Muir National Historic Site.” Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR-2000/262. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, February 2000: Appendix C.

<sup>49</sup> National Park Service, “Final General Management Plan.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, September 1976: 1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 6, 19.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 14- 16.

<sup>53</sup> There is little documentation regarding the drying shed. A letter from Howard H. Chapman, Regional Director, Western Region to Herbert Rhodes, Department of Parks and Recreation, State of California, 21 November 1965, mentions that the master plan proposed eliminating maintenance storage in the drying shed. Information also extracted from National Park Service, "Final General Management Plan," 1976: 14, 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment/Master Plan." Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, March 1975: 23; National Park Service, "Final General Management Plan," 1976: 16.

<sup>55</sup> National Park Service, "Final Interpretive Prospectus," 1976: 4.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>57</sup> National Park Service, "Final General Management Plan," 1976: 16.

<sup>58</sup> National Park Service, "Final Interpretive Prospectus," 1976: 20.

<sup>59</sup> National Park Service, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Proposed Legislative Ceiling Increase," 1972: 1.

<sup>60</sup> JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1; Excerpt of letter from Phyllis Shaw, Superintendent, to Dr. Jean Merriam, Sonoma State University, 12 December 1984 (Reference P8619). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading File."

<sup>61</sup> Memorandum to Regional Director, 30 September 1985 (author unknown, reference F30). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files January - December 1985."; Memorandum, excerpt of National Park Service Annual Report, 4 December 1986 (reference A2621). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files November 1986 - December 1987."

<sup>62</sup> Typescript, no date or author (reference A26). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files January - June 1988."

<sup>63</sup> Memo from Superintendent to Regional Director, 5 June 1984 (reference A2623, WR- PRT). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading File."

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources 13 November 1983. PWRO files; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 98; Staff Meeting Notes, 14 June 1984 (reference A4031). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading File".

<sup>65</sup> Memo from Superintendent to Regional Director, 5 June 1984 (reference A2623, WR- PRT). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading File."; Staff Meeting Notes, 8 April 1986. JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files January - December 1986."

<sup>66</sup> Letter from Park to Store Manager at Navalt's Garden Center, 22 March 1988 (author unknown, reference A26). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading files January - June 1988."

<sup>67</sup> Letter from John Donahue to Mr. Christiansen, 17 May 1984 (reference N50). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading File”; “Annual Report,” 3 October 1988. JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading Files January - June 1988”.

<sup>68</sup> Memo regarding exhibit rehabilitation for fiscal year 1986, author and date unknown. JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading File.”; Staff Meeting Notes, 17 May 1984 (reference A4031). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading File”

<sup>69</sup> Agee’s report noted NPS policies regarding management and preservation of historic vegetation and recommended that the park maintain historic specimen trees as much as possible, and maintain the remaining trees in a manner complementary to the historic trees and structures. This could include limited replacement of missing trees that were present in the historic period and removal of non- historic trees to improve the historic scene. James K. Agee, “Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 1- 5, 32- 33.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 98.

<sup>72</sup> JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 2; JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>.

<sup>73</sup> Burke 1992: 75.

<sup>74</sup> “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” John Muir National Historic Site, 1977. (Cited in Burke 1992: 75).

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Howard H. Chapman, Regional Director, Western Region to Louis S. Wall, Assistant Director, Office of Review and Compliance, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 27 January 1976. PWRO files.

<sup>76</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>.

<sup>77</sup> Excerpt of letter from John Donahue to Dianne Ceballos, President, Muir Garden Club, 19 December 1984 (reference F5415). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading File.”

<sup>78</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>; Burke 1992: 76; Staff Meeting Notes, 19 February 1986. JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading Files January - December 1986.”

<sup>79</sup> National Park Service, “Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan: Overview.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, November 1981: 2.

<sup>80</sup> William E. Davis, “Technical Report No. 4: Management Recommendation for the Removal of Introduced Woody and Prominent Herbaceous Perennials Along Franklin Creek,” Cooperative National Park Resources Studies Unit: University of California- Davis and NPS, Western Region, San Francisco, November 1981: 8.

<sup>81</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 97; Memorandum from Superintendent to Assistant Regional Director, Fiscal and Information Management (Reference D2623), 30 July 1986. JOMU files; Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 22 June 1982 (Reference No. 166). PWRO folder "JOMU Folder 1973- 1994."

<sup>82</sup> Letter to Mr. John Aranson, East Bay Conservation Corps, 1 April 1987 (author unknown). JOMU files "Correspondence Reading Files November 1986- December 1987."

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum to Regional Director, Western Region, from Superintendent, 5 November 1984 (reference H2215). JOMU files; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 98; Excerpt of letter from John Donahue to California Native Plants Society, 13 September 1984 (reference K14). JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading File."; Staff Meeting Notes, 23 April 1985. JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files January - December 1985."

<sup>84</sup> "Annual Report," 3 October 1988. JOMU folder "Correspondence Reading Files January - June 1988."; Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 9 November 1984 (reference No. WR 400). PWRO folder "JOMU Folder 1973- 1994."

<sup>85</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 97-98.

<sup>86</sup> Burke 1992: 76.

<sup>87</sup> Burke 1992: 77; National Park Service, "Statement for Management." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Revised September 1992: 9; "Superintendent's Annual Report," John Muir National Historic Site, 1989. (Cited in Burke 1992: 92).

<sup>88</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 97-98.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>90</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 97; JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>91</sup> JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>92</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 97.

<sup>93</sup> P.J. Ryan to John Hanna, 8 March 1974, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 73); “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” John Muir National Historic Site, 1978, JOMU files. (Cited in Burke 1992: 76); David Blackburn, “Days of Future Past.” Typescript excerpted from “The View from John Muir’s Window,” newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, December 1997.

<sup>94</sup> Burke 1992: 77.

<sup>95</sup> Information regarding the ramada in Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 7 July 1988 (Reference WR NO. 766). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”; Information regarding the septic tank from JOMU files.

<sup>96</sup> Burke 1992: 74; Information on electric line in Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 27 April 1987 (Reference WR NO. 664). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 22 July 1981. PWRO folder “JOMU folder 1973- 1994.”; National Park Service, “Statement for Management.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Revised March 1989: 11.

<sup>98</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 98.

<sup>99</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 98; Letter from 1 April 1987. JOMU files “Correspondence Reading Files November 1986 - December 1987”; Letter to Mr. John Aranson, East Bay Conservation Corps, 1 April 1987 (author unknown). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading Files November 1986- December 1987.”

<sup>100</sup> A photograph from c.1923 (Figure 4.6) informed the decision regarding the cobblestones. See Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 2 October 1981 (Reference No. 97). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”

<sup>101</sup> Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 22 December 1983 (Reference No. WR 328). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”; Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 18 July 1983 (Reference No. 280). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”; Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 13 January 1992 (Reference No. WR 1257). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”

<sup>102</sup> “Comprehensive Design,” John Muir National Historic Site, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426- 80011, May 1985, Sheets 1 and 2.

<sup>103</sup> National Park Service, “Statement for Management.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Revised March 1989: 11; Comprehensive Design Plan, John Muir National Historic Site, NPS, Western Regional Office, May 1985, Drawing No. 426/80011, Sheet 1 of 2. PWRO Archives.

<sup>104</sup> The only work completed on the parking lot was a resurfacing project in 1989. Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site,” 1993 Revision: 98.

<sup>105</sup> Burke 1992: 77; Note from William S. Sharkey, Shell Oil Company, 7 June 1989. JOMU Reading File “January - June 1989.”

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Howard H. Chapman, Regional Director, Western Region to Louis S. Wall, Assistant Director, Office of Review and Compliance, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 27 January 1976. PWRO files.

<sup>107</sup> JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>108</sup> Roger E. Kelly, “Sensitivity Maps for Historical Archeological Resources: John Muir National Historic Site and Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site,” October 1981, Denver Service Center files.

<sup>109</sup> Letter from Phyllis Shaw, Superintendent to Lynelle Johnson, District Aide, 17 May 1993. JOMU folder “Gravesite.”

<sup>110</sup> National Park Service, “Feasibility Study, John Muir Gravesite, Contra Costa County, California: Draft.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, May 1980: 5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 9.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum from Regional Archeologist, Western Region “Brief Assessment of Proposed Additions to John Muir NHS,” 30 June 1989. (Cited in Richard Inglis, “Watershed Condition Assessment of Sub Drainage Zone No. 1167, John Muir National Historic Site.” Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR- 2000/262. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, February 2000: Appendix C).

<sup>115</sup> The cost of managing and maintaining the Mt. Wanda and gravesite additions was estimated at \$31,000 annually and described as “modest” by the park’s superintendent, Phyllis Shaw, in 1988. It was anticipated that the East Bay Regional Parks District would absorb the cost of trail maintenance in partnership with NPS. Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001; Karl Kuellmer, “Differences in species diversity and ground cover between grazed and ungrazed grassland near Martinez,” undated typescript: 2. JOMU files;



<sup>116</sup> National Park Service, “Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, April 1993 Revision: 7.

<sup>117</sup> Memorandum from Regional Archeologist, Western Region “Brief Assessment of Proposed Additions to John Muir NHS,” 30 June 1989. (Cited in Inglis 2000: Appendix C).

<sup>118</sup> The cost of managing and maintaining the Mt. Wanda and gravesite additions was estimated at \$31,000 annually and described as “modest” by the park’s superintendent, Phyllis Shaw, in 1988. It was anticipated that the East Bay Regional Parks District would absorb the cost of trail maintenance in partnership with NPS. The \$31,000 estimate included: maintenance, management, and interpretation of Mt. Wanda \$20,000; maintenance and management of the gravesite and pear orchard - \$7500; management of cultural and natural resources of both areas - \$3500. Negotiations for the various properties were finalized in the 1990s. Information from Memorandum from Acting Superintendent to Bill Thomas, Associate Regional Director, Public Affairs, Western Regional Office, 18 July 1988 (reference L14/F34). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading files January – June 1988.”

<sup>119</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 35, 42.

<sup>120</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 3, 22- 23, Appendix 4- 1; Letter, Mr. Terry Kilpatrick, 1 September 1987 (parties unknown, reference H2215). JOMU folder “Correspondence Reading File, November 1986- December 1987.”

<sup>121</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 4, 21, 23.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., vii, 3.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., ii, 17.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., ii, vii, 4, 13- 15, 19, 22.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., vii, 16, 20- 21

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 4, 25.

<sup>127</sup> Phyllis Shaw, typescript excerpted from “The View From John Muir’s Window,” newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, December 1997.

<sup>128</sup> Phyllis Shaw, typescript excerpted from “The View From John Muir’s Window,” newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, December 1997; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files.

<sup>129</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –  
<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>130</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files;  
JOMU Landscape Management Plan –  
<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>131</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memembers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>132</sup> Email from Kimball Koch, PWRO, to Phyllis Shaw and David Blackburn, 30 March 2001. JOMU files; Conceptual planting plan for State Route 4 and Alhambra Avenue interchange, no date or source information given. JOMU files.

<sup>133</sup> Conceptual planting plan for State Route 4 and Alhambra Avenue interchange, no date or source information given, JOMU files; Handwritten notes from meeting with CALTRANS regarding improvements to State Route 4 and Alhambra Avenue interchange, dated 27 February 2001 (author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Herb Thurman, 17 July 2003, by author.

<sup>135</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memembers.frys.com/~bpmsley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>136</sup> John A. Keibel, "Paint Restoration of Muir House: Caged House Has Been Freed." Excerpted from "The View From John Muir's Window," newsletter of the John Muir Memorial Association, Issue No. 100, February 2001: 1; National Park Service, "List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site." Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration, Park Historic Structures Program.  
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>137</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files.

<sup>138</sup> Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 29 March 1993 (reference No. WR 1433). PWRO folder "JOMU Folder 1973- 1994."

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Herb Thurman, 17 July 2003, by author; National Park Service, "List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site." Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration, Park Historic Structures Program.  
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>140</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files; Retaining wall information from JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>141</sup> Inglis 2000: 9; Interview with Herb Thurman, 17 July 2003, by author.

<sup>142</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files.

<sup>143</sup> Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources. PWRO folder "JOMU Folder 1973- 1994."; Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files.

<sup>144</sup> "Site Plan for Canyon Way Trailhead," John Muir National Historic Site, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426- 80029, October 1991, Sheets 1 to 9.

<sup>145</sup> Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, "Technical Assistance for John Muir National Historic Site." Boston, MA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 8 November 2002: 2.

<sup>146</sup> Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. Typescript: 98. JOMU files.

<sup>147</sup> Linda Scott Cummings and Kathy Puseman, "Pollen, Phytolith, and Macrofloral Analysis at the Martinez Adobe, California," Typescript, November 1991: 3- 5. JOMU files.

<sup>148</sup> Memorandum from Regional Archeologist, Western Region "Brief Assessment of Proposed Additions to John Muir NHS," 30 June 1989. (Cited in Inglis 2000: Appendix C).

<sup>149</sup> Letter from Phyllis Shaw, Superintendent to Lynelle Johnson, District Aide, 17 May 1993. JOMU folder "Gravesite."

<sup>150</sup> Richard Inglis, "Stability of Alhambra Creek at the John Muir Gravesite." Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR- 2002/297. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, 2002: 1,7.

<sup>151</sup> Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, "Technical Assistance for John Muir National Historic Site." Boston, MA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 8 November 2002: 1.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from Herb Thurman, Chief of Maintenance to Regional Chief of Interpretation, Western Region, 13 December 1993. JOMU files.

<sup>153</sup> Inglis 2000: 9.

<sup>154</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>155</sup> "Construct Patio and Repair Road," John Muir National Historic Site, NPS, Western Regional Office, May 1996, Drawing No. 426/80036, Sheets 5- 7. PWRO.

<sup>156</sup> "Mount Wanda Area Site Plan: Repair Mt. Wanda Fire Roads," Drawing No. 80036, no date, PWRO.

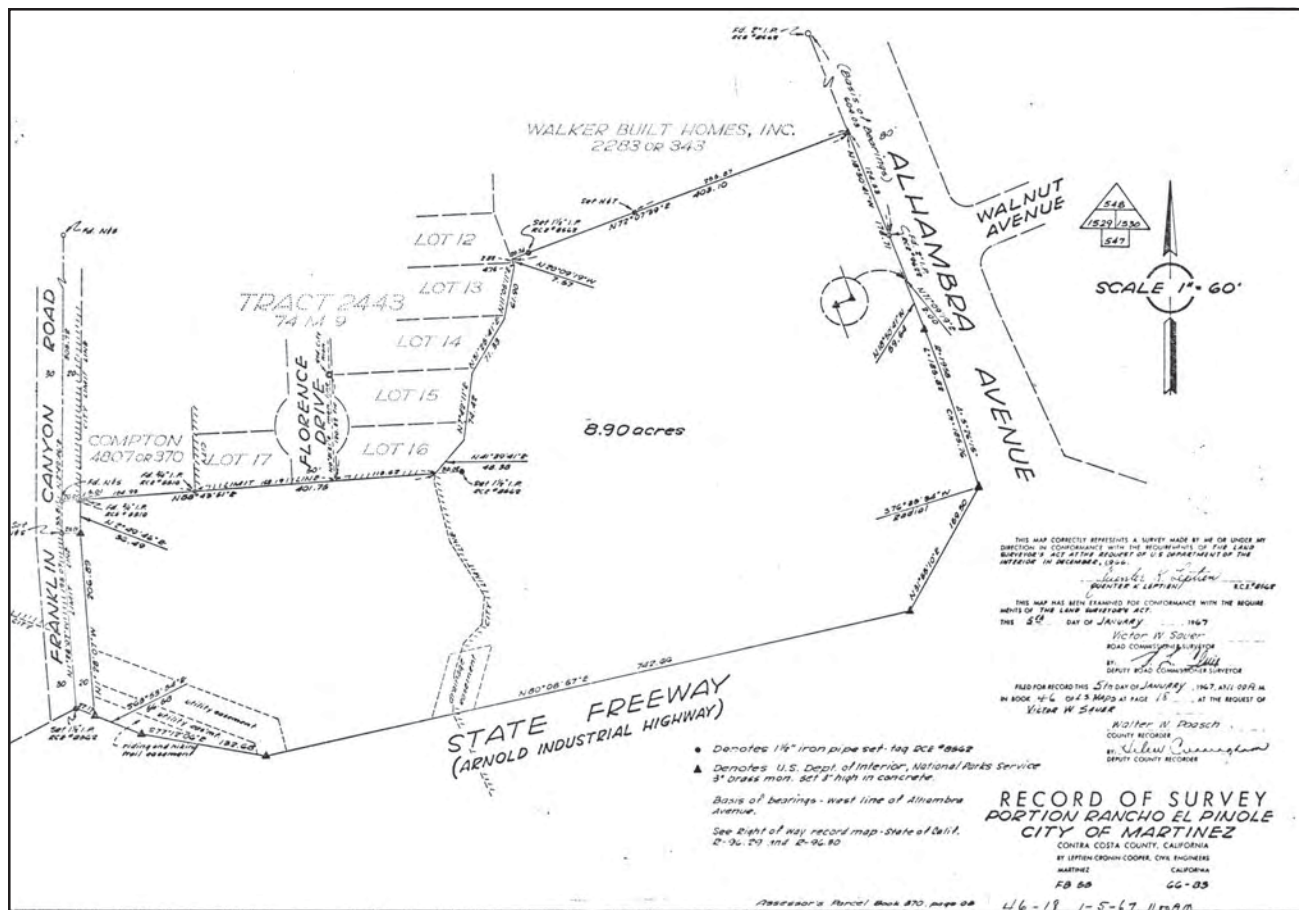
**Figure 5.1:** This view, taken c.1965 prior to reconstruction of State Highway 4, looks northwest from the railroad trestle showing new houses on the hillsides to the west. At lower right is the Martinez Animal Hospital (a) on land proposed in the park boundaries. On the left is the grove of historic eucalyptus (b). (Louis Stein Collection, D6-19, JOMU).



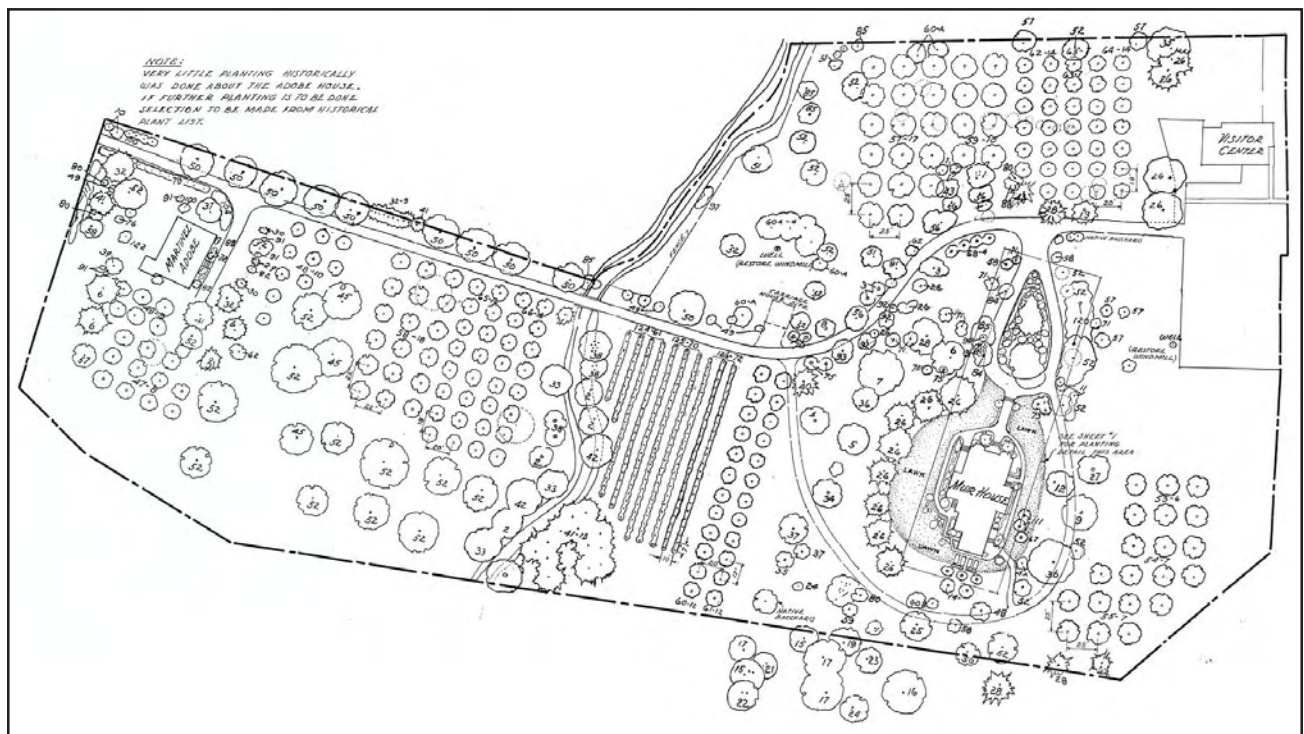
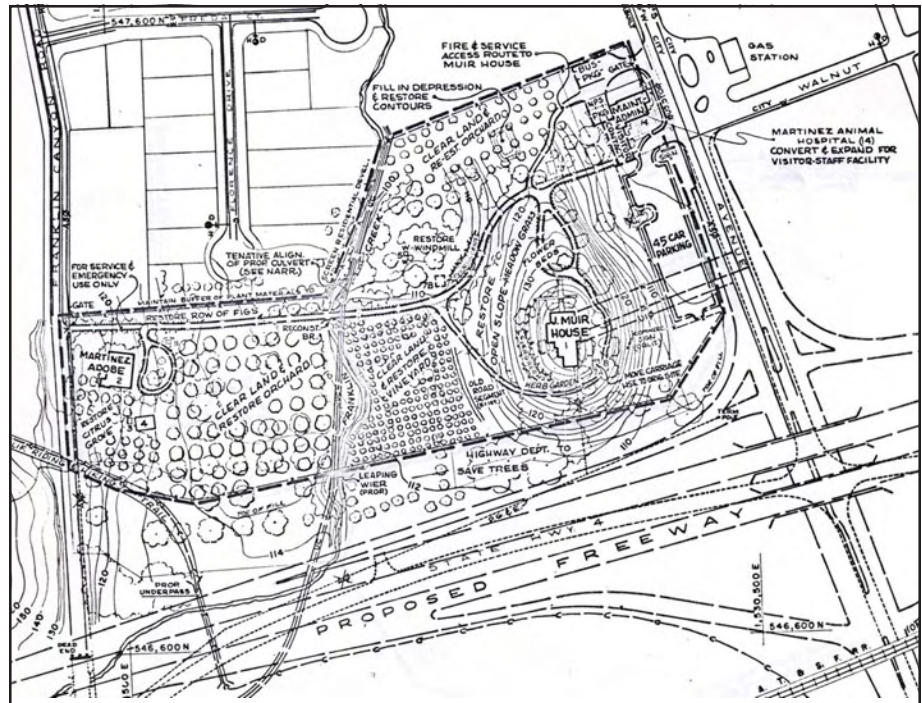
**Figure 5.2:** View looking north of the Muir House and Carriage House in 1966. Grading for the new on-ramp from Alhambra Avenue to the new highway, in the foreground, almost touches the eucalyptus and two Canary Island date palms. Note the old retaining wall at the Carriage House. (Photograph by Paul E Schulz. A1-4, JOMU).



**Figure 5.3:** This photograph was taken from the cupola of the Muir House in 1967 and shows massive amounts of fill (a) for the new highway. The vineyard between the house and Franklin Creek has been cleared by this time, but on the other side, remnant walnut trees (b) remain. In the foreground is the Atlas cedar (c), which has apparently been topped to provide a view from the cupola to the Martinez Adobe. (Photograph by John E. Jensen. D6-6, JOMU).







**Figure 5.6: Historic Planting Plan for the John Muir National Historic Site, 1968/69. (Historic Planting Plan, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, July 1968, Drawing No. 426/80000A, Sheet 2 of 2).**

**Figure 5.7: View looking northeast from the freeway in August 1969 at newly planted grapes and plums. Some historic trees visible include: incense cedars around the Muir House; arborvitae, olive, and giant sequoia (a); Canary Island date palm (b); Lebanon cedar (c); Atlas Cedar (d) which has been topped; black locust (e); and a California fan palm (f) in front of the house. Eucalyptus, redwood, oak, buckeye, and redbud was proposed in a 1967 CALTRANS plan for the highway side of the fence (g). (Photograph by Peter Allen, D6-16, JOMU).**





**Figure 5.8:** This view of the Muir House was photographed in 1966. Note the appearance of the landscape compared to ten years earlier, c.1955, in Figure 4.14. Historic plants visible in this photo include the top of the Canary Island date palm (a), California fan palms at the front, and the California bay tree (b) in the center island. Also note the bench at far right, next to the house. (Photograph by Fred E. Mang, Jr. July 29, 1966. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).





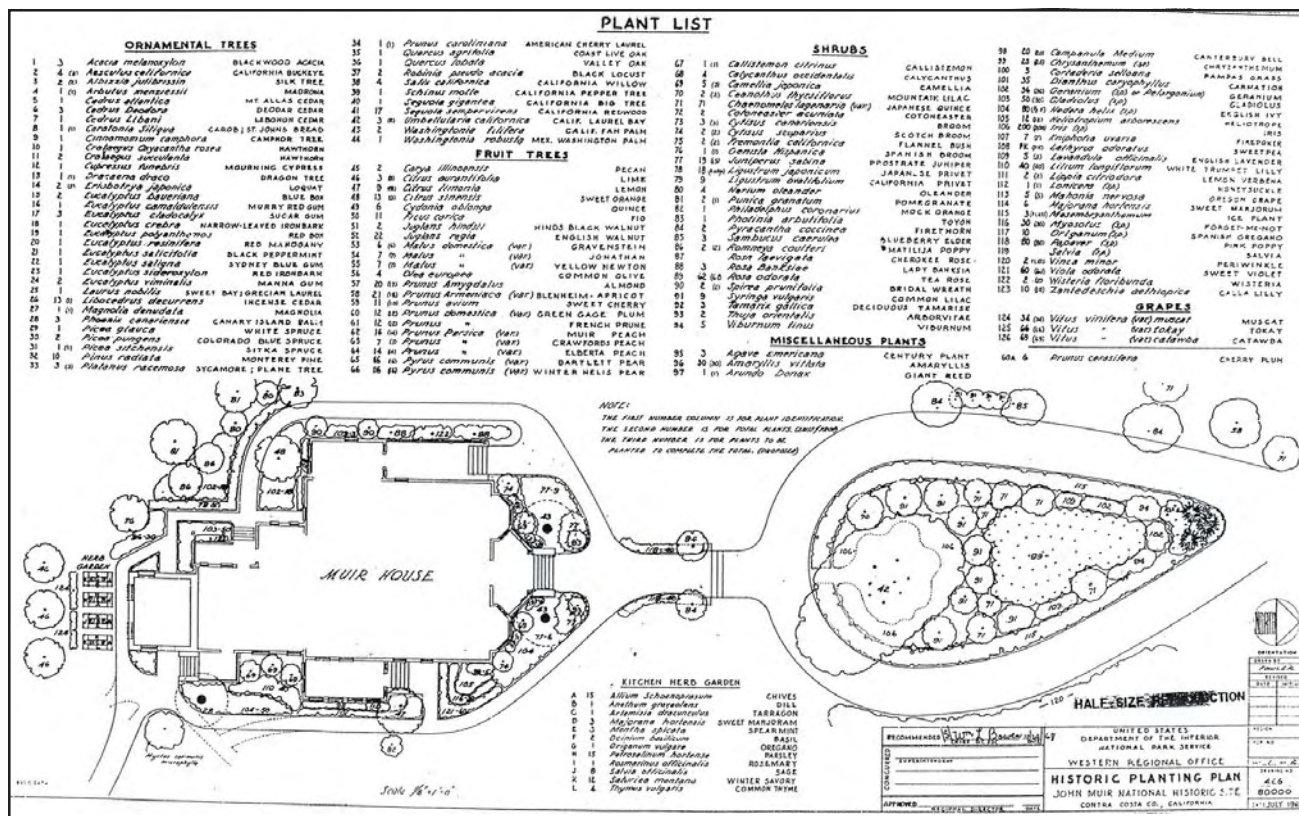


Figure 5.9: Historic Planting Plan for the Muir House, 1968/69. (Historic Planting Plan, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, July 1968, Drawing No. 426/80000A, Sheet 1 of 2).

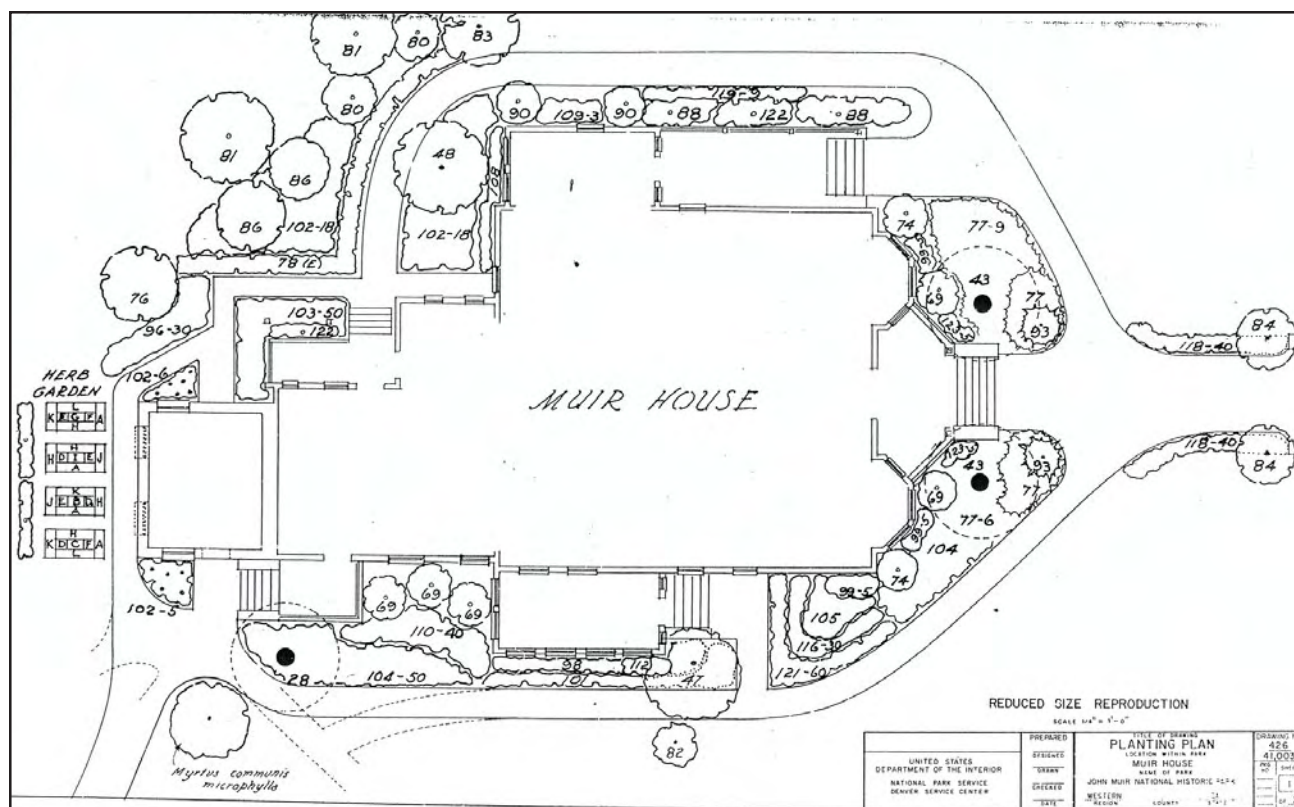


Figure 5.10: Close up of the Historic Planting Plan for the Muir House, 1968/69. (Historic Planting Plan, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, July 1968, Drawing No. 426/80000A, Sheet 1 of 2).



**Figure 5.11:** In this 1968 view, Monterey pine (a) and walnut (b) frame a view of the Martinez Adobe. The trace of the driveway loop (c) is barely visible, and the center island of which includes two blue spruce (d) and lilac (e). Mockorange, rose, cotoneaster, and flowers line the foundation. (Photograph by John E. Jensen, March 1968, B1-37, JOMU).



**Figure 5.12:** View of the Martinez Adobe and the ramada in 1967, looking northeast from Franklin Canyon Road prior to installation of the boundary fence around the park. The large tree in the foreground was removed soon after this photograph was taken. To the left is a walnut tree (supported by a brace) and wisteria vines around the ramada and at far right is one of Deodar cedars. (Photograph by John E. Jensen, 1967, JOMU).



Figure 5.13: Portion of a 1967 CALTRANS landscape plan for the State Route 4 project showing historic palms and eucalyptus to be saved (marked with hatches) and additional plantings. They were preserved but few new plants were installed. (CALTRANS Project 335501, P14, 1967/68, JOMU).

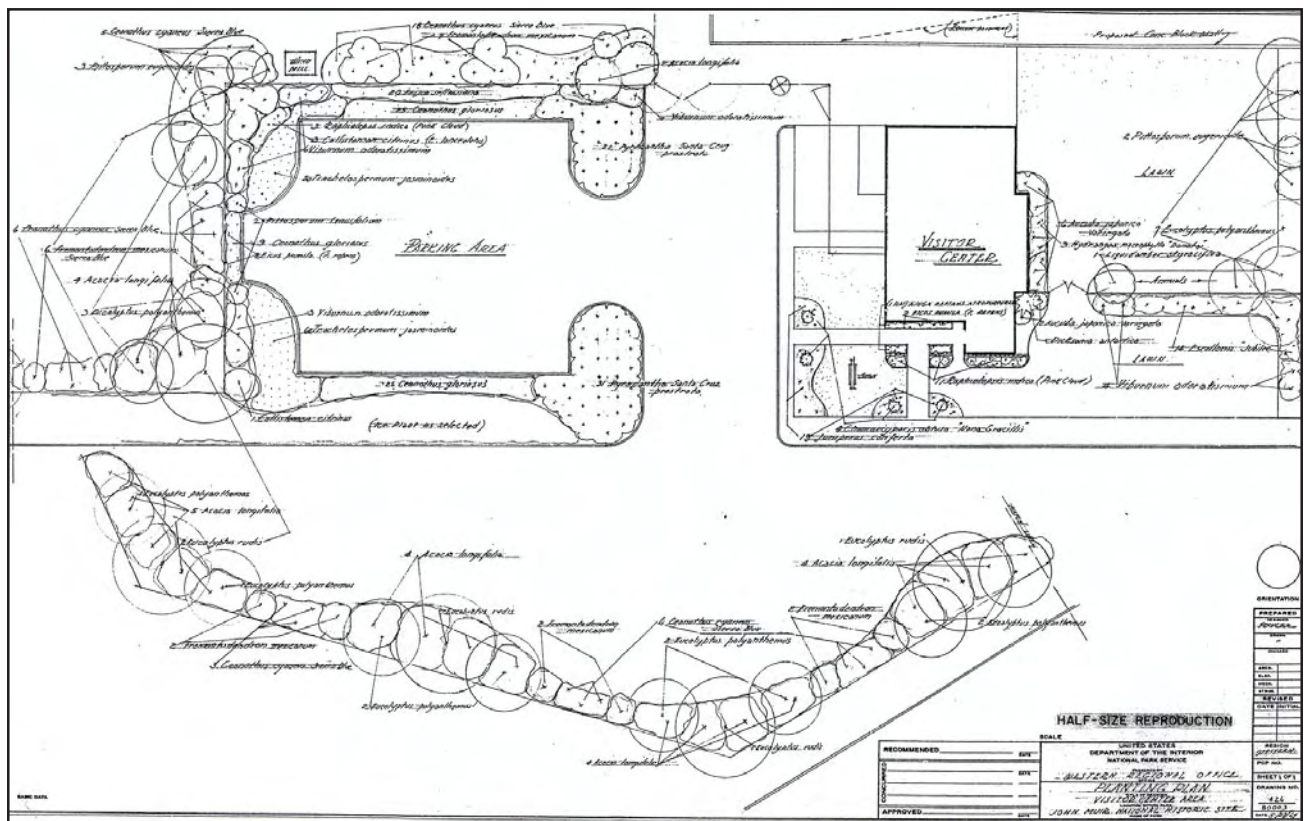
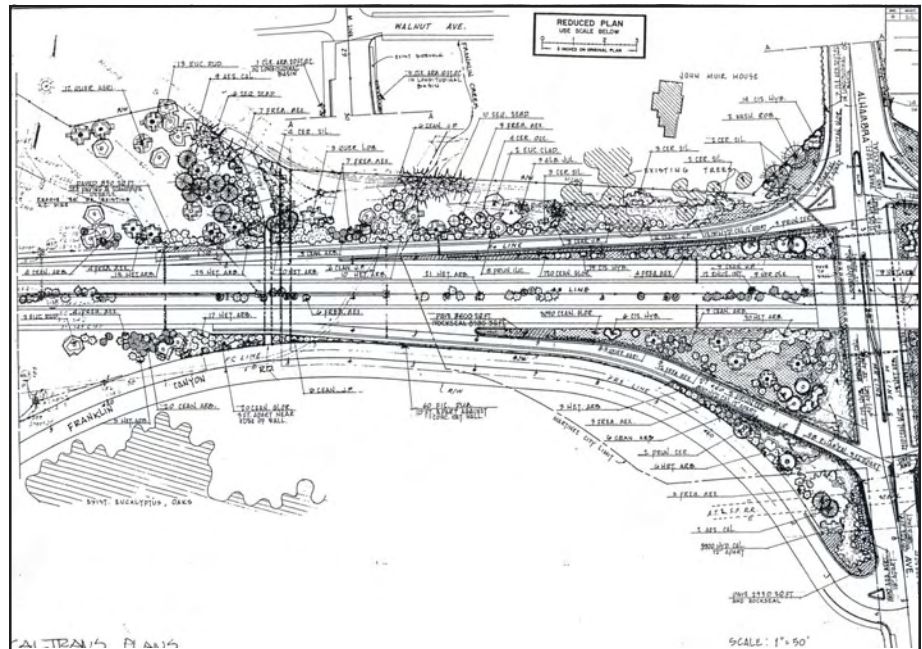


Figure 5.14: A 1969 landscape plan for the Visitor Center and the south-east boundary fence showing the scaled-back (and current) parking lot configurations and park entrance gates. (Planting Plan: Visitor Center Area, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80003, May 27, 1967. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).



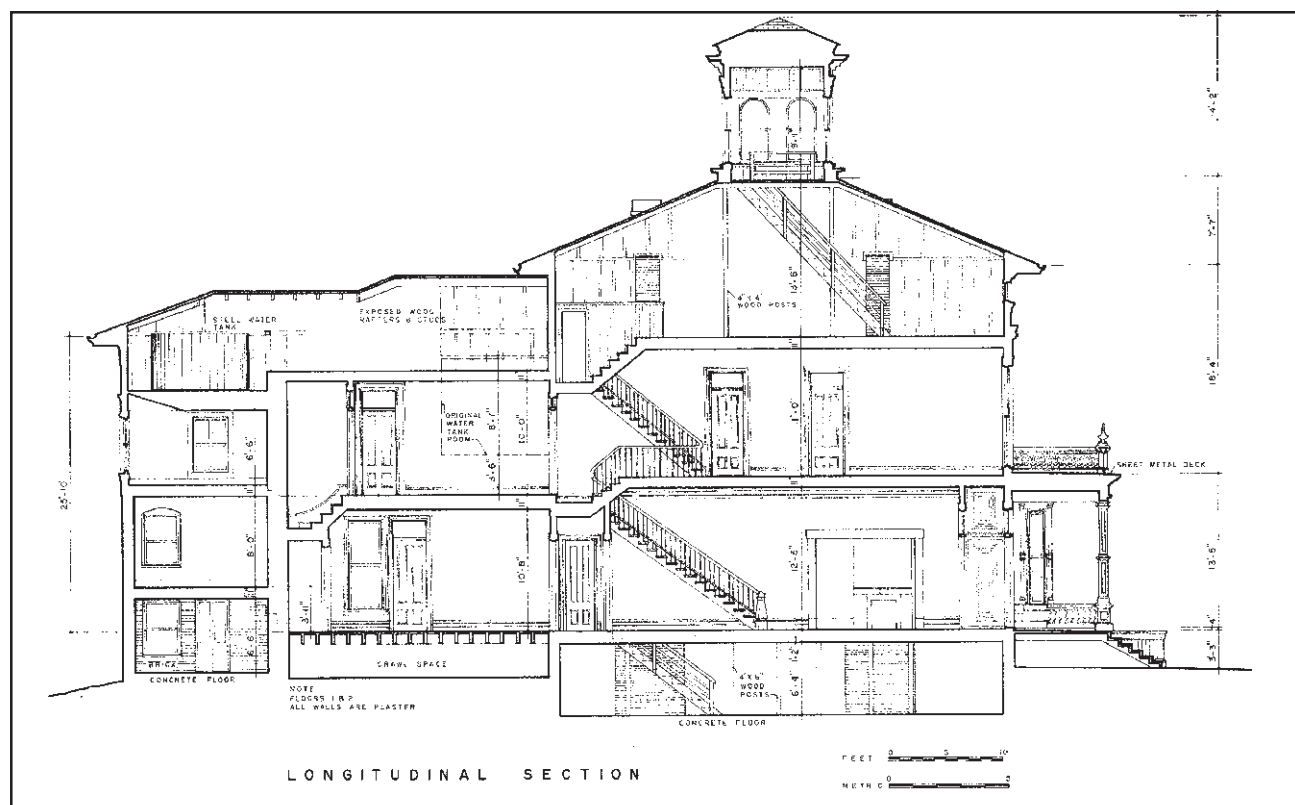


Figure 5.15: Section view of the Muir House as drawn by John C. Whitmire. (CAL-1890, Sheet 8 of 13, Historic American Buildings Survey, John Muir Home, Martinez, Contra Costa County, California. National Park Service, Western Office, 1964).

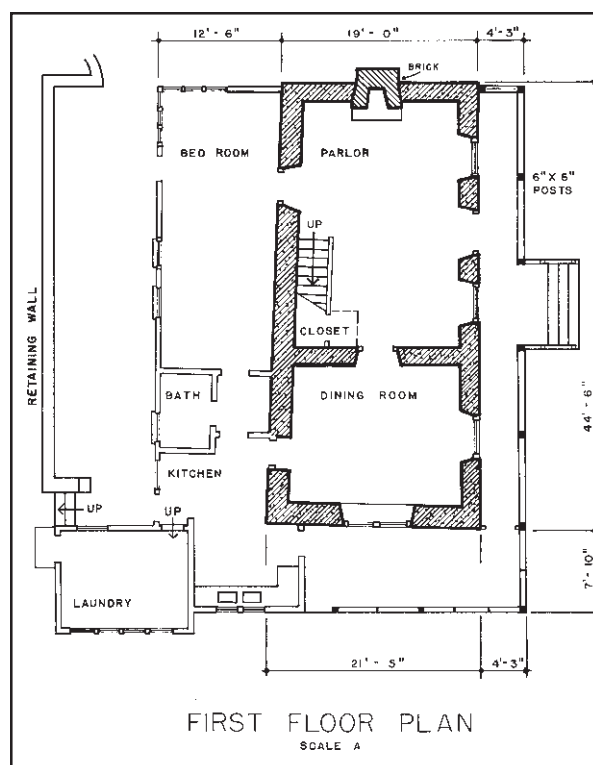
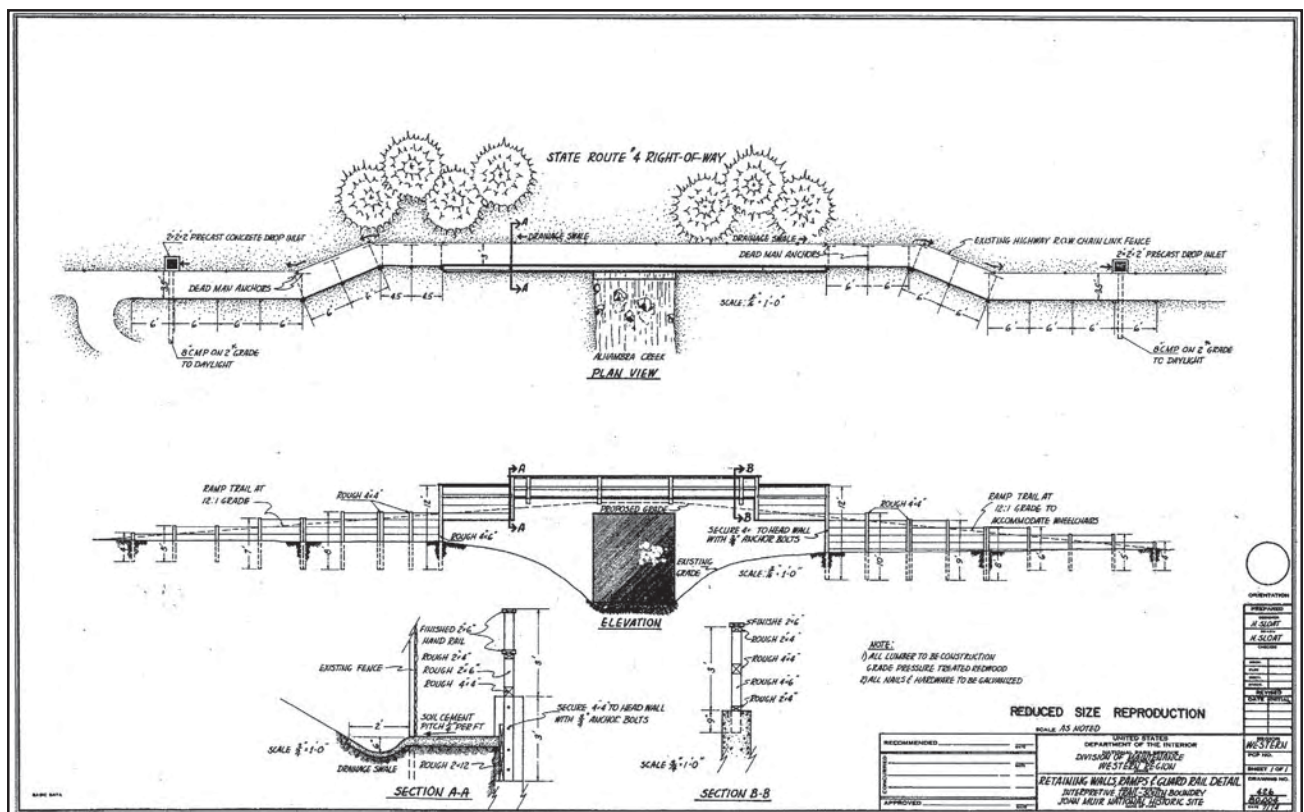


Figure 5.16: Plan of the first floor of the Martinez Adobe drawn by Nancy E. Stark. (CAL-1913, Sheet 2 of 3, Historic American Buildings Survey, Martinez Adobe, Martinez, Contra Costa County, California. National Park Service, Western Office, 1964).

**Figure 5.17:** This photograph shows flood damage along Franklin Creek in 1970. (Photographer and catalog number unknown. From Jensen, John E. "Historic Structures Report, Franklin Creek Bridge, Part 1, John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, California." Martinez: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, August 1966).



**Figure 5.18:** This 1974 plan shows a pedestrian-only bridge and trail along the south boundary fence. (Retaining Walls, Ramps, and Guardrail Detail, Interpretive Trail, South Boundary, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80004, July 1974. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).

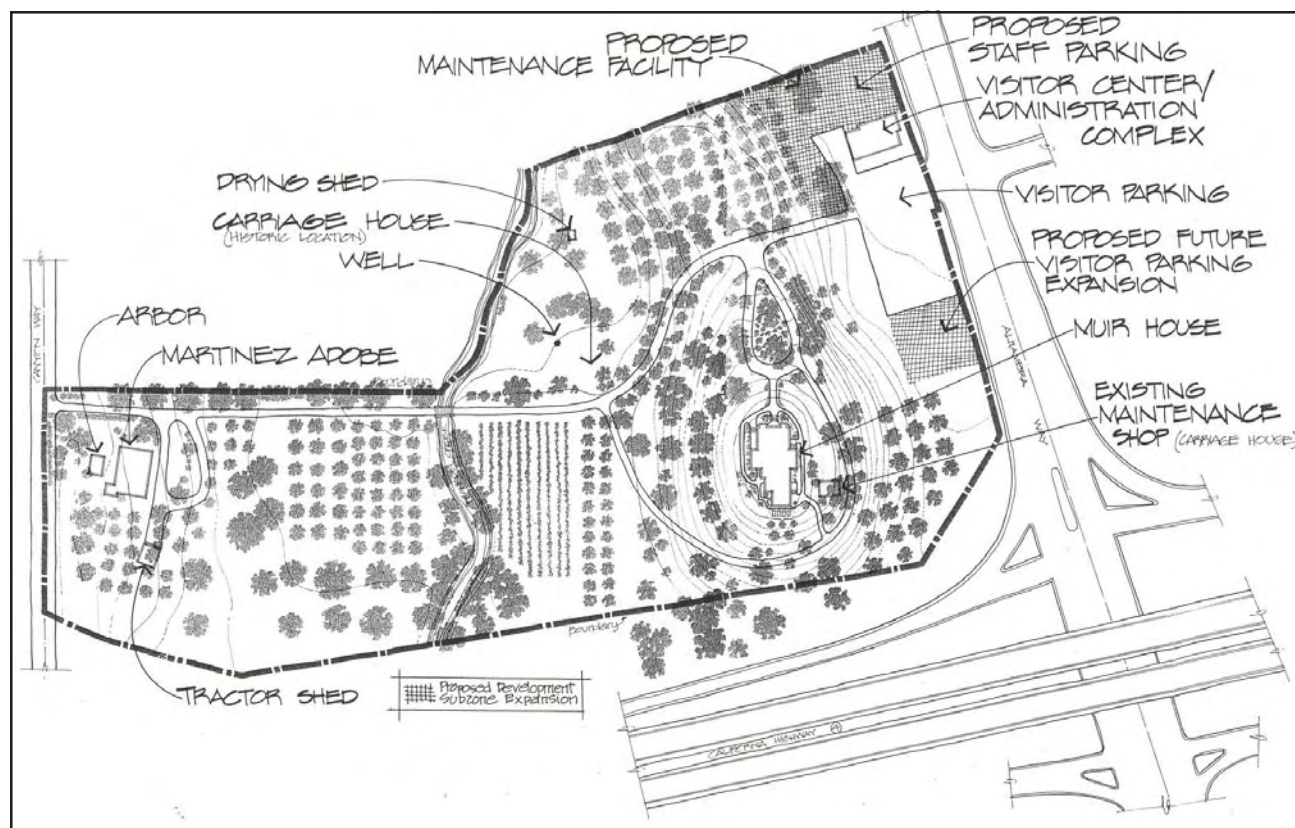
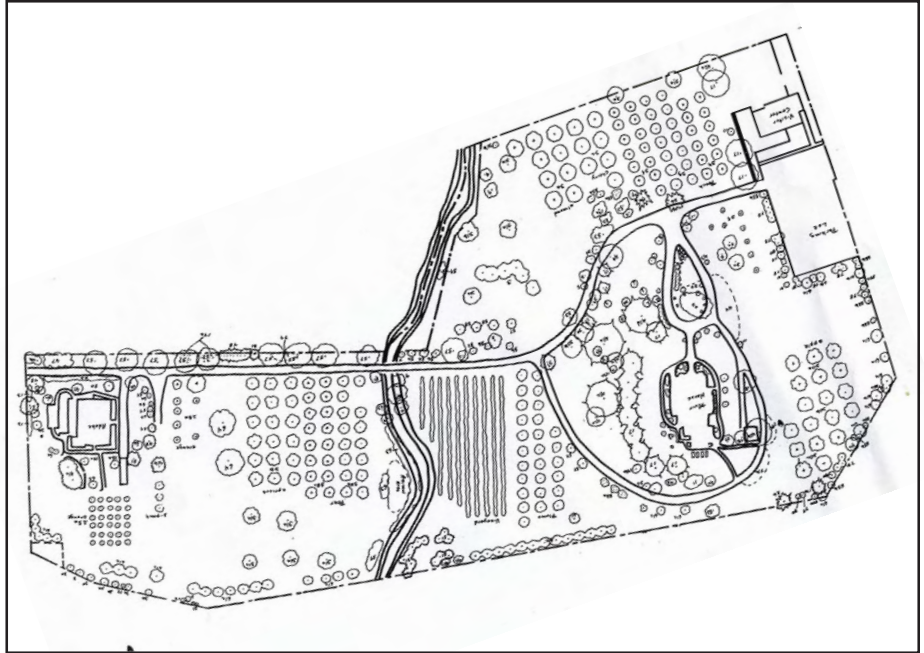


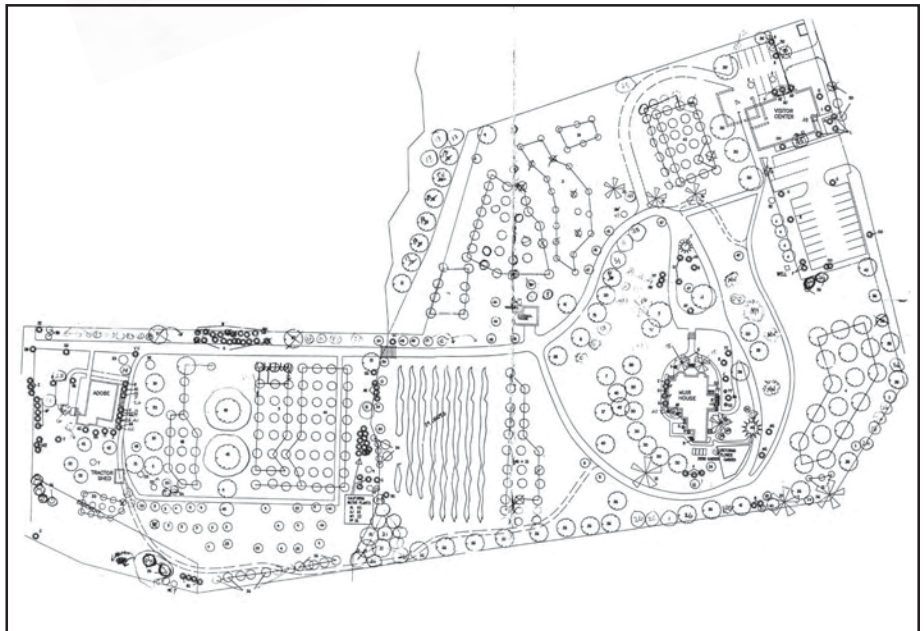
Figure 5.19: General Development Plan from 1976 showing existing and proposed features at the park. (General Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service: Denver Service Center, Drawing No. 426/20012, April 1976. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).



**Figure 5.20: Site inventory from 1976 by University of California-Davis showing that apart from a few variations, most of the orchards and vineyards proposed in the 1968/69 Historic Planting Plan were installed. (Site Inventory, John Muir National Historic Site, University of California – Davis, Drawing No. 426/80018, Sheet 1 of 4, Spring 1976. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).**



**Figure 5.21: Site inventory from 1989 showing pears and apricots in the former fish pond. ("Historic/ Representational Trees, Shrubs, and Plants," August 1989, source unknown. JOMU).**





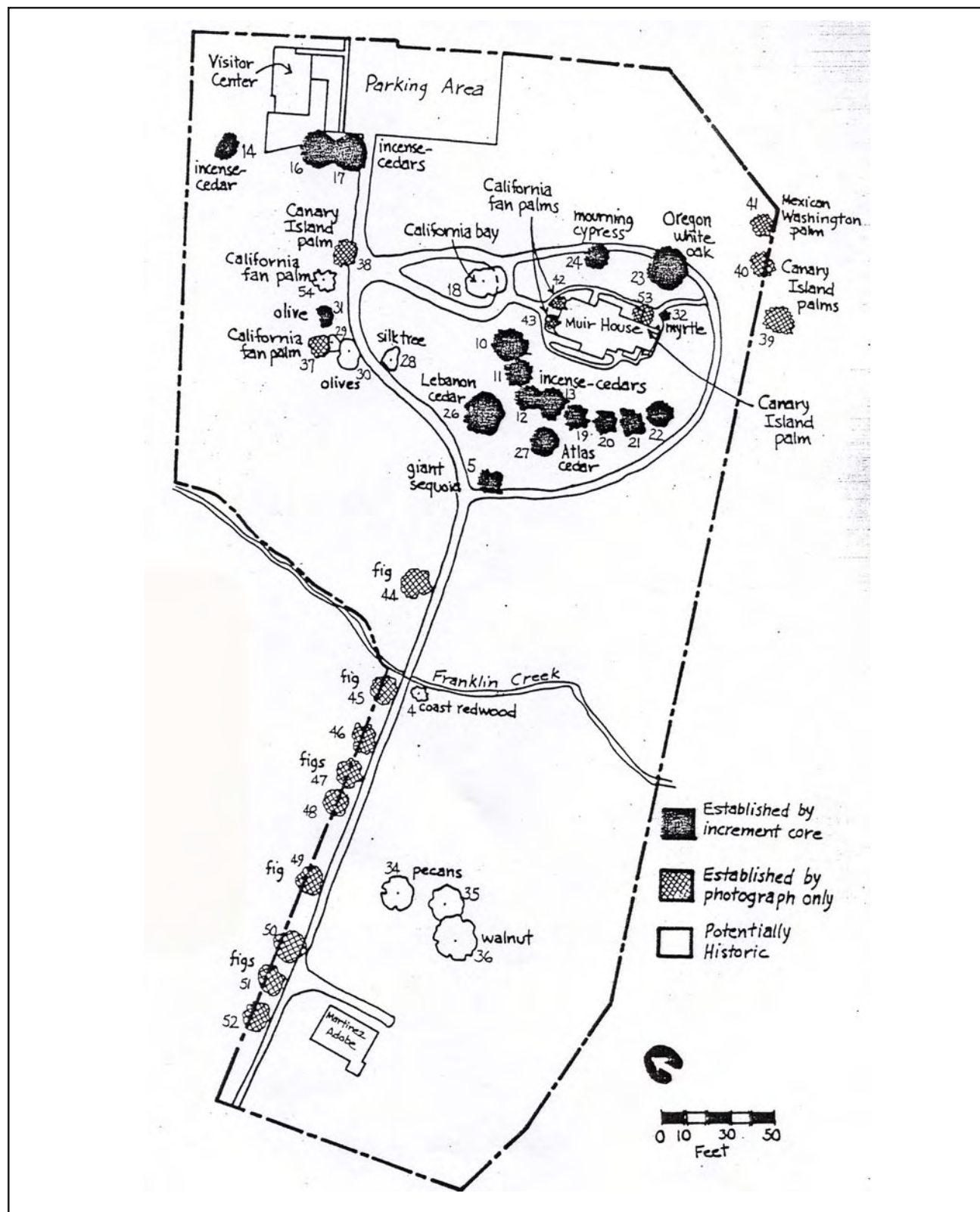
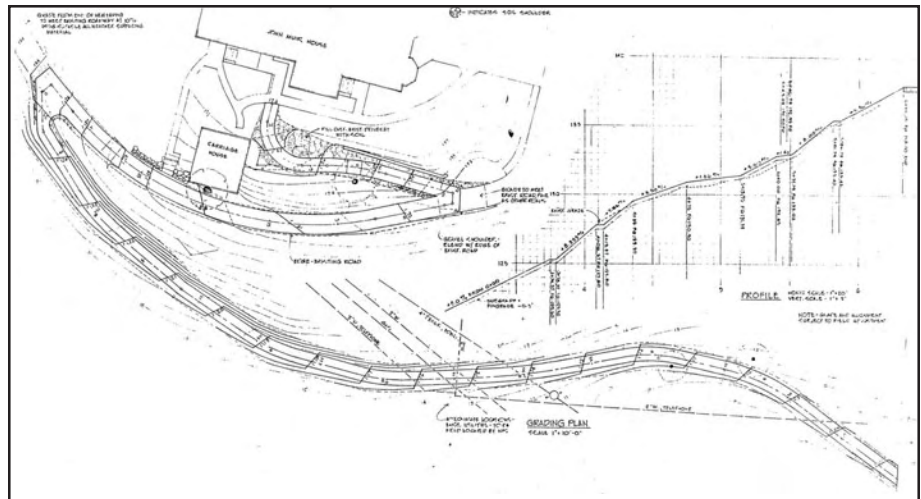
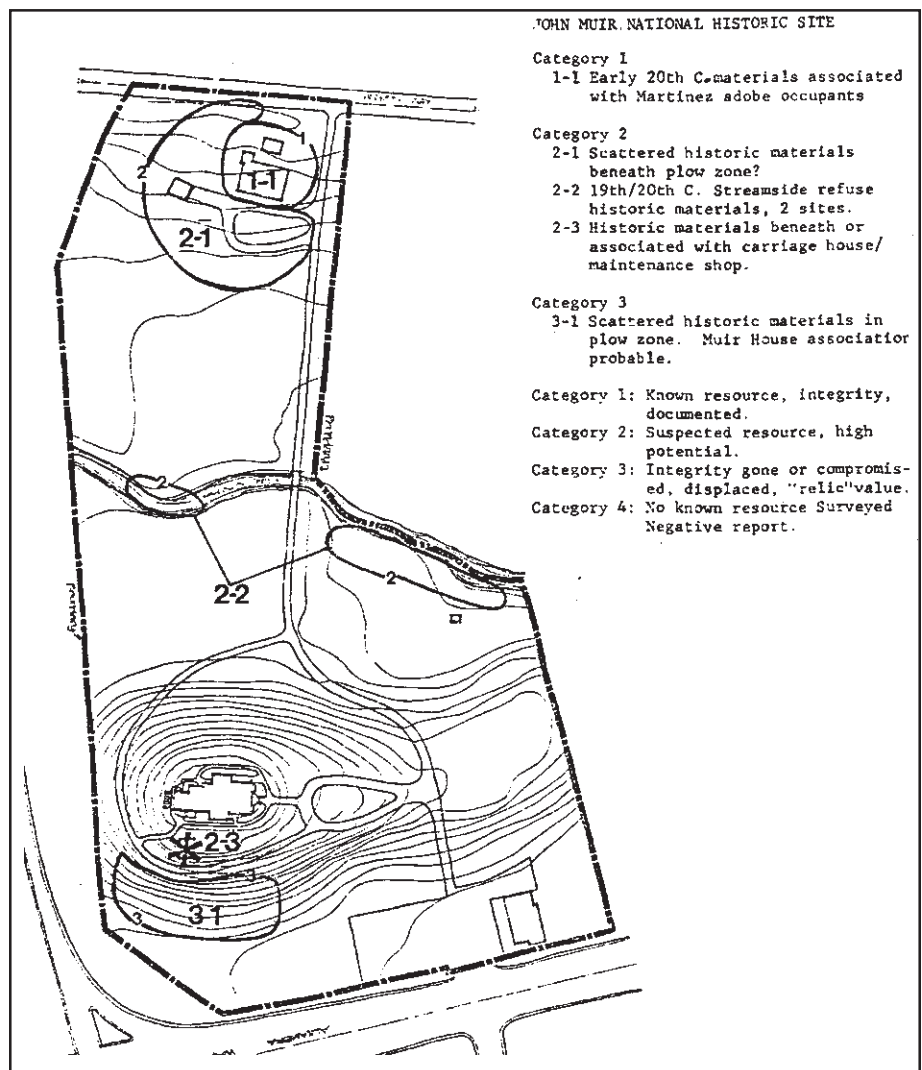


Figure 5.22: This map identifies historic and potentially historic trees at the park. (From James K. Agee, "Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site," *Journal of Forest History*, January 1980, page 44).

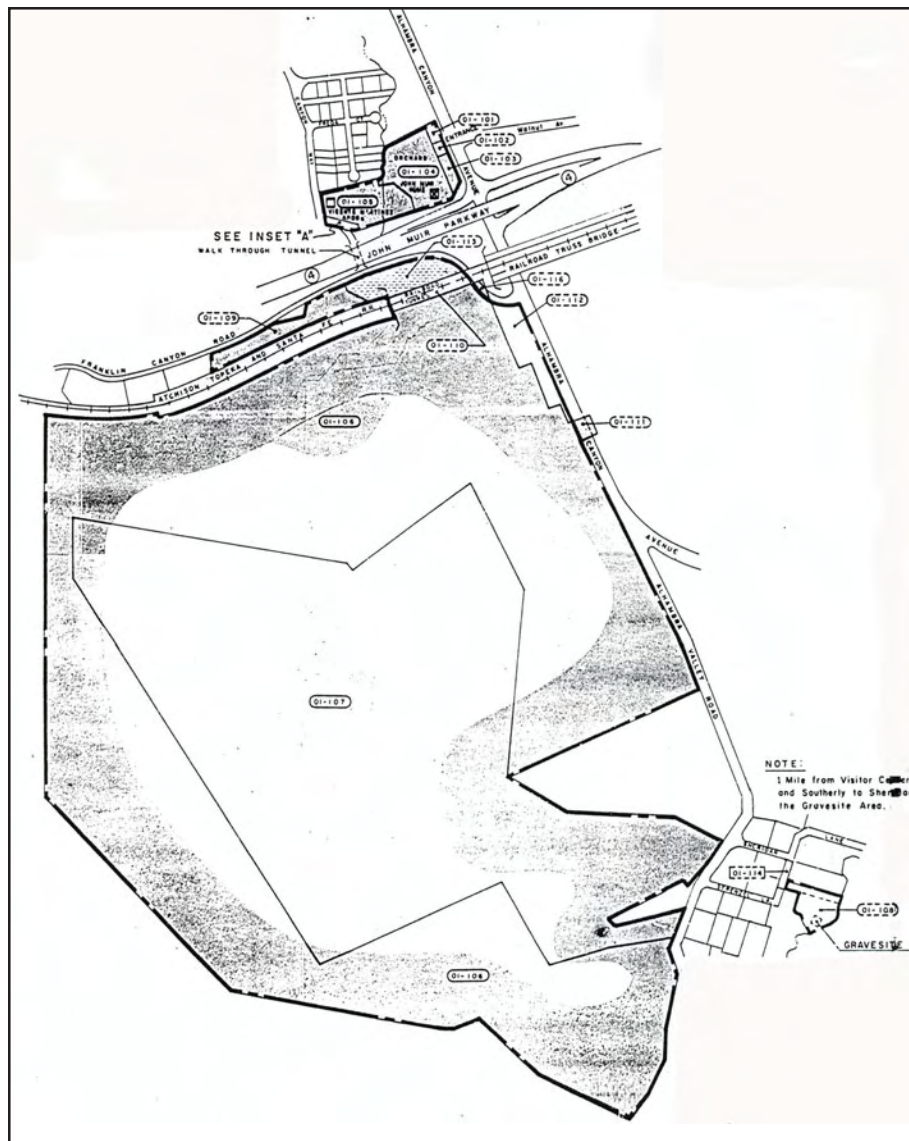
**Figure 5.23: The 1982 plan for an access trail from the Visitor Center to the Muir House was constructed in 1984. (New Access Trail, John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service: Denver Service Center, Drawing No. 426/80005, Sheet 2 of 2, February 1982. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).**



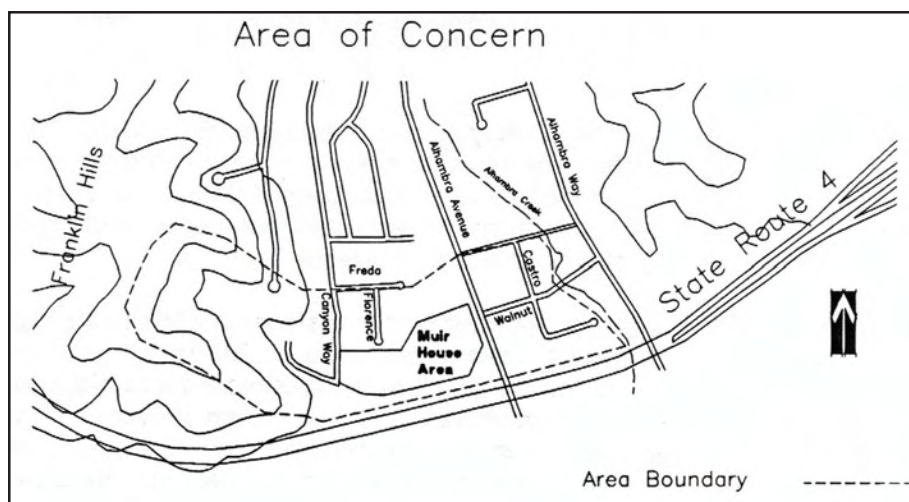
**Figure 5.24: Map from 1981 showing known and potential archeological resources. (Roger E. Kelly, "Sensitivity Maps for Historical Archeological Resources: John Muir National Historic Site and Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site." October 1981. Courtesy Denver Service Center).**



**Figure 5.25: Map showing the Mt. Wanda and gravesite acquisition areas in 1993. (John Muir National Historic Site, National Park Service: Division of Land Resources, Drawing No. 426/80016, Sheet 1 of 1, June 1993. Courtesy US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland).**

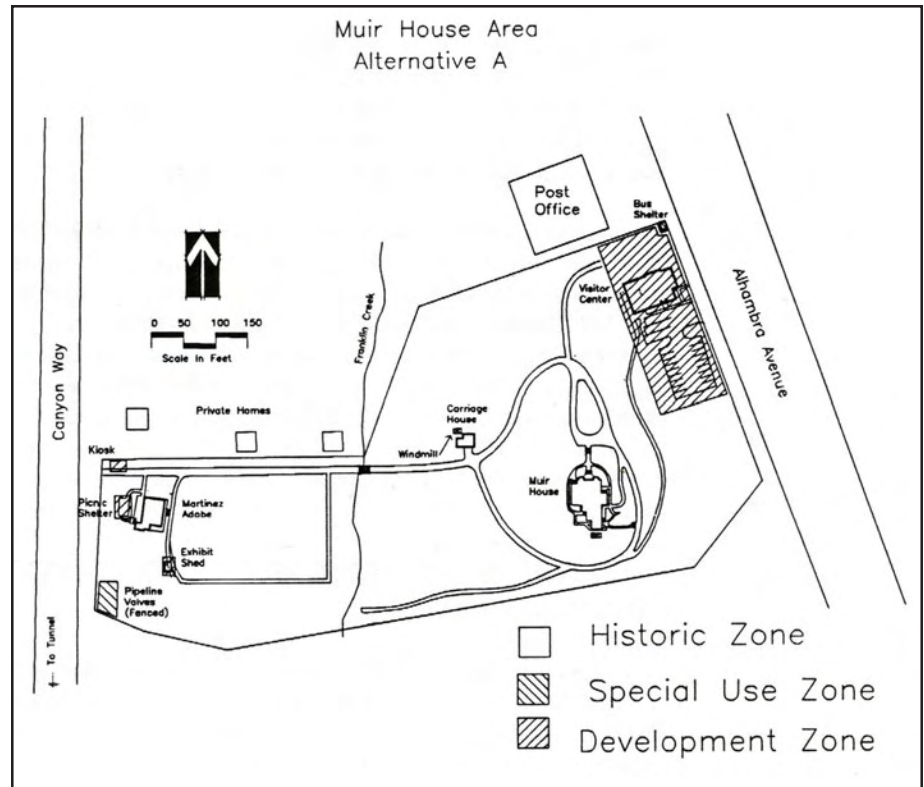


**Figure 5.26: Map showing the areas to monitor for future development and uses around the House Unit. ("Area of Concern," John Muir National Historic Site, General Management Plan, National Park Service: Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80027, December 1990).**

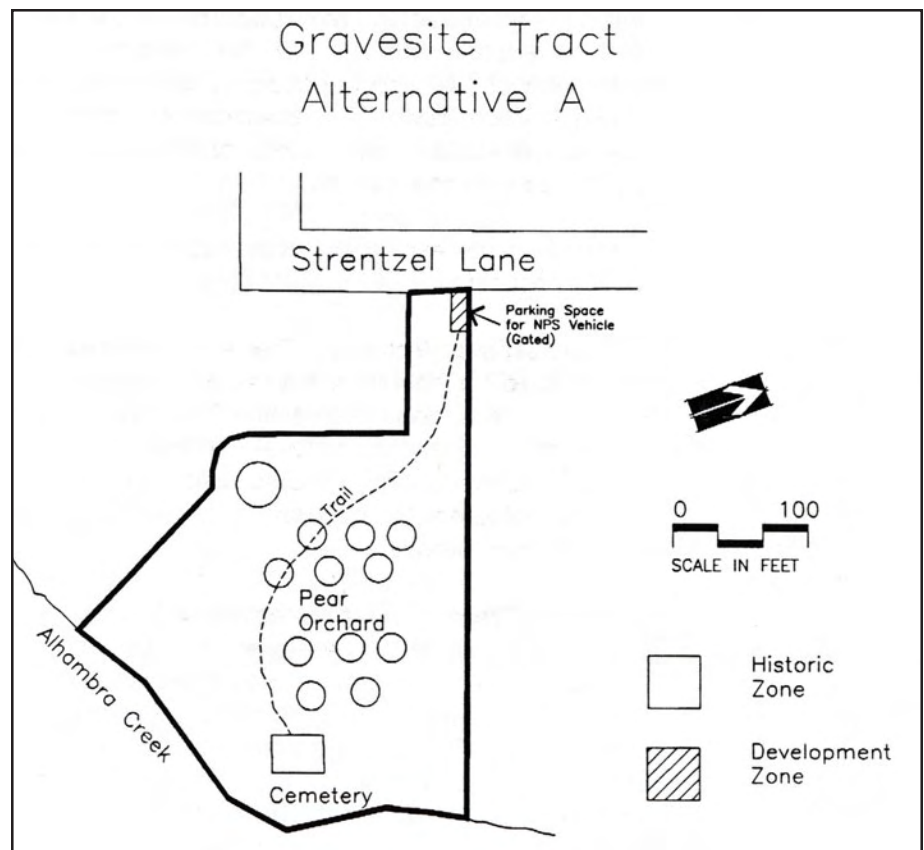




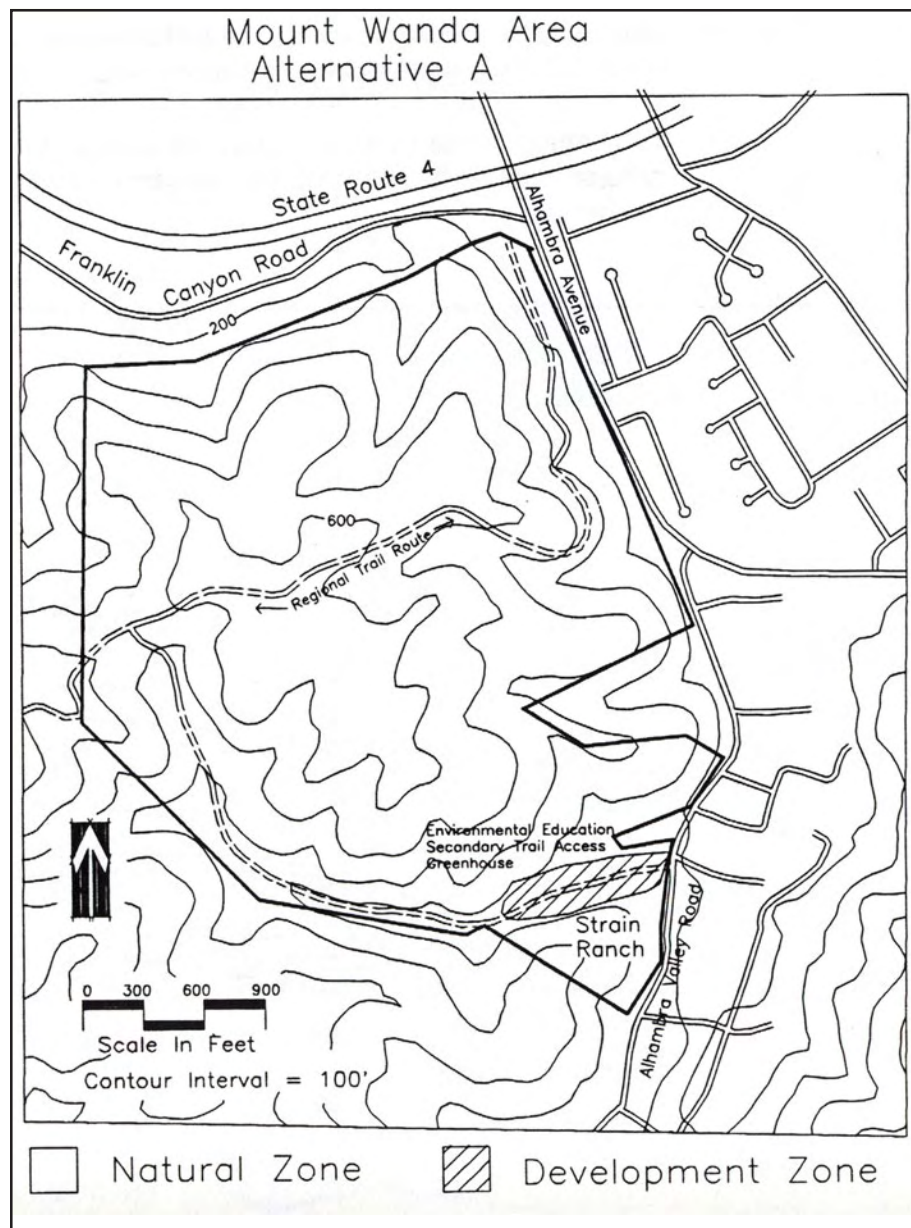
**Figure 5.27: Proposed development alternative for the original part of the park. ("Muir House Area: Alternative A," John Muir National Historic Site, General Management Plan, National Park Service: Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80024A, December 1990).**

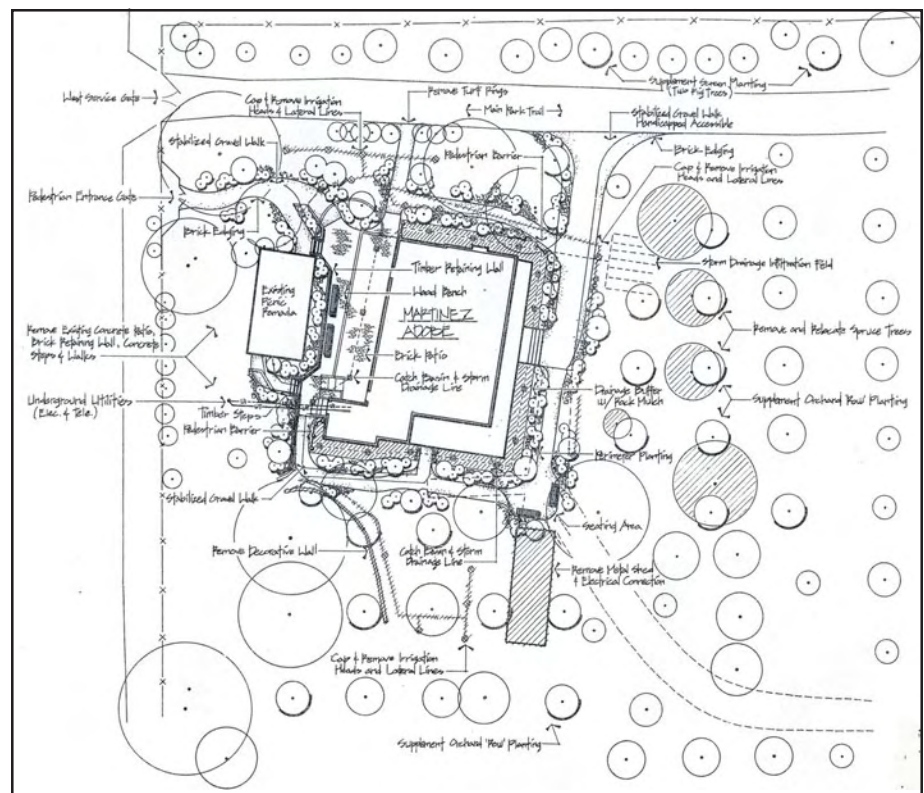
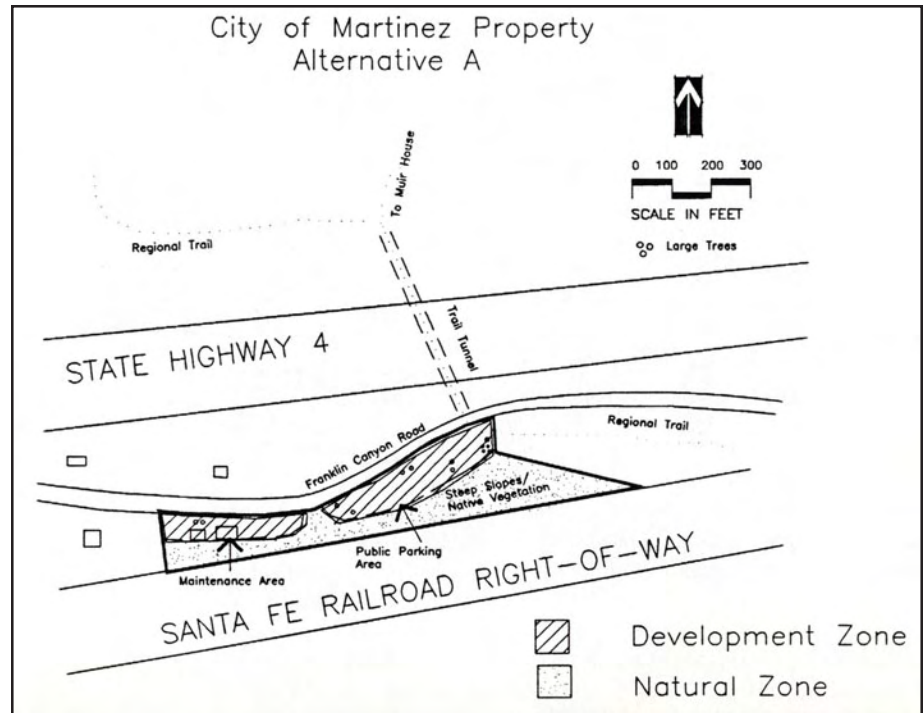


**Figure 5.28: Proposed development for the Gravesite Unit. ("Gravesite Tract: Alternative A," John Muir National Historic Site, General Management Plan, National Park Service: Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80028A, December 1990).**



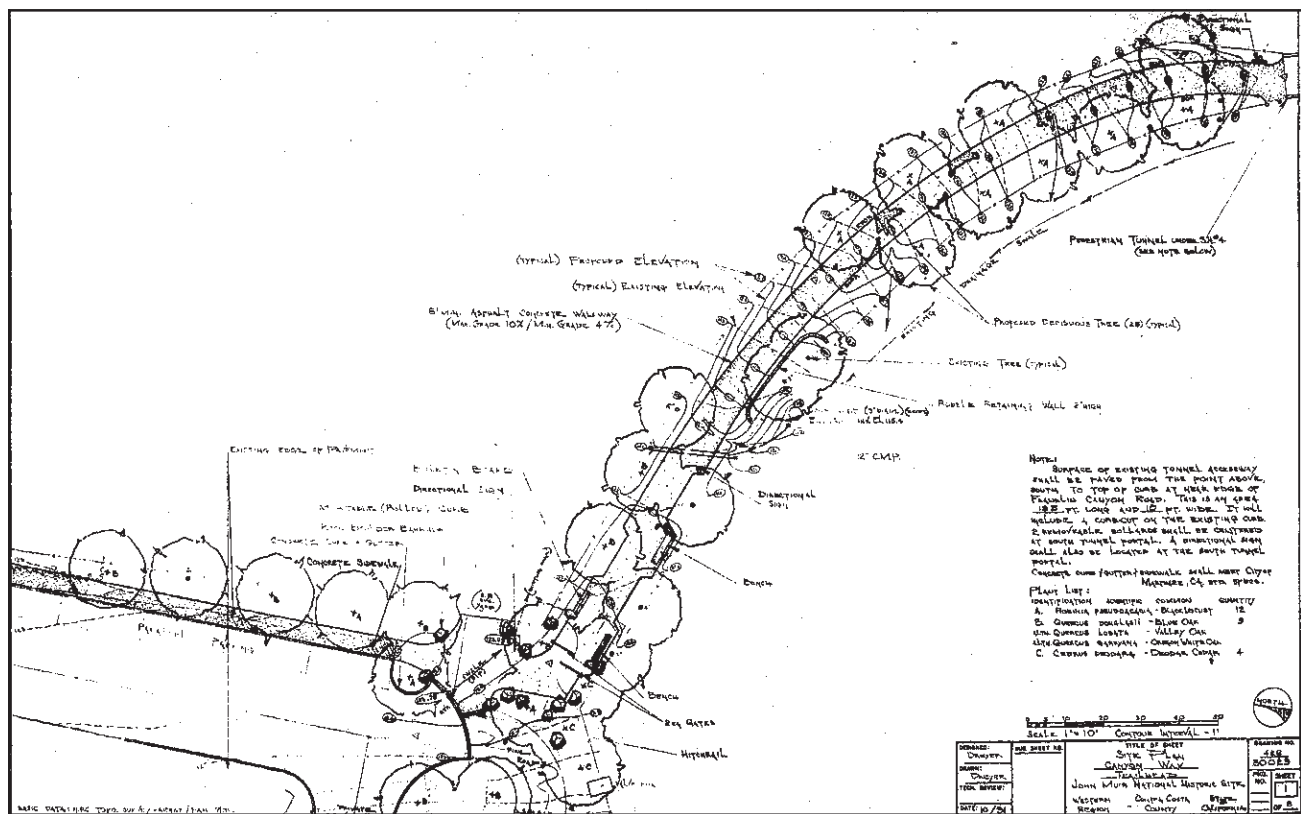
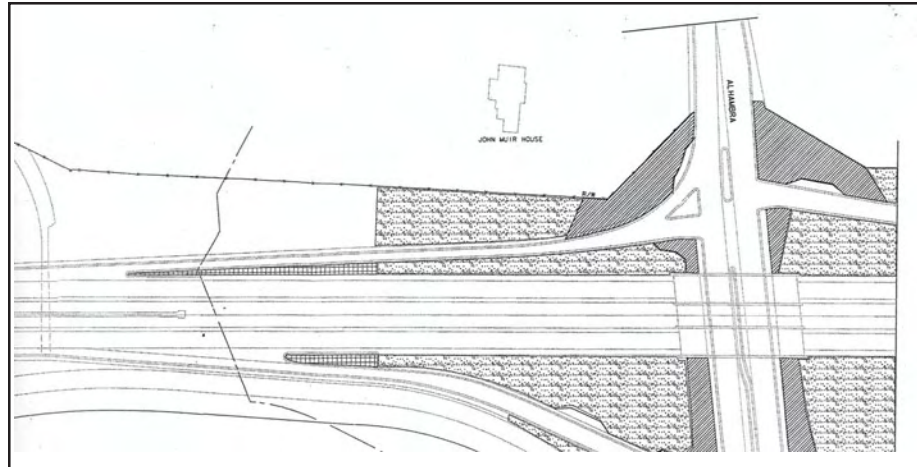
**Figure 5.29: Proposed development for the Mt. Wanda Unit. ("Mount Wanda Area: Alternative A," John Muir National Historic Site, General Management Plan, National Park Service: Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426/80026A, December 1990).**





**Figure 5.31: Recommended improvements at the Martinez Adobe. ("Recommended Landscape Improvements," John Muir National Historic Site, Historic Structures Report for Martinez Adobe, National Park Service, Drawing No. 426/80024A, Sheet L-1, 3 of 11, January 1992).**

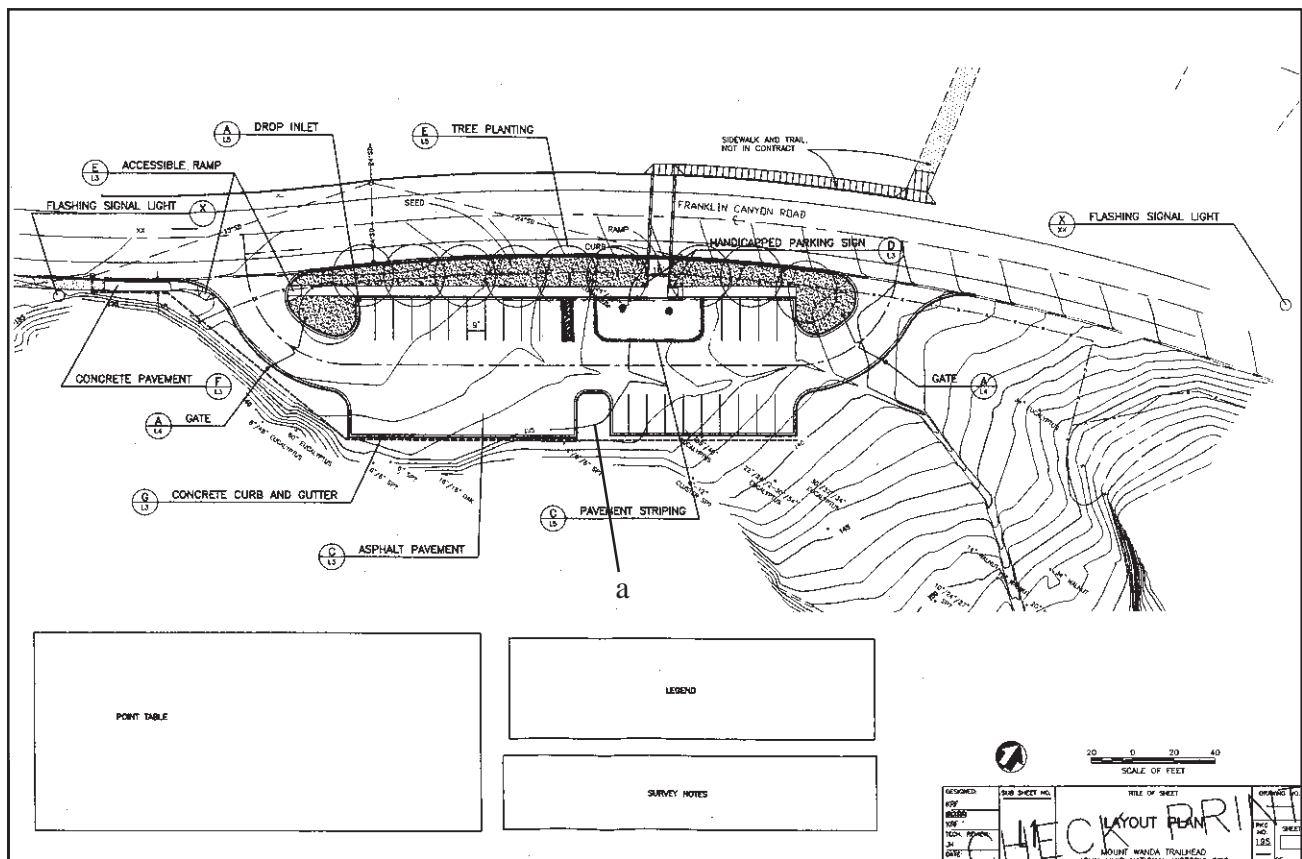
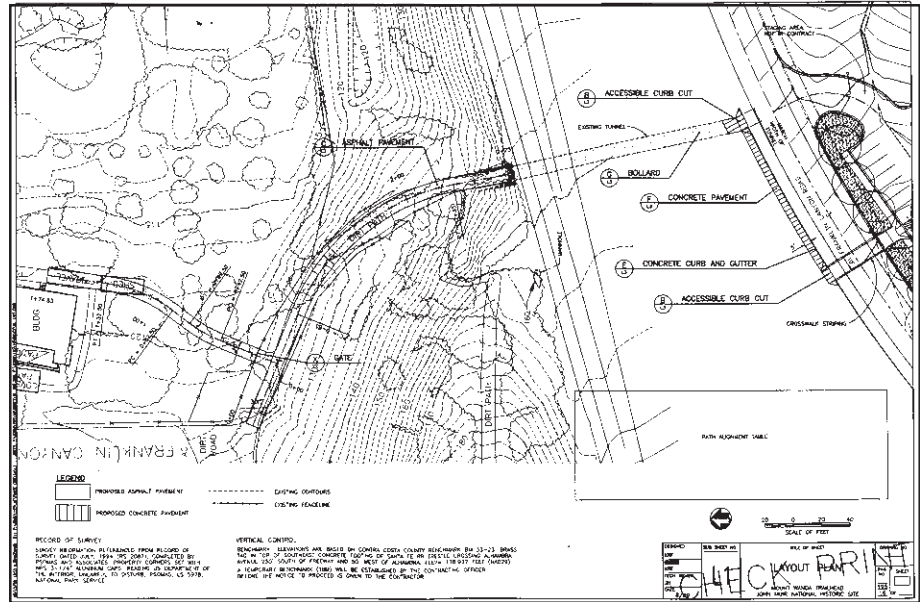
**Figure 5.32: Portion of a c.2000 CALTRANS conceptual plan for improvements at the State Route 4/Alhambra Avenue interchange.** Diagonally hatched areas indicate gateway plantings of trees, accent plants, and groundcovers. Dotted hatched areas represent new groundcovers and accent plants and removal of weeds and volunteer trees. (CALTRANS, no date or source information, JOMU).



**Figure 5.33: Portion of a 1991 plan for park access from Canyon Way and the California Riding and Hiking Trail. ("Site Plan for Canyon Way Trailhead," John Muir National Historic Site, Western Regional Office, Drawing No. 426-80029, October 1991, Sheets 1 to 9).**



**Figure 5.34: Plan from 1999 showing improvements to the California State Riding and Hiking Trail and a new pedestrian entrance. ("Layout Plan: Mt. Wanda Trailhead," John Muir National Historic Site, Sheet L-1, August 1999).**



**Figure 5.35: This alternative plan of the proposed parking lot at the Mt. Wanda trailhead preserves the two large eucalyptus, which possibly date from the historic period, in a protected island (a). (Plan adaptation by OCLP. "Layout Plan: Mt. Wanda Trailhead," John Muir National Historic Site, Sheet L-1, August 1999).**





## **CHAPTER 6**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The current landscape at the John Muir National Historic Site reflects a range of characteristics and features associated with settlement and agriculture from 1849 to the present. It also represents a fragment of the much larger Strentzel- Muir Ranch that filled the upper part of the Alhambra Valley. This chapter of the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) documents the park's extant landscape characteristics and features in 2003, beginning with a discussion of the properties that surround the park and an overview of the lands that encompass the park itself. The narrative is supported by three existing conditions plans and photographs taken in May and July 2003.

#### **LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

The John Muir National Historic Site is located on the outskirts of the City of Martinez, California, a community of approximately 36,700 persons. Martinez is the county seat of Contra Costa County and in January 2000 had a population of 930,000. Both the city and county are growing rapidly, with populations increasing by approximately 6700 and 40,000, respectively, since around 1990. The area's largest employer is Contra Costa County.<sup>1</sup>

Martinez and its environs are situated within the broad lower Alhambra Valley and along the shoreline of the Straits of Carquinez that connects the San Francisco Bay to Suisun Bay. A busy Amtrak railroad station and ferry landing separates the waterfront from a skewed street grid that extends southeasterly, transitioning from a quaint downtown composed of numerous early twentieth century buildings to a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional areas. The main north- south route through the city is Alhambra Avenue, which extends from the business district in a generally southerly direction. The road widens to four lanes by the time it passes under State Route 4, a major two- lane divided highway connecting the Great Valley to the east to the Oakland and San Francisco metropolitan areas to the west. Two of the park's three land units are located at this busy junction.

The Alhambra Valley pushes south from the City of Martinez and gradually narrows as it passes between Mt. Wanda and the Martinez Ridge (Figure 0.2). Nestled within this cradle are the three non- contiguous units of the park.

During Muir's time these lands were – depending on topography – primarily devoted to agriculture, grazing, or left alone in their natural state. Even then, however, changes were underway with the construction of new roads and a railroad trestle across the valley. Today, the valley floor and lower slopes of the surrounding hills display the recognizable timeline of development; single- family residences ornamented with trees and lawns, commercial buildings surrounded by parking lots, and a network of local roads and major highways. Significantly, the rounded upper slopes and draws are comparatively undeveloped and gesture to early times.

Lands adjacent to the park reflect the suburban development pattern. The House Unit is bounded on the north by a post office facility and a neighborhood of single- family houses; on the east by Alhambra Avenue; on the south by State Route 4 and a portion of the California State Riding and Hiking Trail; and on the west by the Canyon Way cul- de- sac. Just to the south of the Muir House unit is the Mt. Wanda Unit, which is bordered on the north by Franklin Canyon Road; on the east by Alhambra Avenue and Alhambra Valley Road; and on the south and west by woodlands and open fields occasioned by new housing developments. A smaller park- owned parcel of land, the city tract, is situated along the Franklin Canyon Road at the base of Mt. Wanda's north slope. The Gravesite Unit is bounded on the north and south by single- family homes, on the east by Alhambra Creek, and on the west by more residences and an unpaved section of Strentzel Lane.

### **THE JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

The House Unit is the original part of the John Muir National Historic Site and was created as a national memorial to John Muir through legislation passed on August 31, 1964. The addition of the Mt. Wanda Unit in 1988 and the Gravesite Unit in 1993 increased the park's size from nine acres to approximately 340 acres. These lands were historically part of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch that, at its peak, encompassed some 2300 acres. Despite the numerous contemporary additions and changes both outside of and within the park, the three units retain many landscape characteristics and features that were present on the historic ranch.

Most visitors to the park arrive by private vehicle or on buses. The House Unit and the Mt. Wanda Unit are physically connected via a pedestrian/equestrian tunnel under State Route 4. However, most visitors choose to utilize the parking areas at each unit. The location of the Gravesite Unit does not lend itself to pedestrian access from the other two units and typically requires the use of a

private vehicle. The 1991 “General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment” (GMP/EA) defined zones within each unit to guide management decisions. For this CLR, they serve as a framework for a general discussion regarding existing landscape conditions. (See Figures 5.27 to 5.29 in Chapter 5 for the GMP/EA maps. Individual landscape features will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8).

### **HOUSE UNIT**

The 8.9- acre House Unit includes the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, several outbuildings and structures, Visitor Center and parking area, and roads and paths set amongst orchards and vineyards representative of the former 2300- acre ranch (Drawing 6.1). The unit is enclosed by 6'- high cyclone fencing, much of which includes vertical board inserts painted brown. Some fence sections are topped with barbed wire and there are numerous padlock gates for maintenance access.

Overall, the landscape possesses an agricultural quality that reflects land uses introduced by Dr. John Strentzel and refined by John Muir. A century of vegetation growth, alterations by subsequent owners, and implementation of NPS plans have changed – but have not erased – a landscape that hearkens back to the early twentieth century.

### **Development zone**

This rectangular- shaped zone occupies the northeast corner of the House Unit along Alhambra Avenue and serves as the main entrance point for visitors. Vehicular access is regulated through a signaled intersection at Alhambra Avenue that directs visitors into a parking lot that can hold seventeen automobiles and one bus. Sidewalks and crosswalks along Alhambra Avenue accommodate visitors arriving on foot or from a city bus that stops at a pullout along the street. The one- story cinderblock Visitor Center, originally built as a veterinary hospital in 1964, is situated at the north end of the development zone. A boundary fence that extends out from the northeast and southwest sides of the building separates the parking and bus stop areas from the rest of the park and serves to funnel visitors into the Visitor Center. Visitors exit from the west side of the building onto a paved patio area bounded by a low retaining wall, seating benches, interpretive signs, and one of the park’s outdoor exhibits – an old sprayer. To the north is a grass gathering space/seating area.

Other features in the development zone include the park sign, a small stone monument displaying two California historical markers, an exit turnstile, two

service gates, an employee gate with a keypad, and a variety of ornamental trees and shrubs. All together, these contemporary features dramatically contrast with the rows of orchard trees and the Muir House that dominate the view to the south and west. (Another small development zone is located at the ramada, between the Martinez Adobe and the west fence).

### **Historic zone**

Visitors in the patio and lawn areas at the Visitor Center can view the adjacent orchard trees and ornamental plantings that surround the unit's focal point, the Muir House, which is situated to the southwest at the top of a knoll. The house faces north and is fronted by a paved carriage drive- loop. Visitors can reach this area by either climbing a steep paved fire road or walking the longer paved easy access trail that switchbacks up the east slope of the knoll.

The Italianate- style mansion was constructed in 1882 by Muir's father- in- law, Dr. John Strentzel, and occupied by John Muir and his family from 1890- 1914. Rows and masses of native and ornamental trees and shrubs, garden areas, and lawns surrounded the house, many of which date to the Strentzel- Muir period. Some of the older vegetation is quite dense, especially on the west slope of the knoll, and limits views from the house area to the rest of the unit. The north, east, and south sides are comparatively open and provide views of some of the orchards and fields that surround the knoll as well as the Visitor Center and parking lot. The view from the house also includes adjacent commercial structures fronting Alhambra Avenue, the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BN&SF) railroad trestle and State Route 4, and the scattered suburban developments that dot the distant hillsides in the Alhambra Valley.

Visitors can experience the unit's agricultural areas more intimately from the network of carriage roads and old farm roads that traverse the grounds. Two routes lead from the Muir House to the main farm road at the bottom of the knoll's west slope: the two- track earthen and gravel Woodshed Road extends along the south and west slopes from the easy access trail and the paved carriage drive- loop curves down the north and west slopes from the driveway loop; most visitors use the latter. Two important structures are located at this intersection: the original one- story Carriage House, moved to its historic location and rebuilt in 1983, and the Franklin Creek Windmill, a reconstruction added in 1978 and rehabilitated in 1983. This spot also presents a view to the southwest of the undeveloped north slope of Mt. Wanda; it is one of the best and unchanged views in the park.

Rows of orchard trees and grape vines spread out from both sides of the main farm road and comprise a majority of the unit's land, which is roughly bisected by Franklin Creek, a densely vegetated intermittent stream. On the east side of the creek, a variety of orchards and vineyards encircle the knoll: to the east is a field and small apple orchard; to the north are peach, pear, sweet cherry, almond, and mulberry trees; to the northwest are apricot, pear, and almond trees surrounding the Windmill and Carriage House; and to the southwest are grape vines, plum trees, and a shady seating area under a grove of redwoods. The main farm road seemingly tunnels through the creekside vegetation via a reconstructed wood bridge that accesses the west side and a large orchard comprised of pear, apricot, orange, lemon, pecan, and walnut trees. Interspersed within this orchard are picnic tables and a grill, an adobe brick-making pit, maintenance storage areas, remnants of a native plant garden, and a beehive, all of which are variously reached by two-track earthen gravel farm lanes.

The main farm road terminates at a boundary gate along Canyon Way, on the north side of which is the Martinez Adobe. The adobe, constructed in 1849, is the oldest building in the park. When purchased by Dr. Strentzel in 1874, the structure served as a headquarters for the ranch and was later remodeled into a residence for Muir's daughter Wanda and her family, from 1906 to 1915. This area also includes an open-sided ramada with picnic tables, a walled brick patio, crushed stone walkways, a drinking fountain, and a variety of domestic plantings and lawn areas. A secondary pedestrian entrance gate is located behind the ramada and can be opened by activating an intercom that dials the park telephone, at which time staff can release the gate's magnetic lock. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the intercom and magnetic locks were disabled.

#### **Special use zone**

This small fenced area is located in the extreme southwest corner alongside the junction of the California State Riding and Hiking Trail and Canyon Way. It consists of two utility easements for pipelines and surface valves owned by the Union Oil Company and for an eight-inch underground gas line operated by Southern Pacific Pipelines.

#### **GRAVESITE UNIT**

The 1.3-acre Gravesite Unit is situated along the west bank of the Arroyo del Hambre (Alhambra) Creek and consists of the graves of Dr. John Strentzel (1890), John Muir (1914), their spouses, and other family members (Drawing 6.2). With the exception of a black 3'-high wrought iron fence along a portion of the north

side, the boundaries are not delineated in the landscape. As a result, the exact boundaries of the unit are unclear.

In addition to the graves, the unit features a remnant pear orchard associated with Dr. Strentzel, several massive specimen trees, and riparian vegetation along the creek. Together, these crops and plantings silently stand watch over the tiny fenced graveyard. They are all that is left of a much larger agricultural area that was subdivided in the early 1960s. The gravesite and nearby fruit trees became part of a 1.27 acre parcel owned by the Hanna family (Muir's son-in-law) until the late 1980s. As a result, the parcel remained undeveloped and essentially unaltered. Although the surrounding neighborhood of established single-family homes and the views of the surrounding undeveloped hills add to the sense of quiet solitude, the loss of the larger orchard and subsequent development has altered the overall setting and the approach to the graves.

#### **Development zone**

Most visitors interested in visiting the gravesite are brought there by park staff; parking of private vehicles is discouraged because there is no designated parking area. The small development zone is located at the far northwest corner of the parcel off of Strentzel Lane and was intended to be developed as a parking space. This grass area is framed by tall and dense masses of shrubs and trees and serves as the main entry point into the unit for visitors and maintenance vehicles.

#### **Historic zone**

The remaining lands of the unit are managed as a historic zone. There are no marked trails, paths, or signs, leaving the visitor to roam through the sunny grass meadow dotted with old pear trees and several live oaks. The pears (or the root stock anyway) were planted by Strentzel in the 1850s and are dwarfed by a gigantic eucalyptus tree planted around the same time. Although the existing collection of pear trees conveys the sense of being in an orchard, the absence of a discernable planting pattern and the presence of the live oaks give an impression of randomly placed trees. Visitors with a keen eye may observe additional pear trees amongst the tall shrubs that line the north side of this space and in the yards of the adjacent residences.

At the east end of the unit, next to the creek, is the rectangular-shaped gravesite. The eight grave are situated within a low granite coping enclosure, which is itself surrounded by a wrought iron fence measuring approximately 35' by 27.' A mix of grasses and weeds shroud the headstones, some of which are tilted and in need of leveling, and large cedars, redwoods, oaks, and other riparian plants tower

above. North of the gravesite are the old abutments of a footbridge that was removed by 1980. The west abutment now serves as a headwall for the new outfall pipe for the Strentzel Lane Erosion and Sediment Project.

#### **MT. WANDA UNIT**

Contrasting the relatively flat topography of the House and Gravesite units is the hilly terrain of the park's largest parcel, the 326.3- acre Mt. Wanda Unit (Drawing 6.3). With the exception of the Strain Ranch at the far southeast corner, the mountain landscape is undeveloped and features a mosaic of mixed oak woodlands and grasslands traversed by fire roads and trails. Most of the unit's boundary is delineated by single- strand barbed wire fencing attached to wood posts.

The two highest points in the unit, 660' and 640', are named after Muir's daughters, Wanda and Helen, respectively. Historically, Muir did not farm or graze the upper slopes of this area, choosing instead to walk there to teach his children about the trees and wildflowers and admire the spectacular views of the Alhambra Valley, Straits of Carquinez, Mt. Diablo, and the distant Sierra range. Today, these same views reveal the park's context and the extent of change that has unfolded in the Alhambra Valley since Muir's time. It is for this reason that the Mt. Wanda area was acquired; the pastoral qualities of Mt. Wanda area are much as they were during Muir's time. The mountain's undeveloped north slopes, especially, are a key part of the historic view from the House Unit.

#### **Natural zone**

Except for the Strain Ranch, the unit landscape is designated as a natural zone. Visitors can enter the unit from the main trailhead located at the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) gravel park and ride lot at the extreme northeast corner of the unit, at the junction of Alhambra Avenue and Franklin Canyon Road. Most visitors to Mt. Wanda arrive by car and park in this lot, although a smaller number arrive on foot from the House Unit via the pedestrian/equestrian underpass and a moderately steep trail situated between the Franklin Canyon Road and the BN&SF railroad line. A secondary parking area is planned east of the maintenance facility on Franklin Canyon Road, at the south end of the underpass.

Two- track earthen and gravel fire roads criss- cross Mt. Wanda. The main fire road begins at the gravel park and ride lot and tracks in a southerly direction up the east slope before turning to the southwest and eventually continuing off site to intersect with other trails in the East Bay Regional Park Trail System. Metal



pipe swing gates identify the eastern and western ends of this road. Other fire roads track through the grass meadows and negotiate the steep wooded slopes, providing access for hikers, equestrians, and resource protection activities. Features visible from the roads include a functioning pond, a breached pond, old tanks and sheds associated with former grazing activities (the land was periodically grazed after Muir's death until 1996), a repeater radio tower, and a weather station. However, it is the views and vistas framed by lush meadows and untouched woodlands that leaves the most lasting impressions of a hike to Mt. Wanda.

Visitors seeking more of a connection to John Muir can embark on a self-guided nature trail that loops north from the main fire road. The 1.3-mile single-track earthen trail passes amongst sunny fields and shady woods and over intermittent streams bridged by wood planks. Several wood benches offer places to pause in the quiet solitude on the mountaintop. Numbered wood guideposts along the route correspond to a brochure featuring Muir anecdotes, plant and ecosystem descriptions, and explanations of distant landmarks and features.<sup>2</sup> The trail penetrates part of the mountain's northern slope and offers some of the best views north toward Martinez and the Straits, and although not referenced in the trail guide, a good view of the House Unit below. Specifically, the Franklin Creek windmill (the turning blades sometimes catch the sunlight) and the distinct rows of fruit trees east of the Martinez Adobe can be seen.

Two of the most historic features at Mt. Wanda are not directly accessed by the road/trail system: remnants of an old apricot orchard and a mass of olive trees. The apricot trees are clinging to the south facing slope north of the Strain Ranch, while the olives are situated along the upper slopes of the extreme south end of the unit. A grouping of walnut trees on the lower north slope may also be historic.

#### **Development zone**

The Strain Ranch comprises the development zone and is located at the southeastern corner of the unit, off Alhambra Valley Road. This twenty-acre area is leased by the Gordon Strain family from the NPS and consists of two residences, two corrals, a barn, and several small outbuildings accessed by a two-track earthen road that connects to two other fire roads that ascend the mountain. The lease will expire in 2012.

The State Historic Preservation Office recently determined the structures at the Strain Ranch were not eligible for the National Register. However, one of the residences, a bungalow, dates to Muir's time and was on land that he owned.

### **OPERATIONS OVERVIEW**

Visitor services and administrative offices are located at the Visitor Center, which is open to the public Wednesdays through Sundays from 10am to 5pm (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's days). An entrance ticket to the park costs \$3.00 for adults but is free for children 16 and younger. The ticket also provides free same day access to Muir Woods National Monument. The Mt. Wanda and Gravesite units are open all year from sunrise to sunset and have no admission charge. Park maintenance and administrative staff are typically present year around.

### **Visitor services**

Visitors coming to the House Unit utilize the parking lot off of Alhambra Avenue. From here, they enter the Visitor Center where they can view the eight minute video, "Nature's Voice: John Muir at Home," which is shown in the auditorium every fifteen minutes throughout the day. A small lobby features an information and ticket sale desk, a small bookstore, and two restrooms. Visitors enter the core of the park through a door on the west side of the building. Plans are underway to demolish the existing building and construct a new Visitor and Education Center to alleviate crowded conditions and to expand interpretive programs and research facilities.

Self-guided tours of the House Unit are available throughout the day and guided tours of the Muir House are offered daily at 2pm and on weekends at 1, 2, and 3pm.<sup>3</sup> Numbered guideposts are located at various points along the paths and carriage roads and correspond to a tour brochure available for purchase at the Visitor Center. The brochure describes some of the highlights of the park. Similar guideposts are located along the nature trail atop Mt. Wanda, and brochures for that trail are available at its east end at a wood kiosk or at the Visitor Center.

Handicapped visitors have access to most areas of the House Unit. The Visitor Center and first floor of the Muir House are accessible and are linked by the easy access trail and a chair lift at the kitchen door. Most of the agricultural areas are visible from the paved carriage drive-loop and main farm road. There are no accessible trails or paths at Mt. Wanda or the gravesite.

Approximately 30,000 visitors come to the park annually with the months of April through August receiving the heaviest visitation. January and February are typically the slowest months. Weekends are the busiest time, especially those associated with the park's main events: the John Muir Birthday Celebration held in mid- May after Muir's April 21 birthday; the Ranch Day Festival in September that presents demonstrations of life on an 1880s fruit ranch; and a Victorian Christmas which features storytelling and Scottish fiddlers at the seasonally decorated Muir House. Events at Mt. Wanda include ranger- led full moon walks from June to September as well as periodic wild flower and bird walks.<sup>4</sup> There currently are no formal programs at the gravesite.

Figures from 1996 reported that approximately 31% of the park's visitors were local, 33% regional, 32% national, and 4% international. The park hosts many school groups that tour the Muir House and agricultural areas, and often they bring picnic lunches. The Environmental Living Program provides a more in-depth day- long program and a Junior Ranger Program is available to children.<sup>5</sup> The park has also played host to several weddings and other local events.

### **Administration**

Park administration is headquartered at the Visitor Center. Due to the limited amount of office, work, and storage space in the building, some functions are located in the basement of the Muir House and in the Martinez Adobe. As noted earlier, the proposed visitor center will address these inadequate conditions and provide modern administrative, storage, and research areas. Staff currently utilizes the same parking lot as visitors, and as a result, the lot occasionally reaches capacity during peak visitation periods. Plans associated with the new building will reconfigure the current parking lot. Additionally, a proposed secondary parking area east of the maintenance facility may help alleviate this problem.

Landscape maintenance is provided by park staff and volunteers and coordinated from the maintenance facility on Franklin Canyon Road, west of the pedestrian/equestrian tunnel. Through the Master Gardener program with the University of California Extension Service, students and recent graduates regularly prune and harvest the orchards and maintain plantings around the Muir House. Potable and non- potable water spigots are located throughout the agricultural areas for irrigation purposes. Maintenance vehicles and equipment used during the spring plowing and planting season access the Muir House unit through the service gates adjacent to the Visitor Center and along Canyon Way. The maintenance facility also houses office space, workshops, storage areas, and

ranger activities related to law enforcement and natural resource activities. Maintenance staff parks in a lot next to the maintenance facility.

### **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX**

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cityofmartinez.org/our\\_city/default.asp](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/our_city/default.asp); <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/>; National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: 34;

<http://www.cityofmartinez.org/depts/community/econdev/demographics.asp>

<sup>2</sup> From undated brochure “John Muir Nature Trail.” JOMU files.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nps.gov/jomu/vis\\_center.htm](http://www.nps.gov/jomu/vis_center.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> National Park Service, “Interpretive Prospectus.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, February 1996: 8.





## Plants at John Muir National Historic Site

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name(s)
Aa	Agave americana	Century plant	Ng	Nicotiana glauca	Tobacco tree
Ac	Aesculus californica	California buckeye	No	Nerium oleander	Oleander
Aj	Aucuba japonica	Variegated gold dust plant	Oe	Olea europea	Common olive
Al	Acacia longifolia	Golden Wattle	Oh	Osmanthus heterophyllus	False holly
Am	Acanthus mollis	Bear's breach	P	Perennials	Perennials
Ama	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Pa	Prunus armeniaca	Apricot
Ar	Alcea rosea	Hollyhock	Pap	Papaver spp.	Pink poppy
Ard	Arundo donax	Giant reed	Pc	Pyrus communis	Pear
Au	Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Pca	Phoenix canariensis	Canary Island date palm
Bp	Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote brush	Pcc	Pyraecanthus coccinea	Firethorn
Bs	Buddleia spp.	Butterfly bush	Pce	Prunus cerasifera	Cherry plum
Bu	Buxus spp.	Boxwood	Pco	Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Ca	Cedrus atlantica	Atlas cedar	Pd	Prunus dulcis	Almond
Cae	Casmanthe aethiopica	Chasmanthe	Pe	Pittosporum eugenoides	Pittosporum
Cc	Callistemon citrinus	Lemon bottle brush	Pg	Punica grantum	Pomegranate
Cca	Carpenteria californica	Anemone	Pga	Prosopis glandulosa	Honey mesquite
Cd	Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar	Pgl	Picea glauca	White spruce
Cda	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry cotoneaster	Ph	Pelargonium hortorum	Common geranium
Cde	Calocedrus decurrens	Incense cedar	Pin	Pinus spp.	Pine
Cf	Cupressus funebris	Mourning cypress	Pl	Philadelphus lemoinei	Mockorange
Ch	Chrysanthemum spp.	Chrysanthemum	Ply	Prunus lyonii	Catalina cherry
Ci	Carya illinoensis	Pecan	Pm	Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir
Cj	Camellia japonica	Camellia	Po	Prunus domestica	European plum
Cl	Citrus limon	Lemon	Pp	Prunus persica	Peach
Cla	Crataegus laevigata	English hawthorn	Ppn	Pinus ponderosa	Ponderosa pine
Clg	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Japanese, Flowering quince	Ppu	Picea pungens	Colorado spruce
Cli	Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon	Pr	Pinus radiata	Monterey pine
Cm	Cupressus macrocarpa	Monterey cypress	Ps	Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce
Co	Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Psa	Prunus salicina	Japanese plum
Coc	Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	Pv	Prunus avium	Sweet cherry
Cp	Campanula medium	Canterbury bells	Qa	Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Cr	Campsis radicans	Common trumpet vine	Qg	Quercus garryana	Oregon white oak
Cs	Citrus sinensis	Orange	Ql	Quercus lobata	Valley oak, Cal. white oak
Csc	Cytisus scoparius	Scotch broom	Qs	Quercus suber	Cork oak
Cse	Cornus sericea	American dogwood	Rb	Rosa banksiae	Lady Bank's rose
Csi	Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	Rc	Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy
Csp	Cupressus spp.	Cypress	Rh	Rosa harisonii	Harison's yellow rose
Cy	Cordyline spp.	Cordyline	Ri	Rhaphiolepis indica	India hawthorn
Dc	Dianthus caryophyllus	Carnation	Rl	Rosa laevigata	Cherokee rose
Ds	Deutzia scabra	Deutzia	Ro	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Ec	Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Rod	Rosa odorata	Tea rose
Ej	Eriobotrya japonica	Loquat	Rov	Rhus ovata	Sugar bush
Eu	Eucalyptus spp.	Eucalyptus	Rp	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black locust
Fc	Ficus carica	Common fig	Rs	Rosa spp.	Rose
Fca	Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush	Rsp	Ribes speciosum	Fuchsia flowering currant
Fs	Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple guava	Sa	Salvia spp.	Sage
Ge	Geranium spp.	Geranium	Sg	Sequoiadendron giganteum	Giant sequoia
Gl	Gaura lindheimeri	Gaura	Sl	Salix lasiandra	Yellow willow
Gs	Gladiolus spp.	Gladiolus	Sm	Sambucus mexicana	Blue elderberry
Ha	Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Sp	Spiraea prunifolia	Bridal wreath spiraea
He	Heliotropium arborescens	Heliotrope	Smo	Schinus molle	Pepper tree
Ig	Iris germanica	Bearded iris	Ss	Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Jc	Juniperus conferta	Shore juniper	Sv	Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac
Jh	Juglans hindsii	California black walnut	Tf	Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill palm
Jm	Jasminum mesnyi	Primrose jasmine	Tg	Tamarix gallica	Tamarisk
Jr	Juglans regia	English walnut	Ti	Trifolium incarnatum	Crimson clover
La	Lavendula angustifolia	English lavender	Tj	Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star jasmine
Lc	Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	To	Thuja occidentalis	American arborvitae
Ln	Laurus nobilis	Sweet bay	U	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Lo	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California privet	Uc	Umbellularia californica	California bay
Ls	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum	Up	Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm
Lsp	Lampranthus spectabilis	Trailing ice plant	Ve	Verbena spp.	Verbena
Lv	Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	Vm	Vinca major	Periwinkle
Ma	Morus alba	White mulberry	Vo	Viola odorata	Sweet violet
Maq	Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon grape holly	Vv	Vitis vinifera	Grape
Mc	Myrtus communis	True or Common myrtle	Wf	Washingtonia filifera	California fan palm
Mca	Myrica californica	Pacific wax myrtle	Wr	Washingtonia robusta	Mexican fan palm
Md	Malus domestica	Apple	Ws	Wisteria sinensis	Chinese wisteria
My	Myosolus spp.	Forget-me-not	Za	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Common calla





Cultural Landscape Report for  
John Muir National Historic Site

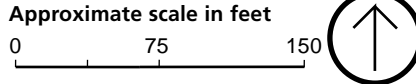


National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

2004, Gravesite Unit  
Existing Conditions  
Drawing 6.2

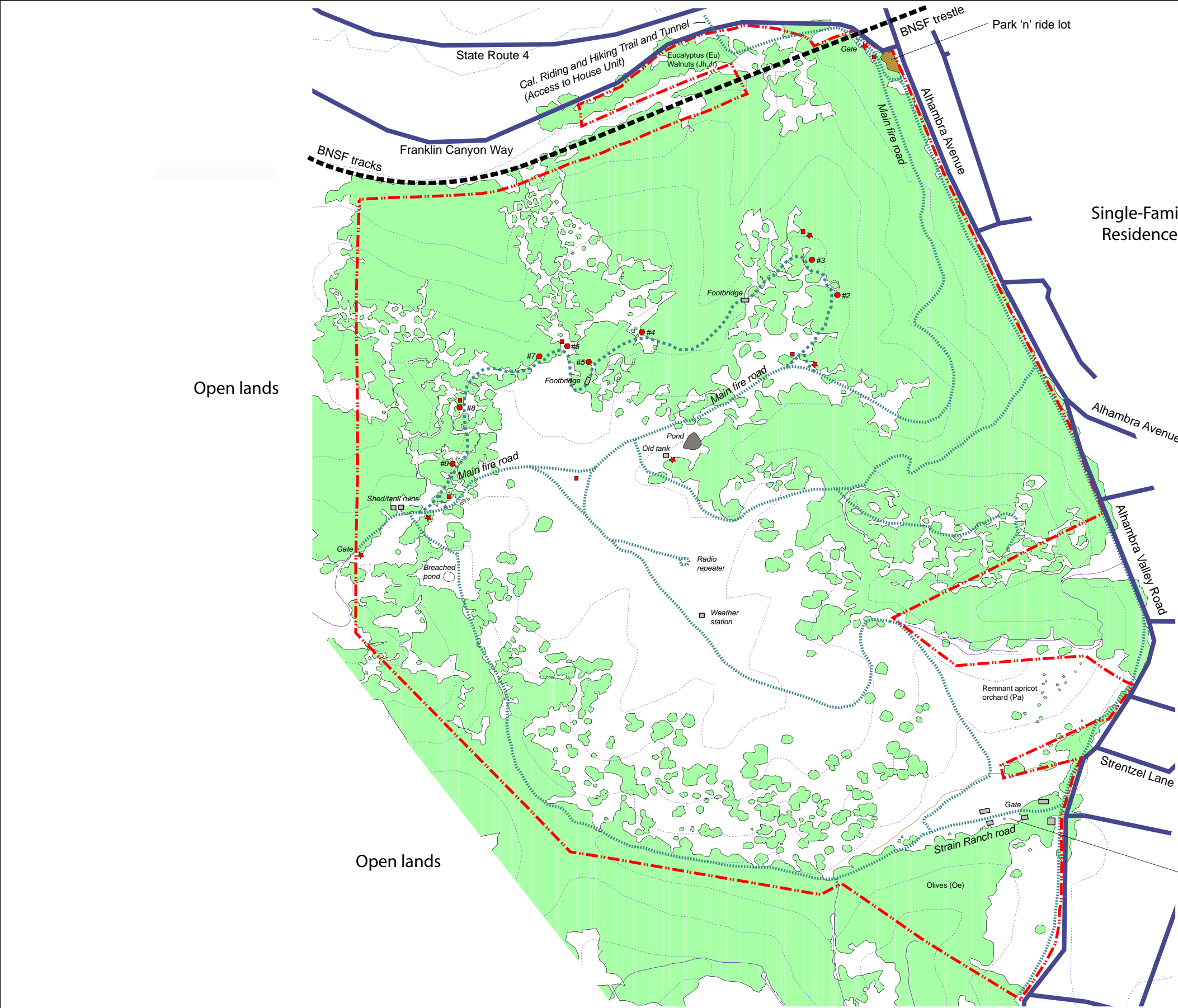
**Sources**  
Base information from John Muir NHS  
Geographic Information System, January  
2002; and historic and contemporary  
maps and photographs.

**Notes**  
Locations and scale of features are  
approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview  
GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by  
OCLP, NPS. Field checked May 2003.



- Legend**
- Approximate Park Property Line
  - Gravel Road
  - Building / Structure
  - Water
  - Mass / Specimen Vegetation
  - Water





Cultural Landscape Report for  
John Muir National Historic Site



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
99 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445

2004, Mt. Wanda Unit  
Existing Conditions

Drawing 6.3

Sources

Base information from John Muir NHS  
Geographic Information System, January  
2002; and historic and contemporary  
maps and photographs.

Notes

Locations and scale of features are  
approximate. Plan drawn using Arcview  
GIS 3.2 and Adobe Illustrator 10.0 by  
OCLP, NPS. Field checked May 2003.

Approximate scale in feet

0 50 100 150 200



Legend

- Contour
- Park Property Line
- Paved Road, Gravel Road, Trail
- Building / Structure
- Water
- Mass Vegetation
- Tour Sign, Other Sign
- Bench

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter evaluates the landscape at John Muir National Historic Site in landscape- related areas of historic significance and integrity according to the National Register Criteria for the Evaluation of Historic Properties. It includes a review of the National Register status and discussions regarding specific areas of landscape significance, recommended new areas of landscape significance, the period of significance, and the landscape's integrity.

#### **REVIEW OF NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION**

The significance in American history is determined through an identification and evaluation program defined by the National Register of Historic Places. According to the National Register, significance may be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association and which meet one or more of the following criteria for evaluation:<sup>1</sup>

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant to our past; or
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The House Unit – the original part of the John Muir National Historic Site that includes the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and intervening lands – was listed as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on December 29, 1962. The designation was based on two themes explored in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: “Theme XIX: The Conservation of Natural Resources” and “Theme XX: Literature, Drama, and Music.”<sup>2</sup> A “Feasibility Report for John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe” in 1963 established the 8.9- acre House Unit’s boundaries and set the stage for the creation of the park on August 31, 1964, “as a public national memorial to John Muir in recognition of his efforts as a conservationist and a crusader for national parks and reservations.”<sup>3</sup>

The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966. The designation was updated in an Inventory- Nomination Form prepared by Laura E. Soulliere on October 10, 1975 and entered on May 22, 1978 (NR #66000083) under Criterion A, B, and C. The 1975 documentation form identified the period of significance as 1800- 1914 and listed specific dates of 1849 for the Martinez Adobe and 1882 for the Muir House.<sup>4</sup>

Areas of national significance were identified in the 1975 form as Conservation, Social/Humanitarian Concerns, Literature, and Science. These areas were specifically linked to John Muir and his “extensive efforts to establish National Parks and to bring his environmental experiences to the public through literature.” Conservation was described in terms of his work with other conservation leaders to save Hetch Hetchy and establish Forest Reserves (which served as the foundation for the US Forest Service) as well as his influence on Theodore Roosevelt, which led to the establishment of five National Parks, twenty- three National Monuments, and 148 million acres of National Forest. The areas of Social/Humanitarian Concerns and Literature were cited as significant because of Muir’s many newspaper and magazine articles and books that introduced the American landscape to the public in terms of both natural and human values. Lastly, Muir’s explorations and scientific studies were recognized as significant because of his discoveries of Yosemite Valley’s glacial origins and glaciers in the Sierras and Alaska.<sup>5</sup>

The 1975 documentation also identified two areas of regional significance, Architecture and Agriculture. The use of the term ‘regional’ significance is somewhat unclear; it is presumed to mean that the areas are significant at the state level and specifically the Central California area.<sup>6</sup>

The 1849 Martinez Adobe was cited as regionally significant as an example of the California- Mexican style rancho. The discussion focused primarily on the building’s interior layout, veranda, and kitchen and laundry room additions, and noted an unusual architectural feature; an octagonal column and cap used on the porch, which came into popularity in the 1850s with the writings of Orson Squire Fowler. The 1882 Muir House was recognized as one of the few remaining significant examples of a Victorian Italianate country house that was popular among the more prosperous families in this part of California. The building’s formal and symmetrical plan and facade reflected the formality of late nineteenth- century society and use of exterior architectural details, such as the quoins, arched windows, and pilasters – which dated to the Renaissance Revival in the 1860s – were inspired by the Victorian tradition “that allow[ed] more

inventiveness in the design and use of those elements which relieve the architectural details of the earlier, more structured rules of architecture.”<sup>7</sup>

The regional connection in the Agriculture area of significance, however, is not as clear in the documentation as the focus was on the contrast between the 120 species of plants installed by Strentzel and Muir, subsequent owners, and the NPS, and the vegetation in the surrounding residential and commercial areas. Of particular note was the overnight Environmental Living Program (ELP), which afforded school children the opportunity to work in the orchards and gardens and gain a first hand knowledge of the land.<sup>8</sup>

In October 1988, resources with the Gravesite Unit were considered significant when the five grave markers and granite enclosure were added to the National Register (NR #s 60192- 60197). No nomination form has been located for these additions. The grave markers and enclosure, along with the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and Carriage House, were evaluated as “contributing” features in the “List of Classified Structures” (LCS), which evaluated the park’s major buildings and structures in 2001. The Franklin Creek Windmill, Franklin Creek Bridge, and California Historical Markers were classified as “not significant - managed as resource.” These designations were consistent with the 1975 documentation, which also identified the Carriage House as a contributing feature (at the time it was still located on the east side of the Muir House). The Franklin Creek Windmill, Franklin Creek Bridge, and Visitor Center were determined to be non- contributing in the documentation.<sup>9</sup>

The NPS also conducted research on the historical significance of the Strain Ranch. In a letter to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the State of California, it was noted that the ranch was developed after Muir’s death and that the lands comprising the Mt. Wanda Unit, of which the Strain Ranch was part of, contributed to the historic scene and the visitor experience, but not the ranch structures themselves. Additionally, the letter stated that was no direct connection with Strain Ranch and Muir, nor local or regional significant events or persons or styles.<sup>10</sup> In February 2002, the SHPO concurred, determining that the buildings and structures that comprise the Strain Ranch were ineligible for the National Register, and had no apparent association with John Muir or the park.” However, it should be noted that one of the buildings – the bungalow – dates from Muir’s time and was on land that he owned.

## **AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE LANDSCAPE**

The following descriptions are an analysis of how the landscape contributes to the significance of the property as a whole. Of the six areas of significance identified in the 1975 National Register documentation, Agriculture and Conservation are best reflected by the park's extant landscape resources. Agriculture corresponds to National Register Criterion A, for association with activities that contributed to broad patterns in history; and Conservation corresponds to Criterion B, for association with the lives of persons significant to our past.

The following discussion illustrates how the development of the cultural landscape supports the Agriculture and Conservation themes and provides an outline for expanding existing National Register documentation. Supporting information is found in site history chapters (Chapters 1- 5). Further context is found in the following sources: J. N. Bowman, "Adobe Houses in the San Francisco Region"; *Geologic Guidebook of the San Francisco Bay Counties: History, Landscape, Geology, Fossils, Minerals, Industry, and Routes to Travel*. (San Francisco: Division of Mines. December 1951); Susan Dolan, "A Fruitful Legacy: The Historic Context of Fruit Trees and Orchards in the National Park System." (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Columbia Cascades Support Office, and National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardships and Partnerships. Draft, March 2001); Edward James Wickson, *The California Fruits and How to Grow Them: A Manual of Methods Which Have Yielded Greatest Success, With the Lists of Varieties Best Adapted to the Different Districts of the State*, 10th edition (San Francisco: Pacific Rural Press, 1926); John W. Winkley, "John Muir, Naturalist," (Nashville, 1959); and Susan Hagstrom, "One Man's Journey," (typescript, JOMU files).

### **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A**

#### **Area: Agriculture**

The park's landscape is regionally significant as a distinctive example of the broader agriculture development of the Alhambra Valley from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Although only a fragment of the original Strentzel- Muir Ranch property remains undeveloped today, the characteristics and features that currently describe the park do, as a whole, represent the agricultural past of the historic ranch.

The most prominent feature, the Muir House, was built in 1882 as Dr. Strentzels' retirement home. The building's grand scale, design, and placement atop a knoll

overlooking the valley reflected the stature of a successful and wealthy fruit rancher. Across the creek, the 1849 Martinez Adobe served as a headquarters for the ranch. This more modestly- scaled building was situated along the main road to the town of Martinez and spoke of the valley's earlier agricultural traditions. Today, the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, as well as the 1890s Carriage House have been rehabilitated while the Franklin Creek Windmill and Well and Franklin Creek Bridge are reconstructions and are compatible with the historic scene. Other structures such as corrals, barns, packing sheds that once dotted the ranch landscape (beyond the park's current boundaries) are no longer present. Most of the major roads – the main farm road, carriage drive- loop, Woodshed Road – as well as paths and sidewalks are also present, although some feature surfaces that diminish their integrity.

Regarding vegetation, remnants of the old orchards can still be observed today at the park's Gravesite and Mt. Wanda units, despite the poor condition of some of the plants and the diminished readability of the planting patterns. Conversely, at the House Unit, except for a mature fig, none of the fruit trees and vines are themselves historic. However, the orchard and vineyard spaces are situated in the same locations that they were historically (except for the contemporary orchard trees in the fish pond space). These post- historic crops represent the varieties that were present at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch during the historic period and are characterized by distinct and evenly spaced rows of shaped and pruned trees and vines set out on grass covered and bare ground.

The blocks of orchard and vineyard plants (again, except for those in the fish pond space) contrasts with the many varieties of trees, shrubs, gardens, and lawns set out around the Martinez Adobe and especially around the Muir House. Some of the individual and mass groupings of plantings installed by Strentzel and Muir, such as cedar, cypress, eucalyptus, and the many kinds of palms, still survive. Muir once wrote of this scene: "[I hold] dearly cherished memories about...the fine garden grounds full of trees and bushes and flowers that my wife and father-in- law planted – fine things from every land."<sup>2</sup> The historic plantings coexist amongst more recent plantings. Compared to the agricultural areas, the character of this part of the landscape can best be described as typical of the late-Victorian period in California, with spaces separated by curving drives and paths and loosely arranged masses and unique specimens of trees, shrubs, and flowers.

The 1975 documentation compared the important difference between the many species of plants within what is now called the House Unit – including both fruit trees and exotic trees planted by Strentzel and Muir, subsequent owners, and the

NPS – to vegetation in the surrounding suburban landscape. However, it did not connect the landscape to the larger agricultural story that once was played out in the Alhambra Valley and in Central California prior to that time. An outline of this context is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Although portions of the rich and fertile lands were cultivated by Spanish missions and Mexican rancheros, it was not until the influx of post- gold rush settlers in the 1850s that the landscape of the Alhambra Valley was forever changed. One such settler was Dr. John Strentzel, who arrived in 1853 and planted pear trees alongside a creek in the upper part of the valley. Acreage devoted to fruit and grain crops was initially small compared to land that had long been used for grazing until the 1860s when a sustained drought killed many cattle. Urged on by promoters such as Andrew Jackson Downing, farmers like Strentzel embraced the golden age of pomology and helped turn California's economic basis away from mining to crops. By 1869, the Strentzel Ranch had dramatically increased in size and was selling 375,000 pounds of produce.

The arrival of the transcontinental railroad around 1870 triggered a long period of success in the commercial orchard industry by opening up new regional, national, and international markets. The town of Martinez north of the Strentzel Ranch flourished as a shipping center when the Central Pacific Railroad arrived in 1877, and organizations such as the Alhambra Grange, founded by Strentzel, helped farmers secure fair prices. Through frequent articles and the invention of new shipping and planting techniques, Strentzel promoted the potential benefits of fruit growing and urged his fellow farmers to plant vineyards and fruit trees. By 1875, Strentzel's message had been heard and the Alhambra Valley was planted with over 70,000 fruit trees. This large community of growers helped turn California's economic basis from mining to agricultural production permanently affected the course of California's agricultural development during the mid- to late- nineteenth century. Strentzel's success allowed him to build a stately home that overlooked the valley and was visible from miles away.

By the 1880s, fruit growing turned more complicated with concerns about diseases and pest infestations, and the industry increasingly relied on new scientific practices. Orchards became more standardized and more focused on economic productivity, which resulted in the decline in the number of varieties grown in the field. Many small farmers left the business because they lacked the capital and skills to compete in an increasingly standardized industry. However, this trend was bucked somewhat in California where the continued influx of settlers combined with improvements such as canning, cold storage, and the



refrigerated rail car spawned an increase in the number of fruit trees. During this decade, John Muir was a partner in Strentzel's fruit ranch and refocused production efforts toward the most profitable crops, namely table grapes and Bartlett pears.

The turn of the century marked more changes to the commercial fruit industry. Although new scientific techniques increased productivity, the diversity of fruits had been winnowed even more from hundreds of varieties in the 1870s to just tens of varieties by c.1910. Accompanying the focus on commercially viable species and refined orchard management techniques was a change in the form, shape, and layout of orchard trees. By this time, farmers tended to plant single variety blocks of one kind of fruit with far less varieties rather than rows of several kinds of fruit with many varieties. There were exceptions to this pattern however, especially for new varieties of citrus and nuts. Other changes included the increasing use of tractors, pesticide sprays and powders, planting of cover crops amongst trees, and the use of filler trees. In California, the Bartlett pear was emerging as the most widely planted fruit tree because it was very adaptable, bore young with heavy crops, and could self-pollinate (so it could be planted as a monoculture). Other successful crops at this time included Navel oranges (primarily in southern California) and European and Japanese varieties of plums.

Muir passed the responsibilities of running the fruit ranch on to various family members in 1891 so he could devote his life to writing and traveling. Much of the land that was subsequently sold or leased stayed in production with essentially the same types of crops as in previous years, probably because Strentzel and Muir had built such a successful and proven business. In 1906, grazing was reintroduced on some of the upper slopes of the ranch when Muir's son-in-law took over. However, there were signs in the valley landscape of more lasting changes, such as a new railroad viaduct and tunnel above the orchards on the north slope of Mt. Wanda and new and improved roads. After Muir's death in 1914, the remaining lands of the Strentzel-Muir Ranch passed to daughters Wanda and Helen, and by 1919 most were subdivided and sold.

For the commercial orcharding industry, the Great Depression of the 1930s accelerated the abandonment of orchards that had begun in the 1880s. Orchard standards became more complex and stringent, and by the mid-1940s the number of varieties was down to a small handful that met the accepted criteria. Californian orchardists, however, seemed to fare better than most, especially with Bartlett pears, and by World War II the state was a leader in growing almonds, walnuts, and citrus fruits. This was mirrored in the upper

Alhambra Valley where much of the land was still in production (including lands that Strentzel and Muir had typically set aside for hay production). By the mid-1960s, however, agricultural uses were eventually pushed out by new roads, highways, and suburban development.

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION B**

##### **Area: Conservation – John Muir**

The park is nationally significant for its association with John Muir, the noted conservationist who was responsible for the establishment of several national parks and forest reserves. From the scribble den on the second floor of his house, Muir and other conservationists directed campaigns that were both successful – such as saving more than twenty- one million acres of forest lands – and unsuccessful, such as the battle to save Hetch Hetchy. Muir influenced many, and chief among them was Theodore Roosevelt; after a meeting with Muir in 1903, Roosevelt set in motion plans that would later establish five National Parks, twenty- three National Monuments, and 148 million acres of National Forest.<sup>3</sup> The property, and specifically the restored scribble den in the Muir House, still conveys this theme.

#### **ADDITIONAL AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE LANDSCAPE**

The following descriptions are an analysis of additional landscape- related areas of significance according to the National Register criteria. Two areas are explored: 1) the conservation theme is addressed again but here in terms of the preservation and use of resources, under Criterion A; and 2) landscape architecture and the Gardenesque and Sub- Tropical styles evident around the Muir House, under Criterion C. The discussions are intended to serve as an outline for expanding existing National Register documentation.

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A**

##### **Area: Conservation – Practices**

The park’s landscape illustrates two opposing camps in the conservation movement: conservation in terms of preservation and conservation in terms of utilitarian uses. Muir was of the former camp and believed that natural resources should be protected for their intrinsic spiritual and aesthetic values. He was alarmed at the condition of these wild and natural places after being discovered by ranchers, tourists, and settlers, and lamented, “the wedges of development are being driven hard and none of the obstacles of nature can long withstand the march of this immeasurable industry.”<sup>4</sup> The other camp in the conservation movement held that natural resources should be strictly and wisely managed to

benefit society through sound forestry, soil conservation, and cultivation of landscape beauty.

The contrast between the preservation and use of resources was clearly visible from the Muir House that overlooked the orchards and vineyards spread up and down the Alhambra Valley. Bordering these lands were the wooded slopes and upper grass meadows of the surrounding hills, many of which were used for grazing. The notable exception was Mt. Wanda, which Muir deliberately preserved for its natural beauty and served as a frequent destination for walks with his daughters, friends, and colleagues. While this choice may have been a result of the mountain's steep slopes, it may also have been from Muir's reaction to the damage wrought by unchecked development in the places he visited and loved the most.

Although the utilitarian view of conservation was not his focus, Muir nonetheless oversaw and streamlined a financially successful fruit ranch of more than 2300 acres that ultimately allowed him to retire at a relatively early age and devote the rest of his life to writing and traveling. It could be argued that the two camps were not mutually exclusive and that the utilitarian principles of forestry, soil conservation, and landscape beauty played to Muir's conservation sensibilities: 1) the preservation of the vegetation on Mt. Wanda benefited plant life and wildlife and held the soil in place (forestry); 2) the focus on the most productive crops was an agricultural practice that maximized productivity of the local soil conditions (soil conservation); and 3) multiple varieties of native and non- native plants such as palms, cedars, eucalyptus, and giant sequoia were set out around the house by both Muir and Strentzel (landscape beauty).

Although the historic context has changed considerably since the end of the historic period, the park's landscape still illustrates this difference today: the "developed" lands comprised of orchards, vineyards, and structures within the House and Gravesite units contrast with the "undeveloped" areas of woodlands and grasslands that dominate the Mt. Wanda Unit.

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION C**

##### **Area: Landscape Architecture – Late nineteenth century Gardenesque design**

The Muir House is situated atop a knoll, and during the historic period overlooked the orchards and vineyards of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch and the Alhambra Valley. The house was surrounded by a diverse palette of native and exotic trees, shrubs, and flowers, many of which were brought back by Muir on his travels. By the time of Muir's death, the vegetation had matured to a point

where individual plants merged with others to create a lush and verdant scene around the house.

Research of historic photographs and the existing layout and types of features suggest that the design of the landscape was probably influenced by the Gardenesque and possibly the Subtropical movements – two styles rooted in the Victorian era. The Gardenesque style grew out of the Picturesque style and was promoted by J.C. Loudon in the early nineteenth century. It favored the use of exotic and non- native plants set out in circular beds or other visible places where they could be fully viewed and admired from open areas or from winding paths and drives. The Subtropical Movement emphasized the use of palms and other plants with large or boldly- shaped flowers and foliage to achieve a “tropical” look. Both types of gardening were popular in Victorian England and were especially popular among those who enjoyed collecting plants from far away places.<sup>5</sup> Plants were sometimes housed in conservatories such as the one on the east side of the Muir House.

Just how much influence these movements had on the landscape design is unclear; no site or landscape plans for the knoll have been found, and it is possible none were ever produced. The emphasis on unique specimens probably appealed to the horticultural curiosities of both Dr. Strentzel and John Muir. Furthermore, the site conditions around the knoll and the area’s climate were favorable for the characteristics that typified these movements. It should be noted, however, that the layout of the knoll and placement of plants could have just as easily been governed by topographic features, soil conditions, and practical needs such as planting for windbreaks and shade. In the end, it was probably a combination of the two.

The Gardenesque and Subtropical characteristics are still evident today, although many of the historic trees have matured to a point where they have blended in with non- historic trees and are less noticeable. Overall, the plantings are routinely pruned and trimmed and the grass areas are regularly mowed; such activities may have been performed during later years of the historic period as the grounds were maintained by ranch workers during Muir’s many absences. The landscape around the Muir House may be significant on a regional level as typical of other landscapes at country homes in the late nineteenth century. However, more research will need to be conducted.

### **PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE, 1849 TO 1914**

The period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with historic events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. The period of significance begins with the date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance, often the date of construction.<sup>16</sup>

The current National Register documentation states that the period of significance for the park begins in 1800 and ends by 1914. Although the 1800 date was a standard date provided by the National Register form, based on research and analysis conducted for this CLR, the period of significance for the park landscape should be clarified to extend from 1849 to 1914, which recognizes the construction of the Martinez Adobe in 1849 and Muir's death in 1914. The new date creates a more focused attention on the above-ground cultural resources at the John Muir National Historic Site.

Within the proposed period of significance, a period of interpretation for the park's resources should be 1890 to 1914. Like the period of significance, the period of interpretation ends with Muir's death. For the House Unit, this period originates with Muir's move to the house at the Redfern Place built by Dr. Strentzel. For the Gravesite Unit, the period begins with the burial of Dr. Strentzel. For the Mt. Wanda Unit, the period begins when Muir's daughters were old enough to accompany him on hikes to the top of mountain.

### **ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY**

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic identity or evoke its appearance during the period of historical significance. While the evaluation of integrity is often a subjective exercise, particularly regarding something as dynamic as a cultural landscape, it is grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance.

Historic properties either retain their integrity or they do not. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: *location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association*.<sup>17</sup> Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven qualities are required to convey a sense of past time and place.<sup>18</sup> Another basic test of integrity is whether the participant in the historic period – in this case, John Muir – would recognize the property as it exists today. The following section discusses

the importance of each aspect to the overall integrity of the park and whether or not it is retained or diminished.

### **LOCATION**

This aspect of integrity refers to the place where the cultural landscape was constructed or where the historic event occurred. Although the 340- acre park represents only a fraction of the 2300- acre Strentzel- Muir fruit ranch, the locations of the major features that do remain – the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, cemetery, orchards and vineyards, and woodland and grassland areas – have not changed.

*Evaluation:* Retains location.

### **DESIGN**

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a cultural landscape. Since the end of the historic period, most of the lands that comprised the Strentzel- Muir Ranch have been subdivided, sold, and transformed into different uses. The lands that do remain include the ranch's most important buildings – the Muir Houses and Martinez Adobe – and retain their original design schemes and features including materials, proportion, scale, site placement, and ornamentation. However, the remaining lands have also been compromised by the addition of the Visitor Center; the paving of some historic roads; the loss of historic vegetation; and the addition of plantings around the house, adobe, in the orchard and fish pond spaces, and along the boundaries that are not sympathetic to the historic design.

The design of the old gravesite orchard is intact but diminished because of missing trees, while the natural mosaic of grasslands and woodlands on Mt. Wanda has survived despite natural changes in plant communities.

*Evaluation:* Diminished design.

### **SETTING**

The aspect of setting refers to the physical environment of a property, or how the site is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and spaces. Since the period of significance, the setting at the House Unit has diminished. Although some areas west of the Muir House and knoll include landscape characteristics and features that gesture to Muir's time, the overall din of traffic on State Route 4, views of adjacent non- historic land uses, and the addition of boundary plantings to visually screen these uses has diminished the setting. Awareness of these distractions is virtually unavoidable looking east and south from the Muir

House, primarily because of the building's hilltop location. Consequently, the scene of the house and knoll as an island surrounded by fields of fruit trees and grape vines has been lost.

The loss of setting is not as severe at the Gravesite and Mt. Wanda units. The scene around the gravesite and the remnant pear orchard is one of quiet reverence, and although some of the adjacent houses can be seen, the single-family neighborhood generally preserves the setting. Within the boundaries of the Mt. Wanda Unit, the natural setting of woodlands and grasslands is much as it was during the historic period. Like the gravesite, the area is remarkably peaceful and quiet, which provides an interesting juxtaposition with the suburban scene spread out in the valley below and the heavy industry visible along the distant waterfront.

*Evaluation:* Diminished setting.

### **MATERIALS**

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during the historic period. All types of construction materials, including paving, plants, and other landscape features are included under this aspect of integrity. The Muir House and especially the Martinez Adobe retain many of their original materials even after extensive rehabilitation. Other structures such as the Carriage House were rehabilitated using some historic materials. Historic roads and walks are still present, but most have been paved and are essentially indistinguishable from the paved non- historic routes. Numerous ornamental plants dating from the historic period remain, especially around the Muir House, although they are now growing amongst non- historic plantings. However, with the exception of a fig, the orchard and vineyard plantings at the House Unit are not original, and many of the current plantings are dwarf or semi- dwarf trees, not the full- size trees that would have been planted historically.

The pears at the Gravesite Unit and apricots (and possibly olives and walnuts) at the Mt. Wanda Unit are historic but are in a state of deterioration and may continue to diminish in integrity.

*Evaluation:* Retains materials.

### **WORKMANSHIP**

This aspect of integrity refers to the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. The rehabilitated Muir House and Martinez Adobe and the reconstructed Carriage House are well- documented and are maintained in good

condition. Concrete work associated with walks around the Muir House is intact, as is the workmanship of the gravemarkers and cemetery enclosure. Other buildings and structures associated with the ranch – such as the Cookhouse, Bunkhouse, and the original Franklin Creek and Alhambra windmills – have been lost. Workmanship in the landscape, and specifically plants, is more difficult to evaluate; using the definition above, the form and structure of many of the representative orchards in the House Unit today are different than they were during the historic period. The pears at the gravesite and apricots on Mt. Wanda date from the historic period, but are beginning to deteriorate.

*Evaluation:* Retains workmanship.

### **FEELING**

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time period. During Muir's time, well-kept rows of fruit trees and vines spread outward from the banks of Franklin Creek, encircled the knoll, and extended up the lower north slope of Mt. Wanda. A network of earthen farm roads and lanes connected the various fields to Franklin Canyon Road and passed amongst the late-Victorian period plantings set out on the knoll and around the Muir House. This rural and agricultural setting would have been relatively quiet and only occasionally interrupted by the passing of a steam locomotive on the nearby railroad trestle. Although the key buildings have been returned to their historic appearances and rows of representative orchards have been planted, the historic feeling at the House Unit has been diminished because of: 1) changes in vegetation (both the loss and maturation of historic vegetation and the additions of non-historic plantings); 2) changes in circulation (asphalt surfaces and the addition of non-historic circulation features); and 3) the overall intrusive visual and aural conditions produced by the adjacent suburban landscape.

At the Gravesite Unit, these conditions also persist but are not as pronounced. At the Gravesite Unit, the gravemarkers still evoke the feeling of a small rural cemetery and the size and form of the pear trees reads as a remnant orchard. At the same time, however, these qualities are diminished because of missing trees, the addition of boundary plantings, and the presence of adjacent residences. Integrity of feeling at Mt. Wanda has not changed considerably since Muir's time; it is still a sought-after place of quiet solitude for locals and visitors alike.

*Evaluation:* Diminished feeling.



**ASSOCIATION**

This aspect refers to the direct link between the historic event or person and the cultural landscape. Major features such as the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, Carriage House, gravemarkers, roads, and wells were present when John Muir lived and worked at the fruit ranch, as are many of the plantings. Additionally, the lands now encompassed within the three park units were owned by Muir during the historic period.

*Evaluation:* Retains association.

**INTEGRITY OF THE PROPERTY AS A WHOLE**

The park's landscape retains integrity in location, materials, workmanship, and association. It has diminished integrity in design, setting, and feeling. According to National Register guidelines, a property either does or does not retain its overall integrity, and does or does not convey its significance. Even though there have been changes since the historic period, the preceding analysis indicates that the landscape at the John Muir NHS possesses the essential physical characteristics and features that define why and when the property was significant.

**ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER SEVEN**

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin 16: Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part A." Washington DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register, History and Education, 1997: 1.

<sup>2</sup> John Hussey, Ronald N. Mortimore, Charles S. Pope, Lewis Koue, and John Wosky, "Feasibility Report, John Muir Home and Vicente Martinez Adobe." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1963: 6.

<sup>3</sup> Section 2, Public Law 88- 547, 31 August 1964. From National Park Service, "General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment." Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form. Prepared by Laura E. Soulliere, Architectural Historian. San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 10 October 1975: 2.

<sup>5</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 2,4.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Paul Weinbaum, NPS Regional Historian, 20 February 2004, by author.

<sup>7</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 2,4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer to George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO, 4 February 2002.

<sup>12</sup> William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir, Volume 2*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924. (Cited in Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, "Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site." Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 375).

<sup>13</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form 1975: 8.

<sup>14</sup> From undated brochure, "John Muir Nature Trail." JOMU files.

<sup>15</sup> Material researched at [www.gardenvisit.com](http://www.gardenvisit.com) and [www.sbg.org.uk/gardenesque](http://www.sbg.org.uk/gardenesque).

<sup>16</sup> National Register Bulletin 16: 42.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Page, Cathy Gilbert, and Susan Dolan. *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*. Washington DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource and Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, 1998: 72.

<sup>18</sup> National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." Washington DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register, History and Education, 1997: 1.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The analysis of landscape characteristics and associative features compares conditions during the historic period to conditions as they exist today and makes possible an evaluation of their contribution to the property's historic significance. Through a hierarchy of landscape character areas created for this CLR, this chapter investigates those relationships that define the resources associated with the landscape at the John Muir NHS.

Landscape character areas are determined by the physical qualities of a cultural landscape (such as landforms, masses of vegetation, or land uses) and the type and concentration of cultural resources. Landscape characteristics are the general aspects of the landscape that define its historic character and aid in understanding its historic significance. They include natural systems and features, land use, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small- scale features. Landscape features are components of landscape characteristics and represent the smallest unit of study in the analysis process.

#### **ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY**

##### **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**

The division of the landscape into character areas and smaller units called feature zones (primarily for vegetation identification) helps to organize and frame the landscape analysis discussions that follow. The names of the character areas are derived from field observations and assessments of contemporary conditions. The boundaries are drawn mindful of the site's historical development and surviving features that illustrate the significance of the landscape. It should be noted that these boundaries are somewhat fluid as their characteristics and features occasionally overlap.

The appearance and use of the lands around these units have changed since John Muir's time. Although it is possible to experience moments of quiet solitude, especially atop Mt. Wanda, one may just as likely hear traffic from the busy roads, the sound of a lawnmower, or the din of children playing.

As noted in the introduction of the CLR, the resources within the House Unit are the main focus of this report. Of the three park units, the House Unit is the most complex in terms of landscape resources and lends itself to multiple character areas and feature zones. Three of the four character areas at the House Unit – named the Muir House and knoll, Martinez Adobe, and Agriculture areas – fall within the park’s Historic Zone as defined in the 1991 “General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment” (GMP/EA). The boundaries of the character areas and feature zones generally correspond to landscape characteristics such as topography, types of vegetation, and concentration of buildings; the management zones defined in the GMP/EA; and the unit’s current boundaries (Figure 8.1).

#### **Muir House and knoll area (MH)**

The focal point of this character area, and that of the John Muir NHS, is the rehabilitated 1882 Muir House situated on a knoll high above the park’s landscape. The slopes of the knoll are filled with mass plantings and unique specimens of trees, shrubs, and flowers – some of which were planted by Muir and his family – and are set amongst grassy open lawns. The late- Victorian period plantings in this area contrast with the orthogonal rows of pruned fruit trees and grape vines set out around the knoll. This area also includes the Carriage House; the historic carriage drive- loop, Woodshed Road, and east driveway; and other historic and non- historic paths and walks that serve the house. It can be subdivided into seven smaller feature zones that generally radiate outward from the house: *north side*, *east side*, *south side*, *west side*, and *foundation*. Adjacent to these are the *west slope*, *east slope*, and *carriage drive-loop*.

#### **Martinez Adobe area (MA)**

The Martinez Adobe dates from 1849 and is the oldest building in the park. When purchased by Dr. Strentzel in 1874, the structure served as a headquarters for the ranch and later was modified as a residence for Muir’s daughter Wanda and her husband Tom Hanna. As with the Muir House and knoll area, this area was generally used for domestic uses by the end of the historic period. Today, the rehabilitated adobe serves as exhibit and storage space. The area includes an open- sided ramada with picnic tables, a brick patio, walkways, a drinking fountain, and a variety of domestic plantings and lawn areas. The adobe area can also be subdivided into feature zones: *north side*, *east side*, and *west side*.

#### **Agriculture area (AG)**

The agricultural character area comprises most of the flat and level lands in the House Unit and straddles both sides of the densely vegetated Franklin Creek. It

is dominated by rows of crops on the west and east sides of the creek, north and northwest of the Muir House, and just east of the knoll. The geometric layout of the fruit trees and vines gesture to conditions during the historic period and contrasts with the informal plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers at the Martinez Adobe and especially at the Muir House and knoll. The agricultural area also includes the fish pond space, the reconstructed Franklin Creek windmill and well, the Alhambra well, and the main farm road. Post- Muir features include picnic tables and a grill, storage areas, an adobe brick- making pit, a beehive, and several two- track gravel farm roads. The riparian plantings along Franklin Creek and the non- agricultural plantings along the boundary fences are also part of this character area.

**Visitor Center area (VC)**

This area occupies the northeast corner of the House Unit and corresponds with the Development Zone in the GMP/EA. It abuts Alhambra Avenue and serves as the primary access point for visitors. In addition to the Visitor Center, this character area includes a fenced parking lot for seventeen automobiles and one bus, a patio area with benches, and a small grass seating area and gathering space. Other features include sidewalks, the main park sign, an exit turnstile and service gate, a city bus stop, and a variety of non- historic trees and shrubs that are primarily intended to screen this area from the Muir House.

**Gravesite Unit area (GR)**

The Gravesite Unit is a character area that features several massive specimen trees, a remnant pear orchard, and riparian vegetation, which together silently stand watch over the tiny fenced cemetery that includes the graves of John Muir, his wife, and other family members.

**Mt. Wanda Unit area (WA)**

This character area encompasses most of the park's acreage and features a mosaic of rolling hills, woodlands, and grasslands that overlook the Alhambra Valley.

**CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES**

The following analysis sections provide an evaluation of the landscape's historic integrity by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1849- 1914, with current conditions. It should be noted that in regards to vegetation, a change in plant material through growth and maturity can often add to the character of the landscape by conveying the passage of time and strengthening the feeling of history, even though it does not match the exact conditions during the historic period. Additionally, it is the inherent nature of

plants to grow, mature, and eventually die. In the evaluation definitions for characteristics and features that follow in Table 8.1 below, additional conditions are presented for post- historic vegetation.

The analysis process consists of a comparison of historic (1849- 1914) and contemporary (2003) conditions for landscape characteristics and features that exist at the John Muir NHS. The format of the analysis is as follows:

- *Historic Condition:* A brief synopsis of the history during the period of significance as documented in Chapters 1- 5.
- *Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* An overview of changes that have occurred since the period of significance and description of the current physical condition and use (2003).
- *Evaluation:* A determination of whether the characteristic or feature contributes to the historic significance of the property based on a comparison of historic and existing conditions (see definitions below).

Table 8.1: Definitions of Contributing and Non- contributing Characteristics and Features

	Definition	For vegetation features:	Examples
<b>Contributing</b>	<p>Landscape characteristics, sites, or features that survive from the historic period and are associated with John Muir, or the agriculture, conservation, or landscape architecture themes. Landscape features are further described as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “<i>Character- defining</i>” features that add in a prominent manner to the historical associations and qualities for which the property is significant.</li> <li>- “<i>Characteristic</i>” features that are typical of those extant during the historic period.</li> </ul>	<p>Vegetation material that does not date to the period of significance is considered “contributing” if the <i>Secretary of the Interior Standards</i> were applied in their replacement and the following conditions were met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Condition 1</i>: That the same species and variety is used. If possible, the plant should be either a clone of historically- used vegetation from the site, or, is known to be consistent with the plant material used from that time period. This should to be investigated on a case- by- case basis since certain cultivars have been modified over time.</li> <li>- <i>Condition 2</i>: That the vegetation will be planted in a <b>known historic location</b> and is planted in the same layout (e.g. same site and spacing) as the historic location for that particularly species to have been grown during the period of significance.</li> <li>- <i>Condition 3</i>: That the plant's form is being managed in a way consistent with its historic use (e.g. orchard trees are trained and pruned in a manner consistent with the way fruit trees were grown during the historic period.)</li> </ul>	<p>Muir House; pear orchard at the gravesite; giant sequoia; black locust trees along Woodshed Road.</p>
<b>Non- contributing – Compatible</b>	<p>Landscape characteristics, sites, or features introduced in the landscape after 1914, or have been so altered that they have lost their historic or intended character. Speculative reconstructed features that were intended to evoke the historic period and relate to historic materials, size, scale, proportion, and massing fall into this category.</p>	<p>Vegetation material that does not date to the period of significance and is not contributing is considered “non- contributing – compatible” if it meets a minimum of the first two conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Condition 4</i>: That the same species and variety is used. If possible, the plant should be either a clone of historically- used vegetation from the site, or, is known to be consistent with the plant material used from that time period.</li> <li>- <i>Condition 5</i>: That the vegetation will be planted in the same <b>general location</b> and manner as the original species known to have been grown during the period of significance (exact locations unknown)</li> <li>- <i>Condition 6 (Desirable but not required)</i>: That the plant's form is being managed in a way consistent with its historic use (e.g. orchard trees are trained and pruned in a manner consistent with the way fruit trees were grown during the historic period).</li> </ul>	<p>Franklin Creek windmill; west, middle, and east orchards.</p>
<b>Non- contributing – Incompatible</b>	<p>Characteristics or features installed or introduced on the landscape after 1914, have no historic precedent, and/ or are inaccurate reconstructions and/ or detract from the site’s historic character in terms of materials, size, scale, proportion, and massing.</p>		<p>Ramada; herb garden; orchard in the fish pond space; boundary plantings</p>
<b>Undetermined</b>	<p>Characteristics or features for which physical evidence or historical documentation is inconclusive or where further research and evaluation are needed.</p>		<p>Earthen dams and stock ponds, olive orchard at Mt. Wanda</p>

## **ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

Landscape characteristics are the tangible and intangible characteristics of a landscape that individually and collectively give the landscape its character and aid in understanding its cultural value. Landscape characteristics include culturally derived and naturally occurring processes and forms that have influenced the historical development of a landscape or are the products of its development.

The most important landscape characteristics within the John Muir NHS are land use, circulation; topography, vegetation; buildings and structures; and views and vistas. These characteristics continue to be essential components in understanding and illustrating the evolution of the landscape from the Strentzel-Muir Ranch period to the present day. In particular, the topographic characteristics that define the Alhambra Valley have played a key role in the development and use of the land. Additionally, characteristics related to natural systems and features and small-scale features are discussed.

### **NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES (FIGURE 8.2)**

Natural systems and features are the natural resources that influence the development and form of the landscape. They are discussed in terms of geology, hydrology, flora and fauna, and climate.

#### **Geology**

##### *Historic, Post-historic, and Existing Conditions:*

The San Francisco Bay and the surrounding streams, valleys, and hills are the result of dramatic tectonic forces bearing on the North American Plate and Pacific Plate. Over the course of millions of years, these geological battles created a landscape abundant in resources that provided food, clothing, and shelter for the Ohlone tribelets and other early inhabitants. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, these resources were transformed by Spanish, Mexican, and finally American settlers.

The park's Mt. Wanda Unit is itself an interesting geological timeline of the Bay area landscape and specifically the Alhambra Valley. The lower bedrock layers of Mt. Wanda are composed of sandstone that was slowly deposited by the inland ocean covering this area some fourteen million years ago. Above this is the "Great Valley Sequence," an *older* profile of siltstone and shale; this incongruity is attributed to the San Andreas Fault which tilted up and overturned the rocks twenty to thirty million years ago.<sup>1</sup> Several other faults traverse the area and



generally trend in a southeasterly to northwesterly direction. The most notable geological events were the Great Earthquake of 1906 (7.2 on the Richter scale) and more recently, the 7.0 Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989.<sup>2</sup>

There are two predominant soils in the park, Los Gatos loam (30- 50% slopes) and Los Osos clay loam (15- 30% slopes). Botella clay loam (0- 2% slopes) can be found in the creek floodplains. Most of the soils have a medium to high erosion potential.<sup>3</sup> These soils were and continue to be ideal for growing crops in the lower levels of the Alhambra Valley.

### **Hydrology**

#### *Historic Condition:*

The park is part of two watersheds, the Alhambra Creek watershed to the southeast and the Franklin Creek watershed to the northwest. These basins feature subparallel ridges, deep canyons, and small valleys that parallel the regional geological pattern. The two streams within the park's boundaries – Franklin Creek bisecting the House Unit and the Arroyo del Hambre along the east boundary of the Gravesite Unit – are classified as intermittent streams with flows corresponding to seasonal variations in precipitation.<sup>4</sup> Their sinuous courses and steep banks occasionally produced flood events; some of the flood waters from Franklin Creek likely filled a low area next to the Franklin Creek Bridge that became known as the fish pond, and on several occasions covered a broader area and surrounded the knoll with high water. During the historic period, numerous wells were dug and outfitted with windmills and pumps to irrigate the fields and supply water to the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and corral areas.

#### *Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

Flooding along the creeks gradually increased in frequency as the valley landscape transitioned from agricultural to suburban uses. In the mid- 1960s, part of Franklin Creek just south of the House Unit was channelized in a culvert under State Route 4. A small check dam was built downstream under the Franklin Creek Bridge to maintain a minimum pool of water. Later, concrete stabilization structures were added to curb bank erosion near the culvert outfall. Along the Arroyo del Hambre, random areas of rip rap were added to the banks over the years upstream from the Gravesite Unit and were identified as one of the causes of increased stream flows. The location of the creek in relation to the grave markers is regularly monitored by the park. A culvert associated with the Strentzel Lane Sediment Reduction Project is currently under construction and will outfall just downstream from the gravesite. By the 1950s, the Muir House and

Martinez Adobe were hooked up to city water. Well water and city water are still used to irrigate the fields today.

### **Flora and fauna**

#### *Historic Conditions:*

The fertile flat lands that define the Gravesite and House units were dominated by cultivated fields by the beginning of the historic period. The lands were more intensively farmed when purchased by Dr. John Strentzel in 1853 and 1874, respectively, and remained so until they were subdivided and sold in the years after John Muir's death. During this period, the banks of the Arroyo del Hambre and Franklin Creek were characterized by occasional masses of riparian vegetation that were periodically cut and pruned. These plants contrasted with the orderly arrangement of fruit trees and vines.

The woodlands and grasslands on Mt. Wanda were essentially left alone during the historic period. Although there are few specific references for Mt. Wanda in particular, it is described in the context of the surrounding hills: Mrs. Strentzel (Muir's mother-in-law) admired the dark green of the buckeye, live oak, and laurel from the nearby Alhambra ranch house, and Muir and his family treasured the hills for their botanical variety and distant views during their many hikes. The woodlands were part of mosaic that included grasslands draped over the upper slopes. Livestock grazing returned to some of the grassland areas of Mt. Wanda after Tom Hanna took over ranch operations in 1906.

The ranch was apparently friendly to animals as the family, and especially Muir's daughters Wanda and Helen, kept many pets. Other animals were undoubtedly welcomed and treasured as part of wild nature; Muir strictly prohibited the use of guns or poisons to kill animals.

#### *Post-historic and Existing Conditions:*

The park's flora and fauna is a small part of the larger Alhambra Valley ecology, the conditions and relationships of which have been changed considerably by the course of human culture and settlement. Of the three park units, Mt. Wanda's diverse plant and animal communities represents the least impacted area since the historic period. It consists primarily of blue oak woodlands and grasslands with lesser amounts of mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, ruderal, and relic orchards. This pattern of woodlands and grasslands is also still evident on many of the other hillsides and ravines that define the valley.

Plant species throughout most of the lower slopes and valley floor – and specifically around the Muir House and Martinez Adobe – are primarily native and non- native trees, shrubs, and hedges. Their presence corresponds to both suburban development of the valley and aesthetic influences. Riparian vegetation and orchards dominate the balance of the landscape at the House and Gravesite units and are the last vestiges of the agriculturally oriented landscape that characterized the Alhambra Valley during the historic period. These features are described in more detail in the “Vegetation” section below.

Two animal species that may be present in the park – the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum californiense*) and the California red- legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) – have been listed as “endangered” and “threatened,” respectively. Other documented animal life in the area includes raccoon, ground squirrel, gray fox, skunk, opossum, black- tailed deer, and numerous bird species.<sup>5</sup> Field studies on Mt. Wanda in 2002 also noted several species of snake, active honeybee hives, the den of a red fox, and a nest of a pair of turkey vultures. The discovery of the turkey vultures is unusual given their preference of isolated places and is a testament to the undisturbed nature of the Mt. Wanda area.<sup>6</sup>

### **Climate**

#### *Historic, Post- historic, and Existing Conditions:*

The park is part of the Briones Bioregion, which is characterized by a Mediterranean climate of warm and dry summers and cool and damp winters. The average minimum temperature is fifty- seven degrees and the average maximum temperature is ninety- two degrees. Average annual rainfall ranges between sixteen and twenty inches, 90% of which occurs from November to April. Between 1882 and 1914, the average rainfall was 20.4 inches, with the highest in 1905 at 31.5 inches and the lowest in 1909 at 8.3 inches.<sup>7</sup>

Weather varies considerably within the park and causes a variety of microclimates, which accounts for the varied plant communities. According to the *Sunset Western Garden Book*, the park straddles “Zone 14: Inland Area with Some Ocean Influence” and “Zone 15: Chilly Winters along the Coast Range.” Due to marine air that spills inland from the breach in the Coastal Ranges created by the San Francisco and San Pablo bays, both zones offer long growing seasons, and combined with the terrain, ideal conditions for many orchard, vineyard, and specimen plants.<sup>8</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Natural systems and features, which include geological resources, natural hydrological features, and flora and fauna, contribute to the historic significance of the park as a characteristic of the park's landscape. Geological and hydrological features remain intact, although portions of the Arroyo del Hambre and Franklin Creek have been altered by human settlement and intervention. Deer and other animals are still present, but their numbers and habitats have undoubtedly changed in the increasingly suburban environment.

**LAND USE (FIGURE 8.3)***Historic Condition:*

Land use refers to the principle activities that have formed, shaped, and organized the landscape. In the Alhambra Valley, land uses have been inherently tied to the valley's natural features. The coastlines and floodplains guided the locations of Ohlone settlements and hunting activities; the junction of two valleys at a creek influenced the siting and layout of Vicente Martinez's adobe complex; and the flat valley floor enabled the town of Martinez to grow into a important shipping port. By the mid- nineteenth century, as much of the landscape was transformed from untouched grasslands and woodlands to agricultural uses, the physical characteristics of the land determined the locations of roads, buildings, pastures, and crops.

Dr. Strentzel's first land purchases were the arable and fertile parcels in the upper Alhambra Valley, alongside the Arroyo del Hambre. Here, he planted pears and other crops and established a small gravesite on the creekbank. In 1874, Strentzel purchased the Redfern Farm farther down the valley, which provided additional land ideal for farming. At the Redfern Place, Strentzel and John Muir planted fruit trees and vines on either side of Franklin Creek, around a low depression called the fish pond by Muir's daughter Helen, and around the base of a knoll.<sup>9</sup> In 1881, Strentzel constructed a two- story mansion on top of the knoll. Over time, a network of walkways and roads were built to access the new house, gardens were planted on the south- facing slopes, and native and exotic plantings were set out on the knoll as relief from the sun, wind, and dust as well as for their novelty. By the time of Muir's death, the Muir House stood out as a verdant island oasis amongst the surrounding orchards, vineyards, and fields.

Just to the south was Mt. Wanda, which towered over both the valley and the knoll. As ranch manager, Muir chose to preserve the rolling hilltop grasslands surrounded by woodlands that spilled down the steep hillside ravines. This place was a retreat from the grind of ranch life and a place to admire the sweeping

views. Although some of the meadows were grazed at the end of his life, the mountain was more or less left alone in its natural state. The acreage of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch peaked at around 2300 acres in the mid- 1880s, after which parcels were sold and leased to support Muir's return to a life of writing and traveling.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

After Muir's death, the lands of the Redfern Place were encompassed in the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead and the forty- acre Martinez Adobe property, and along with other ranch parcels passed through numerous owners. Except for the peach orchard within the Muir Homestead, the orchards and vineyards here and throughout the upper valley remained relatively intact until the 1960s when most yielded to the march of suburbia. Due in part to ownership stability and the mountain's steep slopes, Mt. Wanda was spared the effects of development and remained mostly untouched except for occasional grazing. Such was not the case with the more accessible lands around the Gravesite Unit, which were consumed by a residential neighborhood, and especially the House Unit, which were quickly hemmed in by houses, businesses, and a network of local roads and a major highway. In 1964, in what was fortunate timing, the Muir House, Martinez Adobe, and nine acres of what was once the 2300- acre fruit ranch became the John Muir National Historic Site. A large portion of Mt. Wanda (around 330 acres) and the gravesite (1.3 acres) were added to the park's acreage in 1988 and 1993, respectively.

During NPS stewardship, the park reintroduced working orchards and vineyards on the same lands that Strentzel and Muir had planted and rehabilitated the Muir House and Martinez Adobe for public visitation, ending their uses as private residences. Significant changes in land use during this time included development of the Visitor Center and parking lot, planting fruit trees in the fish pond space, and a small easement area for the Union Oil Company. At Mt. Wanda, the park eliminated grazing activities to focus solely on passive recreation, except for the Strain Ranch which is privately leased until 2012. The historic land uses at the gravesite have not changed since the historic period.

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Land use contributes to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic of the park's landscape. Although the land uses around the three park units have changed dramatically, the integrity of the agricultural and non- agricultural land use patterns within the current park boundaries that were present in the historic period essentially to this day and continue to tell the story of John Muir's time at the fruit ranch. The major exceptions are at the

House Unit: the development zone northeast of the Muir House, which includes the Visitor Center and parking lot area; the orchard plantings within the fish pond space; and the utility easement at the extreme southwest corner.

#### **CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.4)**

##### *Historic Condition:*

Circulation refers to spaces, features, and materials that constitute systems of movement, particularly roads, sidewalks, and paths. Although it is not part of the park today, Canyon Way was present throughout the historic period. Early on, it was called the Road to Martinez and then renamed Franklin Canyon Road, and was an important route between the Town of Martinez and the lands to the west and south. The location of the road at the junction of two important valleys was the ideal location for Vicente Martinez to construct his adobe and grow crops along Franklin Creek. Martinez likely set out a farm lane to access the fields on the east side of the creek. After Dr. Strentzel purchased this land from Thomas Redfern in 1874, this main farm road became part of a larger network of earthen and gravel roads and driveways, and earthen and concrete paths. A traveler heading eastward on the main farm road at this time would have been surrounded by rows of grape vines and fruit trees. The view ahead would have been composed of interesting and unique trees and shrubs surrounding the impressive Muir House situated high on top of the knoll.

At the foot of the knoll and next to the Carriage House, a giant sequoia set within a small triangle- shaped wedge of land marked one of the most important intersections at the ranch. Trailing off to the right was the southeast farm road that led to fields and pastures south and east of the knoll. This road was intersected by the lower end of the Woodshed Road, the knoll path, and the east- west farm lane. To the left, a carriage drive climbed up to the north side of the knoll amongst masses of unique plantings and ended as a loop in front of the Muir House. The east driveway connected to the southeast corner of the loop and the upper end of the Woodshed Road, thus creating a continuous route around the house. A network of sidewalks, paths, and steps around the Muir House linked to the roads and driveways. All together, the layout of the circulation system created a variety of spaces in which many trees, shrubs, and flowers were planted.

At the Mt. Wanda Unit, some form of roads and trails were likely blazed by Muir and his family on their many nature hikes to the upper slopes and by ranch manager Tom Hanna (Muir's son- in- law) as he moved livestock around the grassland areas on Mt. Wanda and other ranch lands. There is no information

regarding specific roads or paths at the Gravesite Unit. However, they presumably existed in some form to access the pear trees and the graves, both of which were regularly maintained by ranch workers.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

After the Martinez Adobe property and the Muir Homestead were sold, the circulation system remained relatively intact except for the Woodshed Road , southeast farm road, and part of the triangle intersection which were abandoned and gradually vanished into traces. Several new paths were set out around the Muir House, but the most significant changes occurred at the Martinez Adobe with new concrete walkways, a brick patio, and an earthen loop driveway. During the NPS period, the walkways were replaced and expanded with gravel paths, and part of the loop was removed except for a section alongside the building that was asphalted. In the 1980s, the main farm road and carriage drive-loop, as well as the east access lane on the east slope of knoll were also paved. Although the historic widths and alignments were preserved, the surface material changed the character. The east driveway and upper portion of the Woodshed Road were also asphalted at this time as part of a new accessible route that included construction of a new path paralleling the knoll's east slope. The lower portion of the Woodshed Road was retained as a two- track road and several farm lanes were set out in the orchards near the adobe. The largest concentration of circulation changes have occurred around the Visitor Center in the form of modern sidewalks, patios, and a paved parking lot.

A network of earthen and gravel fire roads were developed at the Mt. Wanda Unit during this period, initially to provide access to the upper grazing areas and later for natural resources protection activities and recreational uses. By the late 1960s, a segment of the California State Riding and Hiking Trail and a park and ride lot were in place on the lower northeast slope, under the railroad trestle, and in the 1990s a nature trail was laid out across the upper north slope. At the Gravesite Unit, a pedestrian bridge was constructed to link new suburban developments straddling the Arroyo del Hambre in the early 1960s, but it was removed in the 1980s. Although NPS plans for the Gravesite Unit included a trail and staff parking space, they were not formally constructed.

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Circulation contributes to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. The network of carriage drives, farm roads, and sidewalks retain integrity to the historic period in terms of location, setting, workmanship, and association. However, the integrity of design, materials, and feeling is diminished due to the asphalt surfaces on some of the historic routes,

which has consequently rendered them indistinguishable from the post- historic roads, paths, trails, and parking areas that accommodate park needs.

#### **TOPOGRAPHY (FIGURE 8.5)**

##### *Historic Condition:*

Topography is the three- dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by features and orientation. Throughout the historic period, the large- scale topography (landform) of the park's three units included a wide range of conditions, from the flat and arable lands at the House and Gravesite units to the steeply sloped lands at Mt. Wanda that rose to over 660 feet. These topographic conditions played a major role in the development of the fruit ranch. The flat valley floors and the gently sloping lower hillsides were set out with orchards and vineyards while the steeper upper slopes of woodlands and grasslands were left for harvesting timber and grazing livestock. Topography also influenced which crops were planted where; table grapes, for example, preferred the valley floors while wine grapes grew best on sloping land.<sup>10</sup> One of the most conspicuous features was the knoll east of Franklin Creek rising thirty feet above the valley floor. With one eye appreciative of the sweeping views, and perhaps the other eye trained on the flood- prone creek, Strentzel selected the top of the knoll as the location for his two- story mansion in 1881.

Other than plowing associated with planting crops, there were few other topographic modifications. The top of the knoll was likely modified for construction of Strentzel's mansion in 1881. The carriage drive- loop, Woodshed Road, and southeast farm road generally paralleled the contours of the knoll except at the east side where the hill was cut and a stone wall and steps were constructed; other roads and lanes appeared to work with the topographic conditions. By c.1887, a low earthen berm was built along the north side of the fish pond space, probably to protect a young peach orchard from flood waters. In the late 1890s, the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad constructed a trestle over the Alhambra Valley. Part of the line included a railroad grade and a tunnel cut into the north slope of Mt. Wanda.

##### *Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

Topographic conditions continued to play an important role in land use decisions, when by the 1960s the former flat, arable lands were replaced with new residential subdivisions. The most significant change to topography came in the mid- 1960 when State Route 4 was redeveloped into a major east- west freeway. The new highway was built on broad slopes of fill that crossed the valley and essentially split it into two halves. The highway severed Franklin Canyon Road,



and the toe of the north fill slope became the southern boundary of the House Unit.

Other topographic modifications were comparatively minor. In the 1930s, the land immediately behind the Martinez Adobe was cut and leveled for a patio and retaining wall, and in the early 1960s, cutting was performed on a small part of the east slope of the knoll for a retaining wall and patio associated with the Martinez Animal Hospital (which became the Visitor Center soon after). During NPS stewardship, limited cutting and filling was required for construction of the easy access path on the east slope of the knoll and the addition of a small swale just east of the Franklin Creek Bridge to direct flood waters away from the adjacent vineyard and across the main farm road into the fish pond space. Two small stock ponds and dams were developed in the draws of Mt. Wanda, but the exact date of their construction is not known. One of the dams was breached in 1993. Some grading likely occurred with development of the park and ride lot, California State Riding and Hiking Trail, and fire roads on Mt. Wanda.

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Natural and modified topographic features contribute to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. Since the historic period, the integrity of the existing large- scale topography within the park boundaries is unchanged. Most modifications have been at a smaller scale and limited to construction of several retaining walls, parking areas, trails, and accessible paths. The major exception is related to the massive fill slopes associated with State Route 4 along the south boundary of the House Unit, which detract from the historic character and will continue to influence management decisions in the park.

**VEGETATION (FIGURES 8.6 AND 8.7)**

*Historic Condition:*

Vegetation includes indigenous and introduced trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous materials and includes such features as woodlots, specimen trees, orchards, and allees. Vegetation has been a defining characteristic of the park's landscape since Vicente Martinez constructed his adobe in 1849. At that time, the land on either side of Franklin Creek was cultivated with mostly grain crops as well as gardens and possibly fruit trees. These types of vegetation were also set out by Dr. Strentzel when he purchased his first land further up the valley, along the wooded banks of the Arroyo del Hambre. Strentzel's successful experiments with a variety of fruits and vines encouraged him to acquire additional parcels in the valley, one of which was the

Redfern Farm (which included the Martinez Adobe) in 1874. By the mid- 1880s, these lands were also filled with fruits and vines.

By the time John Muir and his family moved to the Muir House in 1890, the land comprising the Redfern Place was planted with rows of cherries, apricots, plums, peaches, apples, pears, and grapes. The inventory expanded to include lemons, oranges, walnuts, and pecans by 1914 despite the fact Muir had long since retired from the ranch and had sold and leased most of its parcels to family members and former employees. The most notable change at the Redfern Place occurred in the 1890s when many of the plums between Franklin Creek and the knoll were replaced with table grapes, which Muir felt were one of the most profitable crops to produce. Bartlett pears were Muir's other favored crop and in the 1890s he grafted the Bartlett on to Strentzel's old pear trees near the gravesite.

During the later half of the historic period, rows of crops spread as far as the eye could see, only occasionally interrupted by the wooded streambanks that cut across this manmade arrangement. Franklin Creek was one such stream, and Strentzel and Muir pushed their fruits and vines as close to it and to the fish pond space as they could. The creek banks were held in place by a variety of riparian plants such as willow, oak, and buckeye that tended to grow taller on the north side of the main farm road and around the Franklin Creek windmill compared to the south side. The heights of plantings on the south side may have been managed so as not to shade the adjacent crops.

The geometry of the orchards and vineyards and the uniform heights and forms of different types of trees contrasted with the open slopes of the knoll and the unique plantings around the house and along the driveways. The diversity grew over the historic period as both native and non- native palms, cedars, cypress, eucalyptus, and many shrubs were planted, some set out as individual specimens and others planted en masse as screens and windbreaks. The collection of plants created a verdant scene and complemented the imposing Italianate mansion, and some grew so vigorously that they had to be removed so as not to crowd out other plants. Although not as diverse a palette, the trees, shrubs, and flowers around the Martinez Adobe offered a shady oasis for Tom and Wanda Hanna and their family.

While the orchards, vineyards, and late- Victorian period plantings were set out by Strentzel and Muir, the woodlands and grasslands draped over Mt. Wanda predated both men. As noted earlier, Mt. Wanda, like many of the other surrounding hillsides, featured such plants as laurel, buckeye, and live oak

scattered amongst the open areas. The family treasured the hills for their botanical variety and distant views during their many hikes. This rich mosaic also provided Muir a respite from the labors of the ranch and served as a classroom in which he could botanize with his children, friends, and colleagues. At the gravesite, roses and other shrubs, and possibly riparian vegetation along the Arroyo del Hambre, grew next to the graves and contrasted with the rows of nearby pear trees. The most visually dominating vegetation here, however, was a row of eucalyptus trees that towered over the graves and orchard.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

After Muir's death, Mt. Wanda was generally left in its natural state except for occasional livestock grazing in the upper meadows. Such was not the case for the orchards and vineyards on the lower slopes and floor of the upper Alhambra Valley, which slowly succumbed to new roads and highways and residential and commercial developments. The remaining lands of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch were sold off, and the area known as the Redfern Place was divided into the Martinez Adobe and Muir Homestead properties. The crop lands at the Martinez Adobe property continued to be productive and were even expanded, especially with walnuts and pecans, until Alhambra Avenue was constructed in the late 1950s and State Route 4 was upgraded in the mid- 1960s, transforming the area into a major junction into the City of Martinez. The small peach orchard included in the Muir Homestead was abandoned and by the mid- 1960s was taken out, while some fruit trees were planted in the fish pond space. The ornamental trees and shrubs around the Muir House and along the carriage drive- loop thrived and took on an overgrown appearance, depending on who owned the property at the time. Other plants were added, especially along the west slope of the knoll, while some historic plants such as eucalyptus and palms on the south side were threatened by the new highway. At the gravesite, much of what remained of the old pear orchard was incorporated in suburban landscapes. Only the far southern section of the orchard along with the eucalyptus trees near the graves were retained in a parcel owned by the Hanna family.

Commemoration of John Muir began in the 1930s with pilgrimages to the gravesite and ceremonies under the eucalyptus. This cause merged with efforts to preserve the last vestiges of the fruit ranch which were realized in 1964 with the establishment of the park. Initial development plans called for replanting the orchard and vineyard spaces and clearing much of the west slope of the knoll. A Historic Landscape Plan in 1968/69 proposed fruit trees and vines representative of types present during Muir's time at the ranch. Over the next ten years, spaces that were historically devoted to crops were cleared and replanted (in the west orchard space, new fruit trees were shoehorned amongst remnant fruit trees),

although in some cases, the historic locations and types of trees were not adhered to. The historic and non- historic plantings around the Muir House and Martinez Adobe were pruned and maintained, and specimens that were potential hazards to visitors were removed. Aided by interviews with Muir family members, relatives, and former employees as well as research of historic photographs, the park gradually replanted areas around the Muir House and added more plants along the boundary fences to screen adjacent land uses. In the late 1980s, the orchards were expanded when pears were planted in the fish pond space.

Although the orchard and vineyard areas still contrast with the native and non-native ornamentals around the Muir House and knoll and the Martinez Adobe, the sense of that separation today has become more subtle. The lush late-Victorian period feeling around the house and knoll has changed with the presence of regularly mowed lawns and pruned shrubs. Some historic vegetation has been either lost or is now mature, while non- historic vegetation competes with the historic plants and fills open spaces that were historically unplanted. Although a walk past the fruit trees and vines generally evokes the character of a bygone time, pruning styles vary in term of historic accuracy and planting patterns are not always discernable because of awkward rows and missing trees. One of the biggest changes since the historic period concerns the riparian vegetation south of the main farm road, which is now almost equal in height to the plants on the north side and has visually split the House Unit into two sections.

A large part of Mt. Wanda and the small gravesite parcel were added to the park in 1988 and 1993, respectively. At the Gravesite Unit, some of the root stock of Strentzel's pear trees (*Pyrus communis*) that were grafted by Muir were still alive, and since that time have been minimally maintained. Today, the some of the trees are in poor condition and the planting pattern is difficult to discern because of missing trees and the presence of non- orchard trees. The eucalyptus tree Muir admired survives, as does an incense cedar, and both tower over the orchard and cemetery.

Several orchards were also identified at the Mt. Wanda Unit in an inventory of native and non- native vegetation by Eric P. B. Jepsen and Andrew G. Murdoch in 2002. A small hillside apricot orchard (*Prunus armeniaca*) on a south- facing slope above the Strain Ranch still grows, but the trees appear to be in poor health and they are not maintained. South of the Strain Ranch is an olive orchard (*Oleo europea*), which may be historic but is considered a weedy species by the

California Exotic Pest Plant Council." The unmaintained orchard features extensive sapling growth that is spreading into the adjacent mixed evergreen forest. A grouping of walnut trees is located on the lower northern slope; they may be historic but additional research will be needed.

Invasive trees such as tree- of- heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), particularly those in the oak woodlands, have been removed and replaced with natives such as coast redwood and oak.<sup>22</sup> Other invasive plants have been identified within the historic woodland/grassland mosaic and include artichoke thistle, Scotch broom, yellow star thistle, and field bindweed.

The 2002 study identified a mix of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species in the riparian areas of Franklin Creek at the House Unit and the Arroyo del Hambre at the Gravesite Unit. Dominant plants include California black walnut (*Juglans californica* var *hindsii*), California sycamore (*Platanus californica*), canary grass (*Phalaris aquatica*), giant reed (*Arundo donax*), red willow (*Salix laevigata*), Arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), Himalaya berry (*Rubus discolor*), and poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*).<sup>23</sup> There is also California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), yellow willow (*Salix lasiandra*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*), Catalina cherry (*Prunus lyonii*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), and common olive.

The same study inventoried the native and non- native vegetation on Mt. Wanda and identified the grassland and woodland communities. Grasslands are primarily located on the top of Mt. Wanda and on the south- facing slopes and consist mostly of introduced annual grasses and thistle species covering approximately 117 acres. Dominant grassland species include wild oats (*Avena fatua*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), rip- gut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), foxtail barley (*Hoerdeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), and yellow- star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). No native grass species were identified in the study. Blue oak woodlands cover approximately 155 acres and are situated on the north- facing slopes and in upper portions of drainages. Species include blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), California buckeye, and a variety of understory plants. The mixed evergreen forest occurs in the lower portions of drainages and lower north- facing slopes and covers around fifty- five acres. Species include coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), black oak, and California buckeye with understory plants. Two acres of chaparral are located on the north slope and consist primarily of chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculata*),

California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), coyote mint (*Monardella villosa* ssp. *villosa*), and deer weed (*Lotus scoparius*).<sup>14</sup>

Two plant species – Mt. Diablo sunflower (*Helianthella castanea*) and California black walnut – are listed as “species of concern” by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and can be found within the park’s boundaries.<sup>15</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Vegetation contributes to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. Although much of the plant material is not historic, the overall historic patterns – rows of fruit trees and vines, ornamental masses and specimens, riparian plantings, and woodland and grassland communities – and the locations of vegetation features essentially remains. However, the continued growth and loss of historic vegetation, the growing dominance of non- historic vegetation and invasive species, and the inaccurate styles and types of some of the representative orchard trees threaten to compromise the integrity of the historic mosaic.

**BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.5)**

*Historic Condition:*

Buildings and structures are three- dimensional constructs such as houses, barns, garages, stables, bridges, windmills, gazebos, dams, walls, and memorials. Although the park’s historic buildings and structures number few, they collectively represent a continuum of ownership and land use that begins in 1849, well before Dr. John Strentzel and his son- in- law John Muir transformed the upper Alhambra Valley into a 2300- acre fruit ranch. In that year, Vicente Martinez, the son of the original land grantee for whom the town of Martinez is named, built what is now called the Martinez Adobe on the east side of Franklin Creek, next to Franklin Canyon Road. Vicente constructed a cookhouse, other outbuildings, and corrals, and farmed and lived on this land until selling in 1853. The adobe passed through many owners until purchased in 1861 by Thomas Redfern, who then sold the building and 244 acres of land to Dr. Strentzel.

Strentzel used the Martinez Adobe as a headquarters for his growing ranch and built a small house just to the southwest for a foreman as well as a packing shed, barns, and other corrals nearby. Up until this time, the west side of the creek was cropland except for a conspicuous knoll due east from the adobe. Nearing retirement, Strentzel chose this high spot for his new home, an imposing two- story mansion built in the Italianate style. The fourteen- room structure was

completed in 1882 and featured a cupola that offered grand views of the verdant Alhambra Valley and the Straits of Carquinez. Soon after, a Woodshed was built on the east side of the house and a well and windmill were constructed along Franklin Creek to supply water to the house and irrigate the fields. Masses of plants were set out amongst spaces created by carriage drives and walkways to shade and screen the house.

When Dr. Strentzel died in 1890, Muir and his family relocated to the house. On the second floor he set up his “scribble den” and from there until his death in 1914 wrote the manuscripts that would secure his place in American history. During this period, a three-story wood frame and brick addition housing a water tank and music room was added to the south side, a carriage house was built at the bottom of the west slope of the knoll, and another well and windmill was constructed northeast of the house. In 1906, the great San Francisco earthquake toppled some of the chimneys at the house and damaged a wall and chimney at the Martinez Adobe. Muir repaired some of the fireplaces at the house soon after, and his daughter Wanda and her husband Tom Hanna remodeled the adobe as their first residence and dug a well to the northeast. Alone in his house after his wife died, Muir often rambled down to the adobe to join the Hannas for breakfast. In the last months of his life, and in what may have been an attempt to coax his two daughters back, Muir remodeled the house and added electric service.

Dr. Strentzel was interred at the family gravesite near the Alhambra ranch house. Tucked between his first pear orchard and the banks of the Arroyo del Hambre, the gravesite was defined by a low rectangular coping. He was joined there by his wife in 1897, his daughter Louie in 1905, and John Muir in 1914. Gravestones were erected for each as well as three markers for other family members. Nearby, on the lower slopes of Mt. Wanda, a small bungalow was built c.1910.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

After Muir’s death, the Martinez Adobe property and the Muir Homestead were sold. Most of the outbuildings around the adobe were removed in the 1930s, and its new owner, Daniel Parsowith, attached the Cookhouse to the southwest corner of the building. By the 1960s, the bunkhouse/former ranch foreman’s house was removed. At the Muir Homestead, the Kreiss family relocated the Carriage House to the east side of the Muir House where the Woodshed was located. They also dismantled the dilapidated Franklin Creek windmill and possibly the Alhambra windmill. In 1955, both the Muir House and Martinez Adobe were bought by individuals interested in their preservation, and thanks to their efforts the buildings ultimately anchored the new John Muir NHS in 1964.

The timing was fortunate as suburban development and new roads and highways had surrounded the area. One such building, a veterinary clinic situated in the northeast corner of the park, was converted into a Visitor Center and administrative offices. Starting in 1964, the NPS planned and completed numerous rehabilitation projects to return the historic buildings to their historic conditions in 1906- 1914. The park's historic scene was complemented by reconstruction of the Franklin Creek windmill and well (and the Alhambra well), Franklin Creek Bridge, and relocation and partial reconstruction of the Carriage House.

The march of suburbia did not exert as much pressure on the gravesite or Mt. Wanda. The gravesite had long been the destination of Sierra Club pilgrimages and along with a portion of the pear orchard was eventually surrounded by a quiet neighborhood of single- family residences. The gravesite stayed in the care of the Tom and Wanda Hanna until they were buried there in the 1940s, abut remained in the Hanna family until it ultimately passed to the NPS. At Mt. Wanda, the bungalow and a collection of other buildings, corrals, and a second house became part of the Strain Ranch. In the 1960s, a house was removed on the lower northeast slope for the CALTRANS park and ride lot, and several buildings were removed on the lower north slope for the park's maintenance building completed in 2002.

*Evaluation: Contributing characteristic*

Buildings and structures contribute to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. The Muir House and Martinez Adobe each impart the distinctive character of their time and are important focal points and organizational elements that are key to understanding the site's history. With exception of the Visitor Center, most other buildings and structures complement the historic scene.

**VIEWS AND VISTAS (FIGURES 8.8 TO 8.14)**

*Historic, Post- historic, and Existing Conditions:*

Views and vistas are features that create or allow a range of vision, which can be natural or designed and controlled. During the historic period, the Alhambra Valley's natural features and topographic conditions provided excellent opportunities to record the history of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch. It is no coincidence that many of the site's historic photographs were taken from the Muir House and knoll and from the vicinity of the pear orchard on the lower north slope of Mt. Wanda. These elevated vantage points offered long and unobstructed views of the lands that comprised the fruit ranch. Three historic



views at the House Unit– paired with their contemporary views – are of particular note, not only because of the historic information they provide but also as a testament of how much the valley has changed since Muir’s time and how those changes have influenced development of the park.

One of the earliest views dates from c.1885 and shows Dr. Strentzel on the open west slope of the knoll and a long view to the west across the fish pond and Franklin Creek and down the main farm road to the Martinez Adobe and corrals, barns, and crops lapping up the western hills. Today, mature, and in some cases, non- historic vegetation on the west slope of the knoll partially blocks the view of the fish pond space and the Franklin Creek windmill. However, it is the tall and dense mass of riparian vegetation on the south side of the main farm road that limits the viewshed across the creek to the west orchard and the Martinez Adobe.

The second historic photograph was taken in the late 1890s on the west slope of the knoll, around the lower portion of the Woodshed Road. In this view, looking southwest, the plum trees and grapes in the middle orchard space give way to the hillside pear orchard and the steep and wooded north face of Mt. Wanda. This dramatic view of both the valley floor and part of the landform that forms the valley walls has essentially remained intact, despite the massive amounts of fill used to upgrade and elevate State Route 4 in the 1960s. This intrusion on the historic scene was tempered early on with the establishment of vegetative screens on both sides of the park’s southern boundary fences by the NPS and CALTRANS. Today, some of these trees, such as the grove of redwoods, are now threatening the view. Preservation of this view as a representation of conditions during Muir’s time inspired the park to acquire the Mt. Wanda Unit in 1988.

The third notable view from the House Unit dates from c.1900- 1905 and looks northeast from Muir’s scribble den on the second floor of the house. During the historic period, the view extended far beyond the ornamental plantings around the carriage drive- loop, reaching across the apple orchard and row of incense cedars on the east slope of the knoll towards hay fields and orchards in the distance. Today, this same view illustrates the dramatic shift from an agricultural landscape to a suburban scene of roads, buildings, and power lines, some of which are located within the park’s boundaries. The view is partially blocked by a possibly historic California bay in the center island, which towers over seventy-five feet tall. The same tree blocks the view of the Muir House from the west side of the Visitor Center.

There are, of course, numerous other views within the House Unit that have changed since the historic period. During that time, one of the main routes into the Redfern Place and to the Muir House was via the main farm road. A person standing on the main farm road in 1914 would probably have seen much of the second floor of the Muir House and certainly the cupola because at that time the vegetation was relatively low in height along Franklin Creek around and south of the Franklin Creek Bridge and on the west slope of the knoll. Today, this view is completely blocked because of the tall plants along the creek and the mature historic and non- historic plants on the west slope of the knoll.

As noted earlier, the park has repeatedly planted along the boundary fences to screen adjacent land uses. The efforts have generally been effective along the south- west and west boundaries and, despite occasional gaps, along the north- west and north- east boundaries. However, the task has been more challenging around the Visitor Center area and especially along the south- east boundary, in part because topographic conditions. Plantings of redwoods and oaks along the fence by the park and recent landscape improvements by CALTRANS have been geared to address the problem. However, all of these plants will need to grow to a considerable height to block the scene beyond the fence, and even then may not do so because of the elevated vantage of the knoll.

Mt. Wanda offers the most panoramic views in the park and another opportunity to imagine Muir looking down to the house and adobe surrounded by orchards, vineyards and hay fields that spread across the Alhambra Valley toward the small town of Martinez on the shoreline in the distance. Views from the top were, in Muir's words, "delightful in color like a fairyland" and included Mt. Diablo looming to the east and the shimmering waters of the Straits of Carquinez and pencil- like outline of the Sierras to the west.<sup>16</sup> Although the context has changed, the wide- open views remain today. Historic and non- historic vegetation has obscured the view of the Muir House and Martinez Adobe from Mt. Wanda, but it is still possible to see the Franklin Creek Windmill and part of the orchards and vineyards. Views within Mt. Wanda can be described as a rural scene of woodlands and grasslands criss- crossed by narrow two- track earthen roads.

The scene at the gravesite could be described in similar terms; the surrounding single- family residential neighborhood has preserved a quiet solitude that probably existed when Muir was alive. Hedges and riparian vegetation attempt to screen views of adjacent houses around the older northern half of the parcel, which includes the gravesite, and views of the surrounding undeveloped hills

from this section add to the solitary experience. However, views into private property are more noticeable in the smaller southern half.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing characteristic*

Views and vistas no longer contribute to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. The historic views described above revealed important relationships in the landscape during the historic period and today could illustrate the dramatic changes that have occurred since that time. With the exception of the view from the east side of the Muir House and knoll, most of the viewsheds have diminished integrity primarily because of the maturation of historic vegetation and the presence of non- historic vegetation features.

### **SMALL-SCALE FEATURES**

*Historic Condition:*

Small- scale features are elements that provide detail and diversity combined with function and aesthetics, and includes such features as benches, signs, monuments, and road markers. With the exception of the historic sprayer on display next to the Visitor Center, there are no other small- scale features in the park's landscape that date from the historic period. The locations of fences along the House Unit's north- east and north- west boundaries and part of Franklin Creek and the Visitor Center are historic as they generally correspond to the 1908 boundaries of the Muir Homestead, but the current fence types are not. Similarly, the location of the west boundary fence next to Canyon Way and the gate at the main farm road are also historic, but the actual fence and gate are not. Some of the fence lines and locations of gates at Mt. Wanda may also be historic, but additional research will be needed. Most of other features associated with the operation of both the agricultural and domestic aspects of the ranch – fences, cisterns, privies, sheds, storage areas, pens, clothes lines, and the like – were removed during both the historic period and afterwards as the ranch was subdivided and sold.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:*

Most of the small- scale features at the park today reflect its development and use as a national historic site. Items such as boundary fences; interpretive signs, kiosks, and marker posts; benches and picnic tables; security lights; and water faucets and hoses fit in this category. Other features such as the beehive oven, beehive, fruit bin, and adobe brick- making pit are more reflective of the site's history and are part of the park's interpretive efforts, even though they do contribute to the site's significance. Conversely, features like the

hydrothermograph, weather station, and radio repeater at Mt. Wanda are not directly tied to the park's operations.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing characteristic*

Small- scale features no longer contribute to the historic significance of the park as a defining landscape characteristic. However, most of the features are of a design and scale that is compatible with the surroundings.

## **ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

Landscape features are the smallest physical element of a landscape that can be managed as an individual unit. Landscape features are evaluated according to how they contribute to the historic significance of the property today, and if they do not, whether they detract from the historic character of the property.

The analysis process consists of a comparison of historic and contemporary conditions for each landscape feature that exists within the House Unit. Only major features at the Gravesite and Mt. Wanda units are considered. Historic features that are not extant are not analyzed in this format but are addressed in Appendix 4: Missing Features.

For the purpose of the following section, landscape features are paired with their associated landscape characteristic and are organized according to the four character areas in the House Unit – Muir House and knoll (MH), Martinez Adobe (MA), Agriculture areas (AG), and Visitor Center (VC) – as well as the Gravesite Unit (GR) and Mt. Wanda Unit (WA) character areas. Vegetation features are discussed individually wherever historical information allows. However, in some areas, such as the carriage drive- loop and around the Martinez Adobe, plantings are grouped together and discussed in terms of feature zones. Additionally, although the Muir House was referenced in the Site History as the Strentzel House prior to 1890, it is referred to as the Muir House.

A summary of landscape characteristics and features and their evaluations appears in Appendix 5.

## **MUIR HOUSE AND KNOLL AREA – (MH)**

### **MH: CIRCULATION (FIGURES 8.15 AND 8.16)**

#### **Carriage drive-loop**

*Historic Condition:* The carriage drive- loop was built to provide access to the Muir House when it was constructed in 1882. The earthen road began at the east end of the main farm road next to the fish pond space and tracked northeasterly up the west slope of the knoll before turning to the south and ending as a broad and gently sloping loop at the front of the Muir House. By c.1898, the Woodshed Road was connected to the road, which created a navigable loop around the house. In the early 1910s, Muir added gravel to the road. Historic photographs suggest the width of the road was between eight and ten feet during this period, with wider alignments at the north and south ends of the loop to accommodate turns.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* Use of the section of the carriage drive-loop tracking up the west slope of the knoll likely diminished when the east access lane connecting the loop to Alhambra Avenue was constructed in the late 1950s on the east slope of the knoll. The carriage drive- loop was incorporated into the park's trail system, and between 1964 and 1982, a soil cement surface was added. Around 1982/83, this surface was overlayed with a brown- colored hot asphalt plant mix and covered with thin layer of sand to minimize the appearance of the asphalt. At some point, the loop portion was widened to better accommodate the turning radii of emergency vehicles. Today, the width of the road is approximately ten feet and broadens to twenty- five feet at the north end of the loop and fifteen feet at the south end. The asphalt surface is in good condition.

#### *Evaluation: Contributing*

The carriage drive- loop, constructed c.1882, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although the road was widened at the loop end to accommodate emergency vehicles, the more significant change occurred in the 1980s when the road was paved, which has diminished the historic character.

#### **East driveway**

*Historic Condition:* The driveway was likely developed c.1885 when the Woodshed was built on the east side of the Muir House. The driveway extended across gently sloped ground on the east side of the house from the

carriage drive- loop to the Woodshed area. The road probably featured a compacted earthen surface and may have been supplemented with additional gravel in c.1910 when Muir improved the nearby carriage drive- loop.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* Use of the driveway may have increased when the Carriage House was moved from the fish pond space to the east side of the Muir House in the late 1930s. In 1982- 83, the driveway was incorporated into the accessible route that linked the Visitor Center to the Muir House and paved in asphalt. Today, this asphalt drive is in good condition and is approximately six feet wide.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The east driveway, likely constructed c.1885, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The character of the road diminished in the 1980s when it was paved as part of the accessible route from the Visitor Center to the Muir House.

**Perimeter sidewalks and front steps**

*Historic Condition:* The sidewalks encircling the Muir House were constructed around the time the house and carriage drive- loop were constructed. The layout of the walkways generally paralleled the sides of the house except at the major corners where they were angled. These scored concrete/aggregate walkways were about 3.5' wide, portions of which were bordered by a narrow and slightly raised edge of the same material. The main walkway, which extended north from the wooden front porch steps to a set of four steps at the carriage drive- loop, was approximately 7.5 feet wide.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* In 1967, the front steps at the carriage drive- loop were rebuilt and in 1982/83 an area of non- historic cobblestones was removed from near the steps because they were unsafe to walk on.<sup>7</sup> In 1983, work commenced on repairing and replacing some of the historic walks with exposed aggregate to match the existing walks and a raised rolled edge. This work was completed around 1992. In 1994, some of the sidewalks in front of the Muir House were repaired and leveled. Today, the walkways are in generally fair condition due to cracks and some uneven sections. Some of the walks in the back of the house have been broadened with square concrete pavers set into the lawn panels and planting beds.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The perimeter sidewalks and front steps, most likely constructed in c.1882, contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation

feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Despite periodic repairs since that time, the historic character has been retained.

### **Woodshed Road**

*Historic Condition:* This road was built by c.1898 across a former dry yard area on the south slope of the knoll and linked the Woodshed area to the Carriage House area. The road began at the east driveway on the east side of the Muir House and then gradually descended the south and west slopes of the knoll until intersecting with the southeast farm road just south of the triangle intersection. The two- track earthen road was approximately eight feet wide and was the final piece of a larger loop around the Muir House.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Changes in circulation patterns at the Muir Homestead – the relocation of the Carriage House to the east side of the Muir House and the diminished role of the southeast farm lane caused by construction of the Arnold Industrial Highway – likely contributed to the gradual abandonment of this road. When acquired by the park in 1964, only a trace of the road remained until it was improved with a soil cement surface and incorporated into the trail system. In 1982- 83, the upper portion of the road was made part of the easy access trail route that linked the Visitor Center to the Muir House. This section was overlayed with a brown hot asphalt plant mix and covered with a thin layer of sand to minimize the appearance of the asphalt surface. Today, this asphalt section is approximately ten feet wide and is in good condition, but detracts from the historic character. The lower portion exists as a two- track road of about the same width. It is in fair condition mainly because of several awkward patches of the old soil cement surface.

#### *Evaluation: Contributing*

The Woodshed Road, constructed by c.1898, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The character of the upper portion of the road diminished in the 1980s when it was paved as part of the accessible route from the Visitor Center to the Muir House. The lower portion retains the essence of the historic character as a two- track road.

### **Triangle intersection**

*Historic Condition:* The small triangle- shaped island of land at the bottom of the west slope of the knoll was formed by the intersection of the main farm road, carriage drive- loop, and southeast farm road. The northern side of the

triangle connected the main farm road and carriage drive- loop; the southwestern leg linked the main farm road and southeast farm road; and the eastern leg connected the southeast farm road to the carriage drive- loop. All of the segments appeared to be approximately eight- ten feet wide. It was in place by c.1885 and is where Muir planted a giant sequoia that according to Agee's analysis dates to 1897.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1964, only the northern side of the intersection was in use as the southeast farm road had essentially been abandoned. The park incorporated the main farm road, carriage drive- loop, and Woodshed Road into a trail system, which reestablished the southwestern side of the triangle although the roads that this leg connected were different. In the 1980s, the northern leg was paved in asphalt as part of the project to pave the main farm road and carriage drive- loop. Today, the asphalt is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The triangle intersection, in place by c.1885, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The character of this feature has diminished since the historic period because of the paving on the north side and the missing eastern side.

**Walkway, Victorian garden**

*Historic Condition:* The alignment of this walkway, situated between the southeast corner of the Muir House and the Woodshed Road, may have been in place by c.1887- 1890 – around the time the Woodshed and the retaining wall and steps were constructed and when the rear addition of the house was built in 1890. This path would have directly connected the east door on the addition to the steps. The path likely featured an earthen surface.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Between 1914 and 1964, two single-track earthen paths extended from the southeast corner of house down to the Woodshed Road: the east- oriented path led directly to a set of rough stone steps within the stone and brick retaining wall along the Woodshed Road, while the southeast- oriented path ran down the slope to the road. In 1984, the small wedge of land formed by the two paths was transformed into a Victorian flower garden. By c.1989, only the east- oriented path and stone steps remained. It is not known when the path was paved with concrete, but the fines in the concrete suggest that it post- dates the sidewalks around the Muir House. The concrete is also similar in composition to the concrete



walkway next to the incense cedars on the west slope of the knoll. The walkway was repaired in 1996, but today the paths and steps are in such a hazardous condition that they are roped off to the public.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The walkway in the Victorian garden, likely constructed around c.1887-c.1890, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The alignment of the path suggests it was a direct link from the door on the east side of the new addition to the steps and wall at the Woodshed Road. The concrete was probably a later addition, but more research will need to be conducted.

**Walkway, incense cedars**

*Historic Condition:* Unknown.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* A narrow and slightly curved sixty- foot long sidewalk was constructed from the carriage drive- loop alongside the row of incense cedars, northwest of the Muir House. The fines in the concrete of the walkway suggest it may post- date the sidewalks around the Muir House. It is similar in composition to the walkway at the Victorian garden on the southeast side of the house. The purpose and final destination of the walk is unclear.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional documentation will be needed to determine the history of this feature.

**Fire lane**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was planted with apple trees and other vegetation during the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the late 1950s, a lane was constructed north of the Muir House to provide access to the Muir Homestead from the recently constructed Alhambra Avenue. The east end of the lane was relatively flat but the west end, which climbed the east slope of the knoll to intersect with the carriage drive- loop, was quite steep. Given the steep slope, the earthen lane was presumably supplemented with gravel to improve traction. Soon after the park opened in 1964, the east end of the lane was incorporated into the visitor parking lot while the western portion was retained as the main route from the Visitor Center to the Muir House for both park visitors and park vehicles. In 1970, it was surfaced with bituminous

paving. In 1982, the easy access trail was constructed to provide better access to the Muir House and to separate pedestrian and vehicle uses in the park. The road was retained as a fire lane for maintenance and emergency vehicles and was resurfaced in the late 1980s. Today, the road is approximately eight feet wide and surfaced in asphalt, which is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The fire lane, built in the late 1950s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). The present use of the road as an access route for emergency vehicles makes it a necessary component of the landscape; however, the asphalt surface detracts from the historic character.

#### **Easy access trail**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area of the east slope variously consisted of apple trees, shrubs, and open patches.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* As part of the 1976 GMP goals to eliminate barriers to visitors, the park constructed an accessible pedestrian route from southwest of the Visitor Center to the Muir House via new and existing paths. The new construction portion of the trail consisted of a winding five- foot- wide bituminous walkway along the east slope of the knoll. The route then turned north and used the upper portion of the Woodshed Road and then turned south on to the east driveway to its termination at the wheelchair lift at the house's kitchen door. Construction commenced in 1982 and was completed in 1984. In 1989, the path was repaired. Today, the asphalt trail is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The easy access trail, built in 1982, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). Like the fire lane, the trail is an important aspect of providing access in the park. The trail's asphalt surface, however, detracts from the historic character.

#### **MH: VEGETATION – WEST SLOPE (FIGURE 8.17)**

##### **Row of incense cedars**

*Historic Condition:* Between c.1882 and c.1887, fifteen to twenty incense cedar trees were planted along an arc across the upper west slope of the knoll, just below a large mass of Monterey pine. The trees, along with the pines, were

likely intended to shelter the west side of the Muir House from the hot summer sun and wind or may have been planted to physically and visually separate the house area from the rest of the ranch (Figures 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7). The trees grew quickly, especially those on north and south end of arc and by c.1905 some had reached the height of porch eave on west side and were beginning to meet at their bases (Figures 3.4 and 3.8). By c.1910, some of the trees in the arc were removed to ease overcrowding (Figure 3.15).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Close analysis of the aerial photograph from 1939 reveals that the number of incense cedars had fallen to around a dozen trees. By 1960, the height of some of the trees appeared to reach above the roofline of the Muir House. By 1969, the number of trees had fallen to nine, but all reached up to the roofline and some even topped the height of the cupola. During the NPS period, the trees have been limbed up from the bottom and occasionally pruned. Today, there are nine trees and they are in good to fair condition. The specimen on the south end has a significant lean.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The row of incense cedars, planted c.1882- 1885, contribute to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although a few trees have been lost since the historic period, most have survived. The maturation of the trees is one reason why there is no longer a view between the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe. However, their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

**Lebanon and Atlas cedars**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1898, two true cedars, a Lebanon and an Atlas, were planted on the west slope of the knoll below the row of incense cedars (Figure 3.4). According to a historic photograph from c.1910, both trees grew vigorously, especially the Lebanon cedar that was almost twenty- five feet wide at the base and about as tall as the incense cedars upslope (Figure 3.15).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1939, the two true cedars were part of larger mass of vegetation on the west slope, and by 1969, both were as tall as the roofline of the house. Around this time, the Atlas cedar had been topped, presumably to create a view between the cupola at the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe. Today, these trees are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Lebanon and Atlas cedars, planted by c.1898, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The maturation of the trees is one reason why there is no longer a view between the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe. However, their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

**Black locust (2) along Woodshed Road**

*Historic Condition:* These two trees were originally planted southwest of the Muir House between the Woodshed Road and the southeast farm road and were likely planted in early 1890s. By c.1898, the trees were fifteen to twenty feet tall and twenty to twenty- five feet tall by c.1910 (Figures 3.4 and 3.15).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The post- historic history of the trees is uncertain. They appear as a small mass in the 1939 aerial, but by 1969, only one of the trees was visible in photographs and appeared to be about thirty feet tall. The other tree appeared to be much smaller, indicating the original had been cut and was either replanted or resprouted. Today, the trees are between thirty and forty feet high.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The two black locust trees along the Woodshed Road, originally planted in the early 1890s, contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The current trees were either replanted or resprouted from the originals in this location (Conditions 1 and 2). The character of the trees appears to be similar to that at the end of the historic period (Condition 3).

**Mexican fan palm, coast live oak (4), pomegranate (6), Deodar cedar, Siberian elm, and California fan palm**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. The west slope was mostly grasses or cover crops.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* These trees were planted after the historic period by subsequent owners of the Muir Homestead or by the NPS. Although the history of each plant is not available, records indicate that the Deodar cedar on the northwest slope of the knoll was planted in 1937, and the Mexican fan palm on the southwest slope was planted by 1964. By 1969, the Deodar cedar was as tall as the roofline of the Muir House. Today, these

trees are in good condition and shade much of the west slope, especially at the north end. Most of the west slope is covered in grass.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The Mexican fan palm, coast live oak (4), pomegranate (6), Deodar cedar, Siberian elm, and California fan palm, planted after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). With exception of the Deodar cedar, the trees meet Condition 4 because they are the types of plant material that were present during the historic period. However, they do not meet Condition 5 as most of this area was open land. The presence of the trees combine to block the views from the lower part of the carriage drive- loop up to the Muir House, and from the upper part of the drive westward across the west slope and the agriculture areas beyond.

**MH: VEGETATION – CARRIAGE DRIVE-LOOP (FIGURE 8.18)**

**Giant sequoia**

*Historic Condition:* This tree was planted by Muir and according to Agee’s core analysis dates to 1897. Muir often brought seedlings back from one of his journeys to the Sierra Nevada, and this tree may have hailed from one such excursion. Its location corresponds to a box crate shown in the triangle- shaped island formed by the main farm road, carriage drive- loop, and southeast farm road and protected by a wooden crate (Figures 2.5 and 2.6). The tree itself does not appear in any other photographs from the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* The giant sequoia does not appear in a photograph again until 1969, by which time the height of the tree was equal to that of the roofline of the Muir House. Additional trees were planted in 1972 and 1976, presumably as replacements, but they died. Today, the height of the tree is higher than the house and it is in good condition. Management plans for the tree have focused on avoiding soil compaction and monitoring fungal infections.<sup>8</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The giant sequoia, planted by c.1897, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The growth of the tree conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character. It is also the most significant example of a seedling plant brought back by Muir from his many travels.

**Plantings along north side of drive, from fish pond space to bottom of loop**

*Historic Condition:* The earliest photograph of the carriage drive- loop dates from c.1885 (Figure 2.5). It shows two agave plants at the lower end of the drive next to the fish pond, one of which had a stalk upwards of ten feet tall by c.1898. By c.1910 this lower area featured a linear and dense mass of vegetation and which consisted of an olive and possibly the agaves (Figure 3.15). Another area of plantings was situated at the upper end of the drive and consisted of two California fan palms and a Canary Island palm planted between 1890 and 1906. Between 1906 and 1914, several olives were planted around the palms. Agee cored one of the olives to c.1910 and opined that the other two were likely planted at that time.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1939 aerial, the mass of plants at the lower end appeared as a much smaller mass compared to photographs from the historic period, and included the olive. This olive was visible again in a photograph from 1969. At the upper end, the mass of plants grew and in addition to the olive, Canary Island palm, and two California fan palms included other plants installed by subsequent owners. These additions were later removed or died. Between 1955 and 1964, the Canary Island palm was bent by an impact of some type. Except for the agaves, all of the plants discussed above are present today and appear to be in good condition. The olives are fifteen to twenty feet tall and the three closest to the drive arch over it, while the three palms are twenty to twenty- five feet in height. The only non- historic plant is a pomegranate situated midway up the drive.

*Evaluation: Contributing (four olives, Canary Island date palm, and two California fan palms)*

The four olives, Canary Island date palm, and two California fan palms, planted by 1914, contribute to the significance of the park as character-defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (pomegranate)*

The pomegranate, planted after the historic period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The pomegranate meets Condition 4 because it is a type of plant material that was present during the historic period. However, it does not meet Condition 5 as the middle section of this part of the driveway appeared to be open in historic photographs. The presence of the plant interrupts the view from the driveway into the north orchard and the fish pond space.

**Plantings along south side of drive, from fish pond space to bottom of loop**

*Historic Condition:* According to a c.1910 photograph, the only plant present along the lower end of the driveway was a small arborvitae (Figure 3.15). The reason may be that this area may have been intentionally left open to allow for views up to the Muir House from the drive. However, between 1906 and 1914, a honey mesquite was planted near the upper end of the driveway. This tree appeared to be part of a larger mass in this area.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1939 aerial, a narrow mass of vegetation lined the middle portion of the south side of the drive and included a large and conspicuous dark area that appeared to be too far down the drive to be the mesquite. In the 1969 photograph, the arborvitae appeared to part of a larger mass of trees situated opposite the olive tree. Today, this area is densely vegetated with an almost continuous line of plants that confine views to the road and prevent a good view of the Muir House. The mass is anchored at each end by the historic arborvitae and mesquite, which are about fifteen feet tall, and in between are three tamarisks and three incense cedars that are about the same height. Additional research will be needed to determine the age of these trees.

*Evaluation: Contributing (arborvitae and honey mesquite)*

The arborvitae and honey mesquite, planted by 1914, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The scale, and thus the character, of the trees have changed because of their natural growth.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (three tamarisk and three incense cedars)*

The tamarisks and incense cedars, planted after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The trees meet Condition 4 because they are a type of plant material that was present during the historic period. However, they do not meet Condition 5 as the middle section of this part of the driveway appeared to be open in historic photographs. The presence of the plants interrupts the view from the driveway up the knoll to the Muir House.

**Plantings on east side of loop**

*Historic Condition:* Soon after the Muir House was constructed in 1882 and the carriage drive- loop was established, a variety of roses and possibly

hollyhocks were planted along the eastern edge. These plants, along with a two- and three- board wood fence, presumably acted as a physical barrier between the driveway and relatively steep eastern slope of the knoll.

Photographs suggest they formed a continuous mass and ranged in height from three to six feet (Figures 3.6 and 3.7). This would have allowed partial views over the shrubs to the north and east.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The mass of roses on the east side clearly appear in the 1939 aerial, while the west side was comparatively barren of plants. Today, the types of plantings along the east side of the loop has changed and now features two elderberry that are about ten feet tall and a coast live oak and California white oak that are fifteen to twenty feet tall. They combine to partially block views from the loop to the north and east.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The plantings on the east side of the loop, installed after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The types of plants do not meet either Condition 4 or 5 because the types of vegetation and the locations are not historic. The presence of the plantings interrupts the view from the loop to the north and east.

#### **Plantings on west side of loop**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1914, the west side of the carriage drive- loop was defined by a mass of ice plant and other low shrubs and fruit trees, one of which may have been an elderberry (Figure 3.17). The low height of the plants likely allowed for good views across and down the west slope of the knoll and toward Mt. Wanda.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1939 aerial, compared to the east side of the loop, the west side was comparatively barren of plants. Today, species along the west side of the loop now include a ten- foot tall pomegranate at the lower end, and three to four- foot- high rose, quince, and common lilacs. These low plants allow partial views into the west slope area.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

The significance of these plantings has not been determined. Although their locations and heights appear to meet Condition 5 as a compatible resource, the identification of plants as required in Condition 4 cannot be discerned from the historic photographs.



**Plantings in center island**

*Historic Condition:* The tear- drop- shaped center island space was created in c.1882 when the carriage drive- loop was completed. It began to take a defined shape early on with scattered plantings of roses and possibly ice plant around the lower outside edge and two quinces up towards the top. The recollections of Mrs. Firth- Thomas of this space full of flowers is confirmed in a photograph from c.1900- 1905 that shows the island thick with roses, ice plant, and possibly petunias (Figure 3.7). Another picture from c.1914 shows the space bordered with ice plant and lush with roses, quince, and possibly a young California bay (Figure 3.17).<sup>19</sup> Although Helen Muir remembered this area included an orange tree, large white lilacs, blue lilac, large rose verbena, five to six- foot- high tea roses (may also have been hybrid tea roses), and flowering pomegranate, the latter of which was also recalled by Mr. Figuerado. By this time, the height of the plants, except for the California bay, allowed for views across the island.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are few views of the island space after the historic period. A photograph from 1923 shows part of the upper portion of the space as mostly grass, and in the 1939 aerial only three separate masses were visible. The Kreiss family replanted the area with roses, and a few of them are visible in a photograph from c.1955- 1960 as well as part of the California bay that appears to be growing well and is even taller in a picture from 1966. The 1968/69 Historic Planting Plan proposed some of the plants recalled by Helen – namely lilacs and roses – as well as quince, viburnum, lavender, geranium, agave bordered by a mass of ice plant. It is not clear how much of the plan was implemented, but park records indicate that the ice plant was installed and then lost in the 1972 freeze. The California bay was core tested in 1978 by James K. Agee, but due to stem rot prior to the 1950s was only able to conclude that it was potentially historic.<sup>20</sup> Sometime during the NPS period, the extreme upper portion of the island was paved to accommodate the turning radius of emergency vehicles. In 1996, more roses were planted by the Master Gardeners at the lower east side and today they are thriving. The lower west side is bordered by three five- foot- high flowering quince and an agave is growing at the lower tip. The upper portion of the space is grass except for a five- foot- tall pomegranate on the west side and the large California bay towards the east, which is upwards of fifty feet tall.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (roses, pomegranate, and quince)*

The roses, pomegranate, and quince, planted after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, the plants satisfy Condition 4 because they are a type of plant material that was present during the historic period. They also meet Condition 5 because they are situated in the same general location in the island. Concerning Condition 6, the forms of the plants today appear to be consistent with the forms during the historic period, although the vantages of the historic photographs make this determination somewhat problematic.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (agave and lawn)*

The agave and the lawn, planted after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). The agave does not appear in historic photographs and was not recalled by any family members or former ranch employees. The island appeared to be mostly shrubs during the historic period with little open space for lawn.

*Evaluation: Undetermined (California bay)*

Research has been inconclusive as to the age of this tree and additional testing will need to be undertaken. The tree now blocks views to and from the front of the Muir House.

**MH: VEGETATION – EAST SLOPE (FIGURE 8.19)****Incense cedar (3), coast redwood, pomegranate, California white oak (6), English walnut, and vinca**

*Historic Condition:* As shown in photographs from c.1900- 1905, the southern half of this area, from opposite the conservatory of the Muir House and south, was the upper extent of an apple orchard and other unidentifiable trees and shrubs of about the same height (Figures 3.6 and 3.7). The northern half of this area, from the conservatory and north, was more open with scattered small trees and shrubs which cannot be readily identified.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1939, this area featured part of a larger mass of vegetation stretching from the loop portion of the carriage drive- loop to the east side of the Muir House. In 1982, the easy access trail was constructed along the slope and the hillside above was planted with ice plant, which subsequently died in a prolonged drought that began in 1989. In 1998, three incense cedars trees were planted next to the fire road to honor

Frank Bray, Wakefield Taylor, and John Davis – founding members of the John Muir Memorial Association. Today, only two remain and are about three feet tall. Other plants along the slope include a small coast redwood next to the fire road and scattered plantings upslope from the path that include pomegranate and California white oak as well as incense cedar and English walnut which are approximately thirty feet tall. Except for a grass area near the fire road, most of the hillside is planted with vinca.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (Two small incense cedars next to fire lane)*

The two small incense cedars next to fire lane, installed after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although the plants meet Condition 4, they are not known to exist in this area of the slope and thus do not meet Condition 5. The trees were planted here to commemorate members of the John Muir Memorial Association.

*Evaluation: Undetermined (Incense cedar, coast redwood, pomegranate, California white oak (6), English walnut, and vinca)*

The significance of these plantings has not been determined because of the absence of reliable documentation.

#### **MH: VEGETATION – NORTH SIDE (FIGURE 8.20)**

##### **Shrubs, front steps and walk**

*Historic Condition:* Historic photographs from c.1886, c.1890s, and c.1914 suggest that a low hedge was planted on either side of the front walk, in a line parallel to the top of the carriage drive- loop. However, the vantage point is too far away to definitively conclude what was present. Such plants do appear to be growing on either side of the front walk closer to the house, however. Cordyline trees were planted on either side of the front steps next to the carriage drive- loop and roses were grown alongside the walkway. By c.1914, one or both of the cordylines reached up to the height of the second floor windows. In a 1958 interview, Helen Muir recalled pink poppies and cordylines along the front walk, near the steps.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* According to a c.1923 photograph, the hedge was removed and replaced with several randomly placed rose shrubs as well as two firethorns flanking the steps. Only the west cordyline tree remained and was as high as the roofline, and by c.1955- 1960 it was no longer present. A c.1955- 1960 photograph shows that the roses and firethorns were about four to five feet tall. In 1968/69, the Historic Landscape Plan proposed

a planting of pink poppy along the steps, but it is unclear if they were installed. Today, the roses and firethorns have been replaced with a small rose shrub situated within a small bed of vinca on the east side of the steps. It is unclear when the roses were removed.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Historic photographs are somewhat inconclusive regarding the plantings in this area. The single shrub there today, nor the vinca beds, do not represent this missing feature.

#### **Lawn areas, north side**

*Historic Condition:* Historic photographs from the c.1890 and from c.1914 show a Monterey pine in the northeast lawn area. By c.1914, the tree was as tall as the cupola of the house and the trunk was thick with Banksia rose.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* According to a c.1923 photograph, the Monterey pine was showing signs of decline. The pine was removed by 1939. It is not known when the area was planted with grass.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

The significance of the lawn area on the north side of the Muir House has not been determined. A major tree that was present has been lost, but beyond the shrubs along the walkway there is little detail regarding what was planted on the ground.

#### **MH: VEGETATION – EAST SIDE (FIGURE 8.21)**

##### **Mourning cypress**

*Historic Condition:* Agee's core analysis dated the mourning cypress, situated at the junction of the east driveway and the Woodshed Road, to c.1909. It became part of a large mass of other trees on this part of the knoll.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The cypress is first visible in a photograph from c.1966 and appeared equal the height of the eaves of the Muir House. In 1982, the adjacent paths were paved for the easy access trail route. In 1998, the lower branches of the tree were pruned because they were obstructing the paths. The height of the tree today is about the same as in 1966, although it continues to droop and has a severe lean to the south.<sup>21</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The mourning cypress, planted c.1909, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849-

1914). The growth of the tree conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character, but the integrity of the tree may decline in the future if the lean becomes too pronounced.

### **Common myrtle**

*Historic Condition:* The common myrtle was located near the southeast corner of the Muir House, and according to Agee's analysis in 1978 may have been planted c.1910, although the growth rings were too indistinct to count. Mr. Figuerado also recalled the tree and it was apparently mentioned in one of Helen's diary entries.<sup>22</sup>

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The tree was inadvertently killed by a contractor in 1997 during installation of a water main. A new plant was installed in 1998 and is about two feet tall today.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The common myrtle, replanted in 1998, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, the plant meets Conditions 4 and 5 because it is the same type of plant used in this general location at the end of the historic period. The plant is too young to be evaluated in terms of Condition 6.

### **Oregon white oak**

*Historic Condition:* This tree was planted, or perhaps grew from seed, east of the Woodshed along the bottom of the stone and brick retaining wall. According to Agee's core analysis, it dates to c.1910. The tree became part of a large mass of vegetation in this area.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* When the Carriage House was relocated to this area in the late 1930s, it was placed above the retaining wall and within a few feet of the tree. A photograph from 1966 shows this close proximity and the growth of the tree, which by this time was as tall as the cupola on the Muir House. Today, it is one of the largest and tallest on the knoll and shades most of the east side of the house.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Oregon white oak, dating from c.1910, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The growth of the tree conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

**Strawberry tree**

*Historic Condition:* Unknown.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* This strawberry tree, situated in the southeast lawn, was remembered by Jose Figuerado in a 1967/68 interview as being the same size it was in 1914. In Portugal, this tree was called a madrone and was identified as such on the 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan.<sup>23</sup> The tree was not cored by Agee in 1978.

*Evaluation:* *Undetermined*

There is no photographic documentation of this tree from the historic period.

**California black walnut, loquat, deutzia, geranium, iris, and beds of vinca**

*Historic Condition:* Unknown.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A California black walnut is located above the stone steps in the retaining wall. The loquat is situated between the Woodshed Road and the east driveway, amongst a bed of vinca and stretches from the mourning cypress to the common myrtle. A narrow bed of iris is situated along the west edge of the east driveway and alongside a row of cobbles and stones. Just west of the cobbles, in a grass lawn area, is a deutzia and a small planting of geraniums.

*Evaluation:* *Undetermined*

There is no detailed photographic documentation of this area from the historic period. Some of these plants may have been part of the mass of vegetation that appears in this area in historic photographs.

**Lawn area, east side**

*Historic Condition:* Between 1882 and c.1890, a windmill palm was planted on the east side of the Muir House. A photograph from c.1914 shows that the top of the tree was about as high as the bottom of the house's second floor window. For a time, there was a wood cistern on the northeast side of the house, but it was apparently removed by c.1900- 1905, possibly after the water tank was built in the rear addition of the house. It is possible that this area was not heavily planted because of the presence of the cistern and the east driveway that lead to the Woodshed.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A photograph from c.1923 shows the palm reached the roofline of the house at this time. It was removed

sometime between 1923 and c.1955- 1960. Today, this space is maintained as a lawn.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Other than the features noted above, there are no other photographs that show conditions in the remainder of this area.

### **Victorian flower garden**

*Historic Condition:* This area appears to have been shaded by a large mass of deciduous trees that appear to have a form and character much like the Oregon white oak to the north (Figures 3.4, 3.8, and 3.14).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In 1984, the Muir Garden Club purchased plants for a new Victorian flower garden on the southeast side of the Muir House in a wedge formed by two paths that descended from the Muir House to the Woodshed Road. The garden was likely constructed to improve this part of the park since the removal of the Carriage House had opened up the area and the new easy access trail was bringing more visitors to this part of the park. In 1996, the garden was replanted by the Master Gardeners.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The Victorian flower garden, installed in 1984 and replanted in 1996, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historical record of a flower garden in this area.

### **MH: VEGETATION – SOUTH SIDE (FIGURE 8.22)**

#### **Herb garden**

*Historic Condition:* Beginning in c.1887, the large flat area just south of the Muir House was separated from the dry yard on the south slope of the knoll by a hedge. In c.1890, the new addition on the back of the house reduced the size of this area. By c.1898 the dry yard and hedge were removed and the flat area and possibly part of the slope became part of a larger herb or vegetable garden. Although the exact configuration of the garden is not known, protection from the wind and the western sun offered by the conifers to the west as well as its southern orientation would have proven ideal for such a feature in this location. A letter from Louie to John in 1895 references corn, watermelon, and beans and Helen Muir recalled herbs as well as limes and loquats “in back.”

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The fate of the garden after Muir's death is not known. The park's 1965 Master Plan recommended restoration of a herb garden in this area, and the 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed a variety of herbs in three beds in the flat area, separated from the hillside below by a row of lime and loquat trees. The only reference in park files regarding the herb garden dates to 1988, when a small herb garden was planted. Today, a small and somewhat overgrown herb garden is situated on the south side of the Muir House alongside the walkway. Its configuration is similar to the one proposed in the 1968/69 plan.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The herb garden, replanted in 1988, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). The herb garden was part of a larger vegetable garden but there is no information regarding its location or configuration other than being in this area of the knoll. Regrettably, there is simply not enough detailed historical information to support the current design of this feature.

### **Matilija poppy**

*Historic Condition:* According to research by Steve Pauley, Matilija poppy was a popular plant during this time. Mr. Figuerado recalled that this area and the west slope was full of these plants with areas of grass in between.<sup>24</sup> The plants were also recalled by Helen Muir in the 1958 interview.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1990s, Matilija poppies were planted by Master Gardeners of University of California Extension Service. Today, one small plant is situated on the south side of the house, southwest of the herb garden.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The Matilija poppy, replanted in the 1990s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). However, the plant meets Conditions 4 and 5 because the type and location of the poppy is consistent with the historic period. Condition 6, which refers to management of the plant's form, is more difficult to evaluate as there are no detailed historic photographs available of the plant.



**Loquat, lemon, sweetbay, and apricot**

*Historic Condition:* In Helen Muir's 1958 interview, she remembered loquats on the back, or south, side of the Muir House.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* These trees are south of the house on the knoll. The sweetbay was planted in 1996. The loquat is about twenty feet tall but has not been dated. There is no information available on the lemon or apricot.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

There is not enough detailed historical information to evaluate the significance of these plants.

**MH: VEGETATION – WEST SIDE (FIGURE 8.23)****Lawn area, west side**

*Historic Condition:* Soon after the Muir House was constructed in 1882, a mass of twenty or more Monterey pines was planted on the west side of the building and were likely intended to provide shelter from the wind and the western sun. The trees lived up to their fast- growing characteristic and grew vigorously, and by c.1898 some of the trees exceeded the height of the house's eave while others were removed to give them room. By c.1910, additional pines were cut, probably to admit more light into the house (and scribble den, especially) and to ease crowding into the row of incense cedars just downslope. Historic photographs suggest the pines were replaced with grass or cover crops. There was a particularly healthy specimen northwest of house, which appears in early photographs. Another tree, a Monterey cypress, was situated on the southwest side of the house. It was cut by c.1915.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Additional Monterey pines were cut soon after the historic period, and most appeared to be gone in the 1939 aerial. A photograph from 1960 shows a view across a panel of lawn, and this space has been maintained as lawn since that time. An apple tree is located at the southern end of the lawn space. This tree is about ten feet tall and is a grafted tree with scionwood taken from an apple tree dating to 1859. It was obtained from a historic orchard at Yosemite National Park in 1998.<sup>25</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The lawn area on the west side of the Muir House, present during the historic period, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). During the historic period, this area was planted with varying numbers of Monterey pine as well

as a cypress. As the nearby incense trees grew, the pines and cypress were removed and the area was planted with grass or cover crop.

#### **Privet hedge**

*Historic Condition:* Unknown.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1960, a Japanese privet hedge and a pomegranate were situated on the southwest side of the house. The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed additional plantings in this area that included plantings of toyon, oleander, Spanish broom, Matilija poppy and geraniums. The Japanese privets were apparently removed in 1987 and ten common privet were planted on the southwest side of the house opposite the basement door in 1999.<sup>46</sup> Today, the L- shaped hedge is four to five feet tall.

*Evaluation:* Non- contributing – Incompatible

The privet hedge, planted in 1999, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). There is no historic information regarding the presence of this feature in this location.

#### **MH: VEGETATION – FOUNDATION PLANTINGS (FIGURES 8.20 TO 8.23)**

##### **California fan palms (2), north beds**

*Historic Condition:* Soon after the Muir House was constructed in 1882, two California fan palms were planted in the foundation beds flanking the front door. By c.1914, the east specimen reached the top of the second floor window, while the west specimen was slightly shorter and probably partially blocked Muir's view to the north from his scribble den.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1923, the east specimen was as tall as the roofline and the west tree reached the top of the second floor window. By the late 1950s, the east tree was as high as the cupola and the west specimen was just above the roofline. The trees had taken on a rather shaggy appearance by this time, but by 1966 were pruned by the NPS and have been regularly maintained since because of their location in a pedestrian area. Today, the trees both tower over the house.

*Evaluation:* Contributing

The two California fan palms, planted c.1882, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Due to their location at the front of the Muir House, these trees

convey the passage of time and add to the historic character perhaps more than any other vegetation feature in the park.

#### **Lemon, east bed**

*Historic Condition:* A lemon tree was planted next to the east side conservatory in the late 1880s on east side of house near the porch entrance. The tree is visible in a photograph from c.1890 and appears to be about five feet tall. The lemon tree was also remembered by Helen Muir.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The tree is visible again in a c.1923 photograph but is difficult to locate in a c.1955- 1960 picture. Lemons in the park were damaged in freezes in 1972, 1990, and 1998. In 1985, this tree collapsed and was replaced in- kind.<sup>27</sup> Today, it is about four feet tall.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The lemon tree, replanted in 1985, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The type of tree was planted in this general location during the historic period, thus satisfying Conditions 4 and 5. The form of the tree also appears to meet the requirements of Condition 6.

#### **Canary Island date palm, east bed**

*Historic Condition:* This unique tree was planted between 1882 and 1890 at the southeast side of the house, near the kitchen door and woodshed area. The plant grew vigorously, and by c.1905 the fronds reached the top of the second floor windows. By c.1910, the tree was almost as high as the eave.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By the late 1950s, the tree rose above the roofline and by 1966 was almost as high as the cupola. In the 1990s, the tree was regularly pruned to protect visitors, and today it reaches above the cupola.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Canary Island date- palm, planted between 1882 and 1890, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The growth of the tree conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

**Orange tree, west bed**

*Historic Condition:* In recollections of plants around the Muir House, Helen Muir recalled an orange tree on the west side.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan showed an orange tree in the southwest planting bed, but it is not known if this was an existing plant or a proposed plant. Today, this tree is about fifteen feet tall.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research needs to be completed to determine the history of this plant in this location.

**Plants, northeast and northwest beds**

*Historic Condition:* In the 1958 interview, Helen Muir shared her memories of plantings around the Muir House. Plants under the west parlor window (those in the northwest foundation bed) included camellia and white rose. Plants under the east parlor window and the east front (those in the northeast bed) included violets, forget- me- nots, heliotrope, clump roses, chrysanthemums, and lilies around the palm trees. Unfortunately, the historic photographs do not capture views of the plantings next to the house.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By c.1955- 1960, two arborvitae had been planted on either side of the front porch steps and were four to five feet tall. By 1966, they had been pruned back and in 2000 were removed. In addition to the existing arborvitae, the 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed juniper, scotch broom, and English ivy in the foundation beds flanking the front porch steps. Plantings of callalilly, camellia, violets, heliotrope, chrysanthemums, and forget- me- nots were also proposed, which gestured to Helen's recollections. It is not clear how many of the plants were installed. None of the plants in the beds today – shore juniper, chasmanthe, and vinca – are consistent with Helen's plant list or the 1968/69 plan.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The plantings in the northeast and northwest foundation beds at the Muir House, planted by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). During the historic period, according to Muir's daughter Helen, these areas were full of many flowering plants. The species present today are different

and evoke a different character than what was present toward the end of the historic period.

#### **Plants, east beds**

*Historic Condition:* Helen Muir recalled plantings of carnations, Canterbury bells, and honeysuckle in this area she described as the east side of the house.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed the three types of plants remembered by Helen Muir as well as camellias, white trumpet lily, and English ivy. Today, this area includes Oregon grape holly planted in 1996, common calla, Chinese wisteria, and vinca. None of the species is consistent with those remembered by Helen.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The plantings in the east foundation beds at the Muir House, installed by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). During the historic period, according to Muir’s daughter, these areas were full of many flowering plants. The species present today are different and evoke a different character than what was present toward the end of the historic period.

#### **Plants, west beds**

*Historic Condition:* Recollections of this area variously described as the west side, west porch, and west front by Helen Muir included plantings of lavender, amaryllis, bridal wreath spiraea, callas, geraniums, gladiolas, Matilija poppy, double wisteria, double Cherokee roses (Lady Banksia) and other roses, chrysanthemums, and “something like ice plant... along walk.”<sup>28</sup>

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed some of the plants remembered by Helen Muir: bridal wreath spiraea, geraniums, gladiolus, wisteria, and roses. The plan also proposed salvia, English lavender, sweet pea. Today, this area features only two types plants remembered by Helen, in the form of a Banksia rose and Chinese wisteria. Other plants present now include chasmanthe.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The plantings in the west foundation beds at the Muir House, installed by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Most of the types of plants present today are consistent with Helen’s remembrances of this area, even though the exact locations are not known. Thus, Conditions 4 and 5 are

satisfied. An evaluation of the form of the plants, as required in Condition 6, is not possible due to the lack of historic photographic documentation of this area.

**MH: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.24)**

**Muir House (LCS #000742)**

*Historic Condition:* The fourteen- room, two- story Italianate house was constructed on top of a knoll overlooking the Alhambra Valley in 1882 for Dr. John Strentzel, John Muir's father- in- law. After Strentzel died in 1890, Muir and his family moved into the house to take care of Mrs. Strentzel. Muir had retired as ranch manager around this time to devote more time to writing and traveling, and converted the second floor bedroom into his 'scribble den.' From here, he penned many of his most important articles and books for the balance of his life. The most significant exterior changes to the house occurred in 1891 when a three- story addition was added to the back to house a water tank, in 1893 when the house was painted a light soft gray, and in 1906 when the some of the fireplaces were destroyed in the earthquake, especially on the east side of the house. Muir rebuilt the fireplace in the east parlor as a massive Spanish- style structure so he could enjoy a "real mountain campfire." His wife Louie died in 1905, and although Muir was occasionally joined in the house by his grown daughters, he more or less had the rambling house to himself when not away on travel. Just before his death in 1914, Muir renovated the house with hopes that he could convince his daughters to live there again. New paint, carpets, and even electricity were added at that time.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* After Muir's death, the house and 4.83- acre Muir Homestead were variously owned by his daughters and other parties until 1921 when it was purchased by the Curry family. The house was painted and initially maintained until Mr. Curry died and the building fell into disrepair. In 1937, the Kreiss family bought the property after several years of renting the house and made repairs, which coincided with its designation as a California Registered Historic Landmark in 1939. In 1955, the Sax family bought the house, which had been vacant for about two years and vandalized, and embarked on a multi- year project of restoring the building to its appearance in 1900. Among the improvements were new windows, furnace heat, and wiring; repairs to the roof and gutters; and a new exterior color scheme with the "exact chemical composition of the original paint." When acquired by the NPS in 1964, the park made plans to restore the building to the 1906- 1914 period so that visitors could see an "accurate portrayal of the environment in which Muir did his most productive work."

Exterior projects completed during this period included repainting in 1969, 1978, 1982, and 1998- 2000; installation of underground utilities in 1967; a new roof and foundation stabilization in 1969; installation of a chair lift on the east side in 1978; and new underground gutter drains on the east side in 1983. The interior of the house was addressed with a revised “Historic Furnishings Plan” in 1982. The main part of the Muir House measures forty- two feet by forty feet with porches and additions on all sides. The gabled metal roof is topped with a gabled four- sided cupola and there is a full daylight basement. The wood frame structure is clad in beveled channel wood siding and quoins and features double hung wood windows, bay windows, and bracketed eaves (the lower portion of the rear addition is brick).<sup>29</sup> The siding and roof are painted a smoke white and the trim is painted country red, a scheme that Wanda mentioned in a letter to her father in 1893.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Muir House, constructed in 1882 and altered in 1906, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining building of the historic period (1849- 1914). The building is the most significant and most visited structure in the park. The exterior of the building remains intact since the end of the historic period. Numerous rehabilitation projects have occurred since the park assumed ownership, the latest of which involved extensive exterior rehabilitations completed in 1998- 2000.

**Stone/brick wall and stone steps, southeast of Muir House**

*Historic Condition:* The wall and steps were situated southeast of the Muir House. Although there are no historic photographs that show details of this structure. However, the slope on this part of the knoll would likely have required such a retaining structure in order to create a level area for the Woodshed, which was in place by c.1887, and the Woodshed Road, which according to historic photographs was present by c.1898. The stone steps within the wall were likely constructed at the same time to connect to a path that lead to the addition built at the back of the house in 1891. The brick section of wall just to the north closely matches the exterior bricks in the addition. It may have been built when the addition was constructed or when the stone wall was built.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A photograph from 1966, the first detailed view of the wall, showed the stone section in poor condition with some sections missing. At this time, the Carriage House was situated directly over the brick portion of the wall and a large Oregon white oak was growing

at the base of the wall between the brick section and stone section. The steps and stone wall were repaired when the Victorian garden was replanted in 1996. Today, the brick section of wall appears to be in good condition, but the stone wall and stone steps are in poor condition, and as a result the path leading up to the house has been closed to visitors. The tops and portions of the faces of both walls are covered with a dense mass of vinca.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The stone/brick wall and steps, likely constructed by c.1887, contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic structures of the historic period (1849- 1914). Repairs were made to the stone section of the wall and stone steps in 1996, but both are currently in poor condition; the steps are closed to visitors. Despite these conditions, however, they still evoke the historic character.

**Carriage House (LCS #000744)**

*Historic Condition:* The one- story Carriage House was constructed c.1891 at the southeast corner of fish pond space, next to the junction of the main farm road, southeast farm road, and carriage drive- loop. Two large doors on the south side opened up to the roads. By c.1910, a small flat- roofed addition was added to the west side of the structure; its purpose may have been related to irrigation as historic photographs show a cistern and a pipe nearby.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1939, the Kreiss family relocated the Carriage House to the east side of the Muir House, which possibly displaced the Woodshed. Its move may have been prompted by a flood in 1937.

Although the park's goal was to return the structure to its historic location for use as an exhibit space and rest area, the park modified the structure for use as a maintenance building, replacing the wooden shingles with a sheet metal roof and the large doors at the south gable end with a solid wall.<sup>30</sup> In 1983, the Carriage House was relocated to its original location and partially reconstructed with some of the original materials. In 1987, trenching work for a new electric line was completed and in 1993 an accessible wood plank ramp was installed in the front.<sup>31</sup> The wood frame structure measures eighteen feet by twenty feet and features a gabled roof with wood shingles and a louvered vent, horizontal channel siding with corner boards, four wood sash windows, and two sliding and folding wood doors. A small lean-to addition is attached to the west side. The entire structure rests on brick piers, and is connected to the adjacent roads by a broad wood plank ramp fashioned with a pipe handrail on the east side.<sup>32</sup> The Carriage House is



painted a soft gray, the same color as the Muir House, and contributes to the historic character.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Carriage House, constructed c.1891 and altered by c.1910, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The structure was moved in the late 1930s, then returned to its original site and partially reconstructed by the park in 1983. The addition of the access ramp is compatible, and overall the structure evokes the historic character of the Strentzel- Muir Ranch.

## **MARTINEZ ADOBE AREA – (MA)**

### **MA: CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.25)**

#### **Driveway, east side of Martinez Adobe**

*Historic Condition:* The driveway area was situated on the east side of the Martinez Adobe and connected to the main farm road. It likely served as an earthen or gravel surfaced work area when the adobe was a ranch headquarters and storage area after 1874, prior to conversion into a residence by the Hannas in 1906. The width of the driveway and the extent to which it extended south from the main farm road is not known.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* In the 1930s, Daniel Parsowith transformed this area into a defined loop driveway to connect a garage/shed southeast of the adobe to the main farm road. By c.1968, the loop portion of the driveway was abandoned but the section closest to the adobe was apparently retained. In the late 1980s, the park leveled and asphalted some of the roadways around the Martinez Adobe, which presumably included this driveway. Today, the driveway is approximately eight feet wide and is surfaced in asphalt from the main farm road to the front steps and then gravel from the steps to the site of a recently removed shed southeast of the building. The asphalt portion is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The driveway on the east side of the Martinez Adobe, likely developed between 1874 and 1906, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The character of the driveway diminished in the 1930s when it was expanded into a loop and again in the 1980s when it was paved.

**Patio, west side of Martinez Adobe**

*Historic Condition:* During the historic period, the Cookhouse was situated in this area. In c.1910, the Cookhouse was moved and Tom Hanna converted this area into a driveway.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* This area continued to be used as a driveway until the 1930s when Daniel Parsowith converted it into a patio surrounded by low brick walls. In 1989, the park removed a portion of the wall on the north side to build an accessible path from the patio to the main farm road. On the west side is a set of steps leading to the Ramada. The brick patio was rebuilt in 1998 and enlarged when the west wall was moved five feet to the west. The patio measures approximately twelve feet by forty feet and is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The patio on the west side of the Martinez Adobe, constructed in the 1930s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). This area was used as a driveway during the historic period and was transformed into a patio in the 1930s. It was expanded in the 1998.

**Paths around Martinez Adobe and Ramada**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* In the 1930s, Daniel Parsowith constructed an 18”- wide red- tinted concrete walk on the north side of the Martinez Adobe, leading from the rear patio to a new concrete walk along the edge of the loop driveway in front. The front walkway was about half a foot higher than the driveway. By 1960, the front walk was lined with bricks along the planting beds. A portion of the front walk was damaged in 1976 during repairs of a sewer rupture and a segment of the north walk was removed in 1989 for a new accessible path at the patio area. By the early 1990s, a short path was set out from the Ramada to a new pedestrian gate at the west fence. It is not known when the paths were constructed on the south and west sides of the adobe. By 1998, all of the concrete walks were removed and replaced with paths surfaced with decomposed granite. Today, the paths are variously comprised of compacted earth and granite, some of which are contained by a flexible Trex border. They are between four and five feet wide and include several one- foot square drains slightly below grade where topography dictates.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The paths around the Martinez Adobe and the Ramada, originally developed in the 1930s, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The current path design and materials were installed in 1998 and are compatible with the historic character.

**MA: VEGETATION – WEST BOUNDARY (FIGURE 8.26)****Cherokee rose**

*Historic Condition:* In the early 1890s, Muir planted three dozen Cherokee roses along the fence that bordered Franklin Canyon Road and commented that he knew of no other investment that could give such delightful dividends of beauty at so cheap and pleasant a price.<sup>33</sup> The exact locations of the plants are not known.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the late 1980s, the park planted a mass of Cherokee rose along the west fence. Today, one plant remains and is about four feet tall.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The Cherokee rose, installed by the NPS, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although no longer a mass of plants, the remaining specimen satisfies Conditions 4 and 5; it is the same species and is in the same general location as during the historic period. There is not enough documentation from the historic period to evaluate the plant in terms of Condition 6.

**Pittosporum, rose, sage, coast redwood, western redbud, dwarf coyote brush, and incense cedar**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Numerous plantings were installed in 1998 along the south and west boundaries. In this specific area, five false holly were planted along with western redbuds around oil valve easement area. Today, some of the redbuds remain and are about as tall as the fence. They are joined by plantings of rose, sage, dwarf coyote brush, and pittosporum. A coast redwood is situated next to the pedestrian gate and is over fifty feet tall, but the history of this tree is not known. Several seedling incense cedars are situated along the oil valve fence.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The pittosporum, rose, sage, coast redwood, western redbud, dwarf coyote brush, and incense cedar, installed by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**MA: VEGETATION – NORTH SIDE (FIGURE 8.27)****North side area**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1885, the north side of the Martinez Adobe was shaded by a black locust tree approximately fifty feet tall. The tall tree was apparently removed by c.1905, at which time an unidentified shrub was planted along the north foundation. The shrub was probably removed when the north wall and chimney were repaired following the 1906 earthquake.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By c.1945, a tall deciduous shade tree, possibly another black locust, was once again growing on the north side of the adobe and appeared to be as tall as the locust trees in front. By the early 1960s, photographs suggest there were even more trees on the north side. In 1972, a Douglas fir was planted in this area as part of a memorial to Basil Winslow. Today, the Douglas fir towers over the north side of the house and casts dense shade over a twenty- foot- tall elderberry on the east side and a small patch of perennials on the west, next to the path. Additional research will be needed to determine the age of the elderberry.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The plantings on the north side of the Martinez Adobe, introduced during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**MA: VEGETATION – EAST SIDE (FIGURE 8.28)****East side area**

*Historic Condition:* During the Strentzel- Muir Ranch period, the Martinez Adobe was used initially as a storehouse and ranch headquarters as then as a residence. Although the front of the building was probably a workyard, a historic photograph from c.1885 shows some type of fruit tree in front, possibly the pomegranate remembered by Mrs. Firth- Thomas, who lived in the Bunkhouse southwest of the building from 1894- 1897. The only detailed photograph of the front of the building dates from c.1912- 1913 and shows a

fruit tree near the southeast corner, and one of the three black locust trees (remembered by Jose Figuerado) surrounded by a mass of shrubs and flowers. The area was probably quite shady because of the tall locust trees. Mr. Figuerado also remembered a redwood tree to the southeast and a pine to the northeast.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Between 1915 and 1917, a renter named Greerty remembered the front of the adobe was heavily shaded by the three black locust trees, and that one of them was taken out around that time. The two remaining locust trees appeared as a dense mass in the 1939 aerial, and around this time a Monterey pine was planted to the southeast. By c.1945, the two black locust trees towered over the adobe and over a landscape understory of shrubs and fruit trees that filled the center island of a small loop driveway developed in the 1930s by Daniel Parsowith. A c.1945 photograph also showed a tall conifer to the northeast reaching as high as the roofline. By 1963, the two locust trees and the conifer to the northeast were gone and replaced with fruit trees, one of which was a walnut. Most of the earlier masses of flowers and shrubs were gone, and in their place was grass. In the late 1960s, the eastern half of the loop was abandoned and the former island area was replanted with lilac, mockorange, as well as two Colorado blue spruce and a white spruce planted as a memorial to Basil Winslow. This area was flanked by the walnut and Monterey pine until 1976 when the pine was removed for repairs to a broken sewer line. The following year, an application of “Vikane” killed many of the shrubs around the adobe, and the superintendent’s report for that year noted the plants would be replaced with “historic” specimens. By 1989, cuttings and donations were used to replant the area with rose, mock orange, lilac, and many flowers. Around this time, park management raised concerns about the placement of memorial spruces and their impact on the view to the Muir House. Today, the three spruce trees are upwards of thirty feet tall and surrounded by a grass lawn. Just south of the line of spruces is a thirty- foot- tall Sitka spruce, a fifty- foot- tall coast redwood, and a quince. The dates of these plants are not known.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The plantings on the east side of the Martinez Adobe, introduced during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area. The most significant missing feature is the black locust trees that historically shaded the front of the building; the area is considerably more open today. Additionally, the presence of the

memorial spruces does not evoke the historic character and blocks the views from the adobe eastward.

**MA: VEGETATION – WEST SIDE (FIGURE 8.29)**

**West side area**

*Historic Condition:* Historic photographs show a progression of growth in the mass of cypress or pines on the west side of the Martinez Adobe. Some of the trees may have been planted by Thomas Redfern prior to Dr. Strentzel's purchase of the property. By c.1885, the mass of trees was approximately thirty- five feet tall, just above roofline of the building. By c.1905, the trees towered over the building and were probably well over seventy- five feet high. Some of the trees were visible in a c.1912- 1913 picture at about the same height. Although it is possible some of the trees were removed when Tom Hanna installed a driveway, this area was likely still heavily shaded at this time. Historic photographs also suggest the southern half of this area was planted with fruit trees, but what kind they are is difficult to determine.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The mass of cypress or pines was likely thinned in the 1930s around the time Daniel Parsowith constructed the patio, walk, and ramada in this area. In 1944, a Monterey pine was planted northwest of the adobe, next to main farm road. A 1963 photograph shows that most of the tall trees behind the adobe had been removed except for one large mass at the south end. Two other photographs, from 1967, show the west side of the building included walnuts, wisteria on the ramada, and a large deciduous tree along Franklin Canyon Road. Today, the north end of this area is dominated by the Monterey pine, which is over 100' tall and is pushing up the asphalt along the main farm road. Nearby, next to the Ramada, is an English walnut and an American dogwood planted in 1998. Most of the west side is maintained as an open lawn except for directly under the trees.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (Monterey pine)*

The Monterey pine on the west side of the Martinez Adobe, planted in 1944, does not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). During the historic period, this area was heavily shaded by pines or cypress, although the exact species are not known. The tree satisfies Conditions 4 and 5.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (English walnut, wisteria, and American dogwood)*

The English walnut, wisteria, and American dogwood, introduced after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). During the historic period, this area was heavily shaded by pines or cypress. There is no historical information mentioning these types of trees in this area.

**MA: VEGETATION – FOUNDATION PLANTINGS (FIGURES 8.27 TO 8.29)**

**Foundation, Martinez Adobe**

*Historic Condition:* Between 1874 and 1906, the Martinez Adobe was used as a headquarters for the Strentzel- Muir Ranch and for storage. Any foundation plantings around the building at that time would likely have been remnants of those planted by owners of the building prior to Dr. Strentzel. The earliest close up photograph of the building dates from c.1905 in which a wisteria vine can be seen growing up to the northeast corner of the veranda. In c.1906, Tom and Wanda Hanna turned the building into a residence, and at that time the appearance of the building improved. Foundation plants on the east side are visible in a c.1912- 1913 photograph. They appear to be relatively low but cannot be accurately identified except for a profuse tangle of wisteria vines growing up to the veranda from the ends of the east façade. Most appear to be perennials.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* From 1915 to 1917, Mr. Greerty remembered that the front of building was heavily shaded by black locust and that unpruned shrubs, wisteria vines, and hollyhocks were situated along the front steps. By 1960, the front of the adobe featured a mass of shrubs and flowers that included mock orange at the southeast corner, Banksia rose and lilac on the left side of the steps, Banksia rose and cotoneaster on the right side, and Banksia rose at the northeast corner. In 1977, the adobe was fumigated with “Vikane” that killed many of the shrubs. The superintendent’s report for that year noted that plants would be replaced with “historic” specimens. Eventually, cuttings and donations were used to replant the area and by 1989 some of the earlier plant species – rose, mock orange, lilac, and many flowers – graced the front. A 1992 plan in the adobe’s Historic Structures Report recommended new but unspecified plantings along the foundations. By 1998, this area included plantings of Oregon grape holly around the foundation, and bearberry cotoneaster and toyon in the south bed. Today, plantings along the west foundation of the adobe include Oregon grape holly, gaura, manzanita, and Chinese wisteria. They were

planted in the late 1990s.<sup>34</sup> The beds on the south and west sides are a mix of perennials and flowers, and there are no foundation plants on the north side. None of the beds feature plants over three feet tall.

*Evaluation: Contributing (wisteria on east side)*

The wisteria on the east foundation of the Martinez Adobe, present in c.1912-1913 and replanted by the NPS, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914).

*Evaluation: Undetermined (remainder of east side and other sides)*

There is no reliable historic documentation regarding other plants on the east side or the foundation plants around the south, west, and north sides.

## **MA: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.30)**

### **Martinez Adobe (LCS #000743)**

*Historic Condition:* The two- story Martinez Adobe was built by Vicente Martinez in 1849 and used as his home. The building was acquired by Dr. John Strentzel in 1874 and initially used as a storehouse and ranch headquarters. The adobe was the main building of a larger complex of living quarters, outbuildings, barns, packing sheds, and corrals for the Strentzel-Muir Ranch. By c.1885 a lean- to shed was added in the front. The north wall and chimney failed in the 1906 earthquake, and soon after Wanda Muir and her husband, Tom Hanna, remodeled the building into a residence. They replaced the wall with wooden clapboards, built a new chimney and fireplace, installed electricity and an upstairs lavatory, and removed the lean-to, cistern, and other farm equipment that had accumulated around the building. In c.1910, the Hannas extended the veranda to the south side and added a kitchen on the southwest side, next to which the Cookhouse was moved for use as a dining room. During his later years, Muir often walked from the Muir House to the adobe for breakfast with the Hannas.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The Hannas sold the Martinez Adobe in 1915. The property passed through a variety of owners until 1921 when Daniel Parsowith remodeled the structure and used the small addition in back as a tailor shop in the 1930s. Parsowith also added a kitchen and a laundry room. The adobe was sold to Louis Stein in 1955, the same year it was designated a California Registered Historic Landmark, and was rented out until it was converted into a museum in 1962/63. At that time, the building was improved with exterior paint and gutters and hooked up to city water. In 1964, the adobe was acquired by the NPS and soon after, except for the kitchen and rear addition, was restored to the period when Wanda and



Tom Hanna lived there (1906- 1914). Although various plans were presented for use of the building as employee housing and visitor services, it was ultimately used as storage and exhibit space and occasionally as sleeping quarters for children enrolled in the Environmental Living Program. The adobe was painted white with bright blue trim in 1972 and again in 1978 in preparation to opening to the public on daily basis. In the 1980s, the adobe was repainted and hosted meetings, weddings, and “Posadas” as well as overnight guests with the ELP until the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 rendered the building unsafe for overnight use. This event was cause for an extensive Historic Structures Report, from which numerous interior and exterior upgrades and improvements were proposed and implemented between 1993 and 1996. Today, the two- story building measures approximately twenty- five feet by fifty feet and includes a veranda on the south and east sides, a hipped roof with wood shingles, and plaster adobe walls. There is a Greek revival dormer on the west side, a brick chimney on the north side, and multiple wood frame additions on the west side with gable and shed roofs and siding.<sup>35</sup> The building is painted bright white with yellow- gold trim and is used much as it was when the park first opened.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Martinez Adobe, constructed in 1849 and altered in c.1906, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining building of the historic period (1849- 1914). The building is the oldest structure in the park and is an excellent example of the California- Mexican rancho style. The exterior of the building remains intact since the end of the historic period. Numerous rehabilitation projects have occurred since the park assumed ownership, the latest of which were completed 1993- 1996.

**Ramada**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* An open post and beam ramada was constructed on the west side of the rear brick patio on the west side of the Martinez Adobe by Daniel Parsowith in the 1930s. The park repaired the structure in 1975 and replaced it in 1988. Today, the ramada measures approximately fifteen feet by thirty feet and is about nine feet tall. The structure includes a fading red- tinted concrete pad and is the location of several picnic tables. It is located in the designated park development zone.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The Ramada, originally built in the late 1930s and replaced in 1988, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The design, materials, and scale of the structure are not compatible with the historic character.

**Patio wall and steps, Martinez Adobe**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1930s, Daniel Parsowith built this low brick wall around the north and west sides of a patio. The west section of the wall functioned as a retaining wall while the north side was a free-standing wall. In 1989, the park removed a portion of the north wall for a new accessible path leading from the patio to the main farm road. As part of a site drainage improvement project associated with seismic upgrades in 1998, the west wall was moved five feet to the west and steps were constructed. Today, the 2.5'- high wall is in good condition and measures approximately fifty feet on the west side and ten feet on the north side. A set of six brick steps is located in the center of the west wall and provides access to the Ramada. The steps, which include two pipe handrails, are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The patio wall and steps on the west side of the Martinez Adobe, constructed in the 1930s and rebuilt in 1998, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic structures of the historic period (1849- 1914). This area was used as a driveway during the historic period and was transformed into a patio in the 1930s and expanded in the 1998.

**AGRICULTURE AREAS – (AG)****AG: CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.31)****Main farm road**

*Historic Condition:* The main farm road was likely in place in some form or another soon after Vicente Martinez constructed his adobe in 1849 to provide access to nearby fields and pastures. By 1880, it was one of the most important roads at the Redfern Place and served as the main access route from Franklin Canyon Road to the recently built Muir House on the east side of Franklin Creek. The east- west oriented road passed along the north side of the Martinez Adobe, near which there was a small bump out at the

intersection with another farm road that was also an entrance to the ranch. The road continued east and passed between orchards, vineyards, and the fish pond until ending at the Carriage House and its intersection with the Woodshed Road, southeast farm road, and carriage drive- loop. In the early c.1910s, Muir apparently wished to macadamize this road and others at the ranch but it is unclear if this was done. The well- used earthen lane was generally level and averaged approximately ten feet in width.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1919, after the Redfern Place had been subdivided, the road officially became part of right- of- way from Franklin Canyon Road to the Muir Homestead. Its service as a main route to the Muir House diminished in the late 1950s when a new access lane was constructed northeast of the house to connect to Alhambra Avenue to the east. The main farm road had declined to a two- track road until it was incorporated it into the park's trail system in 1964, which renewed its role as the primary connection between the east and west sides of the creek. The road was paved with asphalt sometime in the late 1980s which generally maintained the ten foot width. The asphalt surface of the road is in good condition today.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The main farm road, developed in the mid- 1800s, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The road served as the main connection between the east and west sides of Franklin Creek during the historic period and continues to serve that role today. The most significant change occurred in the 1980s when the road was paved, which has diminished the historic character.

**Farm lanes, west orchard**

*Historic Condition:* This area was planted with fruit trees during the historic period and was likely accessed by informal two- track earthen farm lanes. However, their exact locations are not known.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The west orchard was planted through the 1940s and was probably criss- crossed by farm lanes. Park planning documents from 1989 show the current configuration of farm lanes, and the east- west lane appears to line up with the gap in vegetation along Franklin Creek in the 1939 aerial photograph. Today, the two- track earthen lanes connect to the main farm road and to the driveway in front of the Martinez Adobe. The lanes are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The farm lanes in the west orchard, originally developed in the late 1980s, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, the layout, widths, and surface materials of the farm lanes are compatible with the historic character.

**AG: VEGETATION – NORTH-WEST BOUNDARY (FIGURE 8.32)****Row of fig trees**

*Historic Condition:* According to historic photographs, personal accounts, and NPS research, a line of fig trees was planted west of Franklin Creek along the north side of the main farm road by c.1885. The figs did not form a continuous line, and over the course of the historic period appear to have shared the space with a black locust, orange trees or some other citrus trees, and a farm lane that tracked to the northwest from the main farm road.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The figs were included within the access easement to the Muir Homestead, and according to an aerial photograph from 1939 continued to thrive in two distinct groups separated by a small clearing. Between 1954 and 1962, nine Monterey pines were planted to fill the gap between the two groups of fig trees on the north side of the main farm road. Beginning in 1964, the figs marked the northwest boundary of the park and served as a screen to adjacent houses. There is no record of plantings in this area until 1976, perhaps because the figs were in good condition and were probably quite large. Sewer excavation work in 1976 damaged the trees as well as a small redwood and by 1977 four were removed. The remaining five Monterey pine were removed by 1985 at the request of a neighbor. That same year, California buckeye and pacific wax myrtle were set out at various locations along the fence and English hawthorns were planted next to the west gate. Between 1986 and 1990, thirteen historic fig trees were removed because of safety concerns and were replaced with air- layered clones. The gap between the figs was planted again in 1989 with a group of toyons as a temporary solution until newly planted figs matured. Today, only one mature fig tree remains and is upwards of fifteen feet wide and tall. There are nine of the clones scattered along the road and many are as high as the fence. Interspersed amongst thee are toyons and hawthorns, which are about as high as the fence, and buckeyes, which are about fifteen to twenty feet tall. There are also several small butterfly- bush and some star jasmine.

*Evaluation: Contributing (figs)*

The fig trees, planted by c.1885, contribute to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Only one tree still survives, but the nine others are clones of the original trees. As a whole, the scale, and thus the character, of this feature has changed because of the variable ages and sizes of the plants.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (Monterey pine, toyon, California buckeye, pacific wax myrtle, English hawthorn, star jasmine, and butterfly- bush)*

The Monterey pine, toyon, California buckeye, pacific wax myrtle, English hawthorn, star jasmine, and butterfly- bush, introduced after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**VEGETATION – SOUTH-WEST BOUNDARY (FIGURE 8.33)****Dwarf coyote brush, coast live oak, almond, fig, California white oak, California black walnut, coast redwood, and incense cedar**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Between 1995 and 1997, the park planted many California white oaks. In 1998, a major planting project including numerous plantings along this boundary and included twenty dwarf coyote brush and western redbud near the oil valve easement area. Many of these species are present today and have been joined by California black walnut, almond, coast redwood, and fig. Most of the coyote brush is part of an overgrown planting area defined by a series of stepped railroad ties, while most of the oak trees are seedlings planted along the fence. Interspersed among these plants are seedling incense cedars. The coast redwoods closest to the creek are upwards of thirty feet tall and effectively screen the culvert.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The dwarf coyote brush, coast live oak, almond, fig, California white oak, California black walnut, coast redwood, and incense cedar, introduced after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**AG: VEGETATION – SOUTH-EAST BOUNDARY (FIGURE 8.34)****Eucalyptus grove (4)**

*Historic Condition:* In a 1958 interview, Helen Muir recalled that her father acquired about a dozen different varieties of eucalyptus from their neighbor John Swett and that she helped plant the trees on the lower south slope of the knoll. The trees appear in a photograph from c.1910 as two groups that are perhaps fifteen feet tall. Most of these trees were included within the fence of the Muir Homestead when the boundaries were set out in 1908.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The eucalyptus grove thrived after Muir's death and clearly appears in a 1939 aerial as a dark mass anchoring the southwest corner of the Muir Homestead. In 1958, nine varieties of eucalyptus were identified in an inventory by the University of California-Davis. When the park's boundaries were proposed in 1963, many of the trees were not included in the park because of the right- of- way and fill slopes associated with upgrades to State Route 4. A photograph from 1966 confirms this and shows the grade of the west- bound on- ramp running very close to the trees, some of which were equal in height to that of the Muir House. In 1967/68, the NPS successfully worked with CALTRANS to preserve the historic trees. In 1972 and 1990, severe freezes killed many of the historic trees and in the 1990s the area was supplemented with native oaks and redwoods.<sup>36</sup> Today, there remain seven large trees, four of which are within the park's boundaries and are located along or near the boundary fence. They are all well over 100' tall and in variable condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The eucalyptus grove, planted in the early 1900s, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Some of the trees have been lost since the historic period, and not all that have survived are on park property. Their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character, but the integrity may diminish if the condition of the trees deteriorates, especially those on state property and closest to State Route 4.

**Canary Island date palms (2) and Mexican fan palm**

*Historic Condition:* These trees were planted southeast of the Muir House on the lower slope of knoll by c.1905, between a grape orchard and an apple orchard. A historic photograph from c.1910 shows them within the fence of the Muir Homestead and taller than the nearby apple trees.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The three plants are visible in an aerial photograph from 1939. When the park's boundaries were proposed in 1963, one of the Canary Island date- palms fell outside of the boundary; a photograph from 1966 shows the highway on- ramp for State Route 4 runs right next to it. In 1967/68, the park worked with CALTRANS to preserve the trees and plant more Mexican fan palms in this area as well as eucalyptus, redwood, oak, buckeye, and redbud. Two palms were planted on state property but most of the other plantings were not installed. The date palms were pruned in the 1990s, but the Mexican fan palm has not been pruned due to its height.<sup>37</sup> Today, the two Canary Island date- palms are massive and are over twenty- five feet tall. The Mexican fan palm is well over 100' tall.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The two Canary Island date palms and the Mexican fan palm, planted by c.1905, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although one of the date palms is just outside of park property, it is still visible from within the park. Their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character, but their condition will need to be closely monitored because of their location near the busy highway.

**Incense cedar, coast redwood, coast live oak, California white oak, olive, sweet cherry, cherry plum, pepper tree, and California black walnut**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1990s, the south section of the fence was replanted with native oaks and redwoods to replace the eucalyptus lost in the 1990 freeze and supplement the grove of coast redwood at the creek.<sup>38</sup> Today, this area is dominated by a line of seedling oaks and incense cedars, three to four -foot- tall coast redwoods, and a large olive and a small California black walnut south of the house. Small sweet cherry, cherry plum, small coast redwoods, as well as two Mexican fan palms that reach upwards of approximately seventy- five feet (on the CALTRANS side of the fence) line the angled southeast section fence. Along the east section of fence, a plan produced in 1969 for the Visitor Center and parking lot included a mass planting of eucalyptus and acacia to help screen the suburban view from visitors rounding the back of Muir House. Much of the plan was implemented, but in December 1972 a freeze killed most of the young trees. In 1976, the City of Martinez began a beautification project to revegetate Alhambra Avenue and chose native redwood trees, among others. It is not

known to what extent the east fence area was included in the project. Today, the east section of fence is dominated by coast redwoods, some of which are over twenty feet tall, as well as several California white oaks, and a pepper tree.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The incense cedar, coast redwood, coast live oak, California white oak, olive, sweet cherry, cherry plum, pepper tree, and California black walnut, planted by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area. Although the plants partially screen the views of cars on Alhambra Avenue and State Route 4, they will ultimately reach a height that blocks the view into the valley, the railroad trestle, and Mt. Wanda and may eventually cast a shade over the east orchard space.

**AG: VEGETATION – NORTH-EAST BOUNDARY (FIGURE 8.35)**

**Coast redwood, California white oak, California black walnut, and coast live oak**

*Historic Condition:* Although the present row of vegetation along the park's north- east boundary was not present during the historic period, this property line is the approximate location of the north- eastern boundary of the Muir Homestead that was established in 1908.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Most of the coast redwoods, California white oak, and coast live oaks along this fence range between ten and fifteen feet high, suggesting they were planted during the 1990s planting projects. They partially screen the neighboring post office building.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The coast redwood, California white oak, California black walnut, and coast live oak, planted by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this location, even though this was the approximate historic boundary of the Muir Homestead. Although the plants partially screen the views of the adjacent postal facility, they will eventually grow to a height that is out of scale with the adjacent north orchard space.



**AG: VEGETATION – FRANKLIN CREEK (FIGURES 8.36 AND 8.37)****Riparian vegetation, north of main farm road**

*Historic Condition:* The earliest historic photograph of the site, from c.1883, showed a mass of vegetation north and west of the Muir House. They were likely the same plants visible in a photograph taken in c.1885 along the banks of Franklin Creek., north of the main farm road. In this photograph, the trees appeared to be a mix of willow and oak and were taller than the surrounding orchards and vineyards but generally shorter than vegetation surrounding the nearby Franklin Creek windmill. Another photograph, from c.1905, showed some of the trees had reached the height of the windmill and included several buckeyes. Beginning in 1908, part of the Muir Homestead boundary followed this portion of the creek.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1939 aerial, the creek area north of the main farm road appeared as a wide and unbroken mass of vegetation compared to the same area along the south side of the road, suggesting that this area was comprised of a thick mass of tall trees. This condition apparently persisted into the early 1960s when the area was illustrated as a large mass in a map from the park's initial Feasibility Report and identified as a buffer to screen adjacent residential developments in the 1965 Master Plan. Management plans in 1981 recommended replanting the area with native plants and removing non- native plants, which by this time included giant reed, vinca, poison hemlock, and English walnut and cherry plum in the adjacent orchard. Between 1995 and 1997, several California white oak were planted along the creek. Today, the creekside vegetation is a mix of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants that are dominated by coast live oak as well as some California buckeye, coast redwood, and blue elderberry. A survey by Jepsen and Murdock in 2001 also identified California black walnut, California sycamore, Canary grass, giant reed, red willow, willow, vinca, Himalaya berry, and poison oak.<sup>39</sup> With the exception of two butterfly- bush, all of the plants are situated on the west side of the boundary fence. The vegetation and boundary fence combine to visually screen the neighboring properties except at an open area next to the Franklin Creek Bridge.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

Riparian vegetation along Franklin Creek, north of the main farm road, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). As there are no detailed views of this entire run of the creek, it is quite possible that some of the species present today may have been present during the historic period, and it is also

quite likely that the diversity of plant material has changed over time. What appears to have remained consistent, however, is the massing and scale of the feature as a whole since the end of the historic period. This feature meets Conditions 4 through 6.

#### **Riparian vegetation, south of main farm road**

*Historic Condition:* Vegetation along Franklin Creek south of the main farm road was virtually absent compared to the north side of the road in c.1885. These conditions may have been intended to keep an open and unobstructed channel upstream from the bridge serving the main farm road. By the late 1890s, this area included buckeye trees and by c.1905, the vegetation along the creek had become more dense and was about as high as the surrounding orchard trees. A historic photograph from a c.1910 shows the vegetation was still at this height, perhaps suggesting it was managed so as not to shade the adjacent orchards.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In 1915, a flood washed out one of the wood bridges upstream from the main farm road, and according to Mr. Greerty, the son of a former ranch employee, this was caused by willows that backed up the stormwater. The willows may have been along this stretch of the creek. According to an aerial photograph, the mass of creekside vegetation was interrupted by a crossing of some type by 1939, and appeared to be narrower, and thus shorter, than the mass of vegetation north of the road. A photograph from 1967 showed the area closer to the main farm road as vegetated but the area closer to the new freeway as essentially barren, which is probably why the grove of coast redwoods were planted next to the culvert around that time. Specific management plans for the creek came in two 1981 reports which recommended replacing non- native plants with native plants, but it is not clear how many were removed. In 1987, the East Bay Conservation Corps removed debris and weeds from this part of the creek channel. Today, the vegetation along the creeks is dense and completely shades the creek except for a small area near the culvert. Most of the major trees along the creek exceed the height of the orchard trees on the west side. Notable species include California black walnut, yellow willow, coast redwood, California buckeye, olive, sweet cherry, Catalina cherry, and poison oak. A survey by Jepsen and Murdock in 2001 also identified, Canary grass, giant reed, red willow, vinca, and Himalaya berry.<sup>40</sup> There are also numerous species of non- native annuals.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

Riparian vegetation along Franklin Creek, south of the main farm road, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). As with the vegetation north of the creek, some of the plants present today may well have been present during the historic period. The most significant change since the end of the historic period, however, has been an increase in the mass and scale of the vegetation which at certain times of the day casts a shade over the adjacent orchards and vineyards and block views across Franklin Creek. It could also be argued that their growth, in the absence of periodic pruning and cutting that may have occurred during the historic period, conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.

**Coast redwood**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1885, according to a historic photograph, a small conifer was situated at the southwest corner of the Franklin Canyon Bridge (Figure 2.5).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Coring by Agee in 1978 dated this tree to 1953 but noted an older stem. The older stem may be the tree in the c.1885 photograph.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research will be required to determine the history and significance of this tree.

**AG: VEGETATION – WEST ORCHARD SPACE (FIGURE 8.38)****West orchard**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1885, the land gently sloping from the Martinez Adobe down to Franklin Creek was planted in fruit trees. Details regarding the types of fruit trees in this orchard space are vague, but according to a c.1885 photograph they appeared to be apricots or cherries. By c.1901, the small area just south of the adobe was also planted with fruit trees, but exactly what species is unclear, and by c.1905, citrus trees, possibly oranges, were grouped north of the adobe around the western end of the main farm road. Between 1906 and 1914, Leonard Dickey, one of Tom and Wanda Hanna's foster children, recalled oranges and walnuts near the creek. Additionally, Helen Muir recalled pecan, cherry, apricot, and lemon in this general area.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A plat map from 1915 and the recollections of Mr. Greerty, a tenant in the Bunkhouse from 1915- 1917, identified this space as an orange orchard. In the 1920s, Daniel Parsowith planted English walnuts at the southern half of the space, possibly displacing some of the oranges. Whether they were oranges or walnuts, by 1939 the space was full of rows of fruit trees and filler trees. According to Agee's tree analysis, this space included two pecans, two of which dated to the 1950s but may have been from older stems (Mrs. Strentzel mentioned a large planting of pecans but was not specific where). Sometime between 1921 and 1955, two deodar cedars were planted southwest of the adobe and by 1967 they had grown higher than the adobe. By 1963, many of the trees at the north half of the orchard space had been replaced by large areas of meadow grass, but most of the walnuts at the south half remained except for those removed for expansion of State Route 4. The park's 1965 Master Plan proposed clearing the entire orchard, but the Historic Landscape Plan in 1968/69 instead shoehorned rows of apricots, pears, oranges, and lemons amongst the remaining walnuts and pecans. Today, this configuration remains intact; the northern section consists of blocks of pears, apricots, and oranges set within a mix of weeds and grasses that include foxtail, Bermuda grass, cut- leaved geranium, and filaree.<sup>4</sup> Towering overhead are two large pecan trees that shade the surrounding fruit trees. The southeast section features more areas of bare ground than grasses and weeds. Notable additions here have included plantings of apricot, peach, and pear amongst the older walnuts and pecans, but the rows are not as distinct. In the southwest section, south of the adobe, a small lemon orchard is situated but is in poor condition due to close spacing. Just to the north of this area are an orange tree, California black walnut tree, and two deodar cedars that are approximately seventy-five feet tall. Most of this area is covered in grass.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (apricots, oranges, lemons, walnuts, and pecans)*

The apricots, oranges, lemons, walnuts, and pecans in the west orchard space, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, these kinds of fruit trees were planted in this general area according to one or more of the following sources: historic photographs and the recollections of two former residents, Helen Muir and Mr. Dickey. Consequently, these blocks of fruit trees meet Conditions 4 and 5. However, due to the lack of historic photographs of this space, it is not possible to evaluate the plants under Condition 6.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (pears, two deodar cedars)*

The pear trees and the two deodar cedars in the west orchard space, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849-1914). According to historic photographs and the recollections of Helen Muir and Mr. Dickey, there were no pear trees in the west orchard space and the deodar cedars were planted after the historic period.

#### **Native plant garden**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Management reports for Franklin Creek in 1981 cited the creek area as the best place to promote native plant growth and represent Muir's love of natural things. To this end, recommendations were made to remove non- native species and replace them with native species. Initially, the entire creek was considered, but concerns over blocking views between the Muir House and Martinez Adobe scaled the plans back to a small area on the west side of the creek. In 1984, a native plant garden was installed on the west bank. Covering approximately 1000 square feet, the area consisted of native shrubs, herbaceous plants, annuals, and bulbs, and was outfitted with small plant identification signs. The garden was expanded in 1988, but it is not clear to where – possibly just to the south where today yellow willow, coast live oak, and California black walnut are growing. Today, these plants along with the overgrown original section conspire to block views between the east and west sides of the creek. Significant plant species include sugar bush, flowering fuschia, anemone, toyon, and flannel bush. Only a few identification signs remain.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The native plant garden, planted by the NPS in 1984, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although it is possible some of these plants may have existed in this area, their current arrangement has no historic precedence.

#### **AG: VEGETATION – MIDDLE ORCHARD SPACE (FIGURE 8.39)**

##### **Middle orchard**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1885, the field between the knoll and Franklin Creek was planted with plums (Figure 2.5). By the late 1890s, most of the space was replanted with table grapes, save for several rows of plums next to the

southeast farm road (Figures 3.4 and 3.5). By c.1905, though, more plums were removed, leaving only a few rows of plums next to the southeast farm road and a solitary tree opposite the Carriage House (Figure 3.8).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* According to the 1939 aerial, the grapes were removed in favor of fruit trees, possibly pears because their spacing and orientation was similar to the pears on the lower slope of Mt. Wanda. In 1961, Louis Stein, the owner of the Martinez Adobe property, bought this .97 acre parcel to prevent it from being developed into a subdivision and severing the connection between the Muir House and the adobe. Under NPS stewardship, the 1965 Master Plan proposed clearing the land, which was accomplished by 1967. The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed three varieties of grapes as well as plums and prunes, and most of these were planted. In 1976, the grapes were replanted by John Hanna, Muir's grandson, after an oak root fungus was identified. Today, the space is dominated by rows of grape vines, although there are many missing plants and the space is not as densely planted as during the historic period. Rows of plum trees occupy the far eastern end in an orthogonal layout of approximately fifteen feet within rows and fifteen- twenty feet between rows. The trees are in poor condition. The ground surface is mostly introduced herbaceous plants and weeds that include foxtail, Bermuda grass, cut- leaved geranium, and filaree.<sup>42</sup>

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The grapes and plums that comprise the middle orchard space, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849-1914). According to numerous historic photographs, these types of plants were present in this general location, thus satisfying Conditions 4 and 5. However, the forms of the crops are inconsistent with their historic form.

**Coast redwood grove (9)**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The grove of sequoias was planted in the late 1960s just northeast of the Franklin Creek culvert as a screen and sound wall. The trees were donated by Jose Figuerado, one of Tom and Wanda Hanna's foster children. Today, the grove numbers nine closely spaced trees that are well over 100' tall. They effectively screen the culvert and tower over other vegetation in the area, casting long shadows over the adjacent orchards and vineyards. There are three wood benches under the trees.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The grove of coast redwoods, planted in the late 1960s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area. Although the trees screen the culvert at Franklin Creek, they interrupt the historic view towards Mt. Wanda and in the afternoons cast a shade over the middle orchard space.

**AG: VEGETATION – FISH POND SPACE (FIGURE 8.40)****Fish pond space**

*Historic Condition:* Prior to construction of the Franklin Creek Windmill and Well in 1882, this area situated between the knoll and Franklin Creek likely existed as a natural low spot that filled with water after heavy rain events. By c.1885, an irrigation pipe/catwalk stretched across the southern portion of the space from the windmill to the main farm road. Although a historic photograph from c.1885 suggests the presence of a water- regulating structure at the southwest corner, the evidence is inconclusive, as is the presence of actual fish in the pond; Muir's concerns about malaria probably preferred the pond stay dry. At this time, the circular shape of the fish pond space became more defined by the main farm road on the south, carriage drive-loop on the east, and a low earthen berm on the north which was likely intended to protect the nearby peach trees. The pond was shaded by vegetation along the creek and even taller plants growing around the base of the windmill. These latter plants have spreading and ascending branches and long and narrow leaves, and are possibly giant reed. In c.1891, the Carriage House was constructed at the extreme southeast corner and in c.1910 was enlarged with a small lean- to addition and a cistern that redirected the irrigation pipe. In 1908, the fish pond space was included in the boundaries of the Muir Homestead. There is no record of crops in the fish pond space except for a small area of grapes or vegetables in the northern part, which appeared in a c.1898 photograph. Although the plants were removed by c.1910, this suggests the fish pond space existed more as a dry pond than a wet pond.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Severe floods in 1915, 1937, and 1958 likely tested the configuration of the fish pond space. The Carriage House and the dilapidated Franklin Creek Windmill were removed in the late 1930s. Between 1915 and 1964, several fruit trees, possibly walnuts or plums, were planted in the space. The Franklin Creek Windmill was reconstructed in 1978, and in 1983, the well was repaired and the Carriage House was

reconstructed in its original location. Flood abatement work the previous year included construction of a diversion channel alongside the creek bank and apparently improved planting conditions. The walnuts and plums were removed as part of non- native tree removal project, and by 1989 a small pear orchard occupied the southwest portion and dozens of apricot trees filled the north part and extended up the hill to the north. These types of tree remain today. The layout of the orchard is irregular and has been supplemented with plantings of almond trees. The ground in the fish pond space is mostly bare and is often muddy after rain events.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The orchard trees in the fish pond space, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). According to numerous historic photographs, with the exception of a small garden area that briefly existed at the north end and riparian plantings around the base of the windmill, there is not historical precedence for orchard trees in this space.

**Quinces and fig**

*Historic Condition:* In c.1885, several quince and at least one fig were planted in a row between the main farm road and fish pond. The existence of quince on the way to the Muir House was recalled by Lillian Firth- Thomas, who lived at bunkhouse from 1894- 1897. A conspicuous opening appears in this area by c.1910, possibly for the irrigation pipe/catwalk visible in the c.1885 photograph. Some of the plants closest to the Carriage House are visible in c.1910 photograph and appear to be about ten feet tall.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1939 aerial shows a distinct line of plants in this area, as well as the opening, and a very large specimen that is probably the fig tree. In 1978, Agee's tree analysis determined that the fig tree, along with the fig trees on the other side of the bridge, were potentially historic based on historic photographs. Today, this area features one fig and three quince near the bridge, a small open space, and two quince near the Carriage House. All of the plants are ten to fifteen feet tall.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The quinces and fig, planted in the 1880s, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character.



**AG: VEGETATION – NORTH ORCHARD SPACE (FIGURE 8.41)****North orchard**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1887, the ridge north and northwest of the Muir House was planted with peach trees. In c.1900- 1905, the lower eastern half was filled with fruit trees, possibly apples. In 1908, most of this area was included within the boundaries of the Muir Homestead. A historic photograph from c.1910 shows that the trees were generally oriented in a grid paralleling the northeastern fence line of the homestead (Figure 3.15).

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1939 aerial shows that by this time, most of the peach trees had died or been removed. An in- ground swimming pool was installed at the highest point of this space by the Kreiss family in c.1944 as well as a small storage shed soon after. Sometime between 1914 and 1964, walnut and plum trees were planted along the northern half of the space. When the NPS acquired the land, plans called for removing the remaining trees and the pool and replanting the orchard. In addition to three kinds of peaches, the 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed other fruit trees such as almond and cherry trees. Today, most of the orchard is comprised of peach, sweet cherry, almond, and peach in rows that are variably spaced. This area also includes white mulberry and carob trees that were added in 1996 to replace some of the almonds. The east half of the space features a seasonal cover crop of crimson clover, while the east half is a mix of weeds and herbaceous plants such as foxtail, Bermuda grass, cut-leaved geranium, and filaree as well as patches of bare ground.<sup>43</sup> The apricots and cherries are generally in poor condition.<sup>44</sup>

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (peaches)*

The peach trees in the north orchard, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, this type of fruit tree was planted in this general area according to several historic photographs. The feature consequently meets Conditions 4 and 5. Unfortunately, there are not enough detailed photographs of this area to evaluate their form as suggested in Condition 6.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (sweet cherries, almonds, white mulberries, and carobs)*

The cherries, almonds, white mulberries, and carobs in the north orchard, planted during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**Incense cedars**

*Historic Condition:* By c.1898, six incense cedars were planted northeast of the Muir House at the bottom of the knoll, between the Alhambra windmill and well and a large cypress tree to the north. In 1908, the eastern boundary of the Muir Homestead passed alongside the four trees closest to the windmill before turning to the west. Historic photographs from c.1901 reveal that the trees had grown vigorously and some were almost equal in height to the blades of the Alhambra windmill. When John Muir died in 1914, Jose Figuerado, one of the Hanna's foster children, apparently cut boughs from one of these trees and laid them in Muir's coffin.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The four trees were included in the park's boundaries in 1964. Around that time, a retaining wall for a patio was constructed alongside the three southern- most trees and severed some of the roots. By 1976, one of the four trees had died and the three that were left were showing visible signs of decline. In 1995, the northern- most specimen of the three trees was lost to a windstorm, and the following year the two remaining specimens died and were removed. Wood from the trees was used for benches. In 1998, six saplings were planted along the same line. Today, they are about one- foot high and are marked by small green flags.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The seedling incense cedars at the far east edge of the north orchard space, planted in 1998, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, this type of tree is known to be consistent with the plant material from the historic period in this general location, and thus the trees meets Conditions 4 and 5. The plants are too young to evaluate their form as suggested in Condition 6.

**AG: VEGETATION – EAST ORCHARD SPACE (FIGURE 8.42)****East orchard**

*Historic Condition:* A historic photograph shows that by c.1885, most of the east slope of the knoll – stretching from southeast of the house to northeast of the house and below the peach orchard – was filled with what appears to be apple trees. Between 1900 and 1905, however, the middle portion of the east slope was absent of apple trees and the northern section was intermingled with other fruit trees, possibly lemon and persimmon that Mrs. Firth- Thomas recalled in that area. The flat areas at the toe of the slope marked the edge of a large hay field. The east boundary of the 1908 Muir

Homestead generally followed the bottom of this slope. The apples were generally oriented in a grid based on the edge of the field.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* By 1939, all but a few scattered apple trees remained along the slope while the flat area was partially filled with scattered fruit trees that had been planted in the hay field soon after Muir's death. In late 1950s, a new access road cut up the east slope to connect Alhambra Ave to the northeast corner of the carriage drive- loop. When the park's boundaries were proposed in 1963, the east slope of the knoll and part of the old hay field, up to the right- of- way lines for Alhambra Avenue and State Route 4, were included in the park. The park's Master Plan in 1965 proposed a 45- car parking lot in the flat area, but only the northern half was actually built. The 1968/69 Historic Landscape Plan proposed a block of Jonathon, Gravenstein, and Yellow Newton apples in the southern part of the field that extended up onto the lower east slope of the knoll. Today, the south end of this orchard space includes a variety of apple trees, some of which are arranged in a distinct grid. A few are located on the slope, but the majority of the trees are in the field. Most of the orchard space is bare ground; the park briefly experimented with silage here but the project was discontinued because it was labor intensive.<sup>45</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing (field)*

The open field that comprises most of east orchard space, and present during the historic period, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Historic photographs show this field variously planted in hay or other crops. Its western limit generally followed the toe of the knoll's eastern slope.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (apples)*

The apple trees that comprises the east orchard space, planted at various times during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). According to historic photographs, this type of crop was planted in areas of on the east slope of the knoll, but not in the flat area of the field, during the historic period. The apple trees satisfy the requirements of Conditions 4 and 5, but there is not enough information regarding their form to evaluate them under Condition 6.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible (pepper tree)*

The pepper tree in the east orchard space, planted during the NPS period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic

vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historic precedence for this tree in this area.

**AG: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.43)**

**Franklin Creek Windmill and Well (LCS #07028)**

*Historic Condition:* The Franklin Creek well was dug in c.1882 and was situated west of the knoll, in the middle of the fish pond space. The structures were built in conjunction with construction of the Strentzel House on top of the knoll. A windmill and pump were used to draw water from the well, which was likely used for domestic and agricultural purposes, but it is unclear to what extent. The windmill was surrounded by a patch of riparian vegetation that varied in height throughout the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are few references to the well after the historic period, but given its location in the fish pond space, was probably affected in some way by floods in 1915, 1937, and 1958. In the late 1930s, the Kreiss family dismantled the windmill, which had fallen into disrepair. In the mid- 1960s, the park made plans to restore the windmill and pump to aid in irrigation, and a few years later a 1932 windmill from another site was offered as a replacement.<sup>46</sup> The replacement structure was dismantled in 1967 by the NPS and brought to the park, but was not reconstructed until 1978. The well and pump were not brought into service until 1983. In 1990, an electric pump was installed and the irrigation network was expanded to the northern half of the park. Today, the windmill features a wind- vane and a multiple blade rotor windmill mechanism attached to an open wood frame tower measuring 9.5' x 9.5' at the base and tapering to a point fifty feet above the ground. The brick- lined well consists of a concrete cap and an octagonal wood cover with a hatch, antique pump, and a four- foot diameter steel pressure tank with electric controls.<sup>47</sup>

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The Franklin Creek Windmill and Well, reconstructed in 1978 and 1983, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic structures of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, the structures are accurate reconstructions and are located on the original site of the windmill and well. The design, materials, and scale are compatible with the historic character.

**Franklin Creek Bridge (LCS #07028)**

*Historic Condition:* Although details regarding the main farm road's crossing over Franklin Creek are lacking, such as structure may have existed as early

as themed- 1850s when Vicente Martinez owned land on both sides of the creek. Historic photographs reveal that some type of structure was in place by c.1885 and was defined two simple wood rails on either side. The bridge was a key component of the main farm road, which provided the most direct connection between Franklin Canyon Road, the Martinez Adobe, and the Muir House.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In 1915, the first documented flood at the Redfern Ranch washed out the wooden bridge. The bridge was rebuilt and withstood flood events in 1937 and 1958. Deck planks were periodically replaced by the Sax family in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and at that time there were no railings. In 1965, soon after the NPS established the park, a flood washed out the bridge because gophers had dug behind the stone abutments. Given the importance of this crossing, the only one in the park, a Historic Structures Report proposed a new span to support pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The bridge was rebuilt in 1967 using hidden steel beams and wood plank flooring and railings to retain the historic appearance. In 1981, the structure was replanked and in 1996 was reconstructed. Today, the bridge features 3" x 10" wood planks fastened into steel beams spanned between concrete and stone abutments. The span is twenty feet long and eleven feet wide and includes wood safety rails.<sup>48</sup>

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The Franklin Creek Bridge, reconstructed in 1967 and again in 1996, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, the bridge is an accurate reconstruction and is located on the original site. Although the bridge features modern elements, the design, scale, and materials used on the visible portions evoke the historic character.

### **Alhambra Well**

*Historic Condition:* The Alhambra windmill and well were located northeast of the Muir House at the bottom of the knoll. They were constructed by c.1898, probably to irrigate nearby fields and possibly to supply water to the Muir House and fill the water tank in the back addition.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Historic photographs suggest the windmill was dismantled by 1963. Soon after the park was created, the well was repaired, but both the 1965 Master Plan and the 1976 GMP advised not to replace the windmill because of its close proximity to the visitor parking lot and boundary fence. The well was improved in 1989 with an electric pump to

expand the irrigation network into southern sections of the park. Today, the well is identified by a square wood plank cover topped by a smaller square wood cover and hatch.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The Alhambra well, improved in 1989, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although the well is in its original location and continues to operate as originally designed with the aid of modern equipment, the integrity of the feature is severely diminished because its most identifiable component, the windmill structure, is no longer present.

### **Culvert, check dam, and stabilization structures along Franklin Creek**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* One of the most significant changes associated with the upgrades to State Route 4 in the mid- 1960s was the rerouting of Franklin Creek into a long concrete culvert under the freeway. The outflow headwall was located along the park's west boundary fence and was the focus of screening efforts in the park's early years. Soon after, as part of the reconstruction of the Franklin Creek Bridge in 1967, a small concrete and stone check dam was constructed just downstream to prevent undercutting of the bridge's rebuilt abutments and new wingwalls. The dam was also intended to raise the level of the stream bed one or two feet, which would be nearer to the historic level of the stream, although still below the original shallow bed. In 1970, however, flooding plagued the bridge and creek and caused minor damage to the bridge deck. A flood abatement project in 1982 included construction of a low earthen berm on the east side adjacent to the grape orchard and a shallow bypass channel on the east end of the bridge that continued northeasterly along the boundary fence to a new scupper wall and diversion wall. Neither of these structures is clearly visible today. However, as part of this project, the east bank at the creek next to the culvert was stabilized with concrete filled sandbags; they were repaired in 1995 and 1997 and are still functioning as intended. The gradual accumulation of sediment and debris behind the check dam has eliminated effectively ended the original purpose of the dam.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The culvert, check dam, and stabilization structures along Franklin Creek, built by the NPS and the State of California, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic structures of the historic period

(1849- 1914). The culvert and concrete sandbags are generally screened from the view of most visitors and are in a remote location of the park. The top flat surface of the check dam, however, is visible to most visitors who pause at the Franklin Creek Bridge and detracts from the historic character. The outfall walls of the concrete culvert are somewhat visible from the middle orchard and west orchard spaces.

## **VISITOR CENTER AREA – (VC)**

### **VC: CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.44)**

#### **Sidewalks and patio**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was part of an apple orchard and a hay field during the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* Concrete sidewalks were set out around the south and east sides of the Martinez Animal Hospital in 1964 and were incorporated into the park's circulation system to serve the Visitor Center. Soon after, a patio and low retaining wall were constructed on the west side. Construction of the retaining wall severed the roots of several historic incense cedars and ultimately hastened their decline. In 1996, the patio was replaced and surfaced with a broom- finish inlaid with a mortared brick pattern.<sup>49</sup> The walks are between four and six feet wide, while the patio measures approximately twenty by fifty feet. Today, the sidewalks and patio are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The sidewalks and patio at the Visitor Center, built in 1964 and partially reconstructed in 1996, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic circulation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). They are located in the park's development zone and function to accommodate visitors as they enter the park.

#### **Parking lot**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was a hay field during the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* From 1915 until the 1950s when Alhambra Avenue was constructed, this area was planted with fruit trees. In 1964, the area was planned as a parking lot for the new Martinez Animal Hospital, and soon after, the park decided to use it for this type of use. In 1966 plans were made to construct spaces for forty- two cars and obtain

then- vacant land north of the park for future expansion. Perhaps for that reason, only the middle portion – the area closest to the Visitor Center and what exist today – was constructed. In the 1970s, bituminous paving and curbs were installed and completion of the southern half was proposed but then dropped because it was felt it would affect the historic scene. In 1989, the lot was resurfaced.<sup>90</sup> Today, the parking lot features concrete curbs and an asphalt surface that is in fair condition. The parking lot can accommodate seventeen vehicles and one bus and serves both visitors and staff. After hours, the stalls are blocked by a length of chain pulled across the aisle.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The parking lot, built in the late 1960s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849-1914). The parking lot is a necessary aspect of the visitor services and as such is located in the park's development zone. The lot is visible from several key viewpoints in the historic zone.

**VC: VEGETATION (FIGURES 8.45 AND 8.46)**

**Boundary fence areas**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was part of a hay field during the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A landscape plan from 1969 showed mass plantings of trees and shrubs along the fences on the south and west sides of the parking lot and fences north of the Visitor Center. Major plantings such as eucalyptus, acacia, pittosporum, and sweetgum were complemented with numerous shrubs such as viburnum, escallonia, pittosporum, lemon bottle brush, and star jasmine. Although it is not clear how many of the plants were installed, park records indicate that many of the eucalyptus and acacia were planted but lost in a killing freeze in 1972. Today, north of the building, the sweetgum along the east fence is approximately forty feet tall. A mass of shrubs is growing under the sweetgum and merges with two small California white oaks along the north fence (part of the north- east boundary fence). Just to the west along the boundary fence are a large Canary Island date- palm and a coast live oak which combine to partially screen the view to the post office facility to the north. South of the building, the fence on the west side of the parking lot – on the park side – features star jasmine near the staff entrance gate, and a California white oak, two small apples, and a forty- foot- tall Siberian elm next to the Alhambra well. The parking lot side of the west fence includes pineapple guava, two



olives, and a coast live oak. The fence on the south side of the parking lot – on the park side – features a mass of vegetation comprised of cork oak, coast redwood, coast live oak, and almond. The parking lot side of the south fence features coast live oak and incense cedar. Altogether, the vegetation along these two fences combines to partially shade the parking lot and screen it from the Muir House. A bed of rosemary now grows above the patio retaining wall where the incense cedars seedlings are located.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The vegetation along the boundary fence, planted at various times during the NPS period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

#### **Foundation and lawn areas**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was part of a hay field.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* The 1969 landscape plan proposed mass plantings around the Visitor Center and in the front lawn panels: Japanese aucuba and hydrangea on the north side; India hawthorn, Japanese aucuba, and creeping fig on the east side; and false cypress and shore juniper in some of the lawn panels. In 1972, two incense cedars and two coulter pines were planted in the lawn on the north side of the building in memory of Basil Winslow, the same year that a severe freeze killed many of the acacia and eucalyptus planted along the boundary fences. In 1984, the Garden Club installed additional plantings but it unclear what exactly was planted. Today, the coulter pines are approximately forty feet tall and shade a mass of shrubs on the north side of the building as well as a lawn and picnic/seating area. The south side of the Visitor Center features a twenty- foot- high English walnut and masses of shrubs along the foundation and in beds within the panels of lawn. Species include Indian hawthorn, boxwood, and numerous perennials.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The vegetation around the foundation of the Visitor Center and in the front lawn panels, planted during the NPS period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**Parking lot islands**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was part of a hay field.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* The 1969 landscape plan for the Visitor Center area proposed plantings of lemon bottlebrush, ice plant, star jasmine, and firethorn along Alhambra Avenue and in the two bump- out islands. Today, these areas are dominated by masses of toyon and a cherry plum tree.

*Evaluation:* *Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The vegetation in the Visitor Center parking lot islands, planted during the NPS period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

**VC: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.47)****Visitor Center**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was a hayfield during the historic period.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Sometime after 1915, this area was planted with fruit trees until the 1950s when Alhambra Avenue was constructed. In 1964, a small one- story building was constructed northeast of the Muir Homestead at the bottom of the knoll for the Martinez Animal Hospital. The modern one- story cinderblock structure never served that purpose and was acquired by the NPS around that time for use as a visitor center and office space. An addition was proposed in the park's first master plan but was not built. Despite a remodeling project in 1974, planning documents in 1976 and 1991 reiterated the building's many deficiencies. Today, the building is painted tan with dark brown trim.

*Evaluation:* *Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The Visitor Center, constructed in 1964, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic building of the historic period (1849- 1914). The building is located in the park's development zone. Although the building's low profile helps it blend into the surrounding suburban landscape, its roof is nonetheless visible from several key points in the historic zone. Plans are underway to replace the building with a new visitor education center.

**Patio retaining wall, Visitor Center**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was the approximate boundary of the hay field and apple orchard.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In 1964, a low cinderblock retaining wall was built along the west edge of a patio, on the west side of the Martinez Animal Hospital. Construction severed some roots of two incense cedars that were planted by c.1898. By 1976, the trees displayed signs of decline, but persevered until 1997 when they died and were removed. Today, the wall is approximately eighty feet long and is between one and three feet high. It is in good condition and is painted tan, the same color as the Visitor Center. There are several cracks and some paint chipping on the wall.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The patio retaining wall west of the Visitor Center, built in 1964, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The wall was built in conjunction with the patio and defines an outdoor space for visitors as they emerge from the Visitor Center. It is located in the park's development zone.

**GRAVESITE UNIT – (GR)****GR: CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.48)****Parking area and entrance**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This area was part of a large orchard.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Strentzel Lane was laid out in the early 1960s when these orchard lands were subdivided and sold. Today, this road is a paper street surfaced in gravel that until recently was owned by the Muir- Hanna Trust. It now appears to have been sold to an adjacent property owner who has planted several rows of olive trees. Park vehicles escorting visitors to the site park in this vicinity. Visitors (and maintenance/emergency vehicles) then enter the site through a narrow opening framed by two masses of oleander and a large Sitka spruce. This open space is covered in grass and leads into the pear orchard. There are no defined paths or parking spaces in the Gravesite Unit.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The parking area and entrance to the Gravesite Unit, developed in the 1960s, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic

circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historic precedence for these features in this area.

**GR: VEGETATION (FIGURE 8.49)**

**Pear orchard**

*Historic Condition:* This area of land was part of a twelve- acre parcel purchased by Dr. Strentzel in 1853. Around this time, he planted pears and established the family gravesite. After John Muir assumed the role of ranch manager in 1881, the pear orchard was likely well- maintained due to his focus on the Bartlett variety and may have been the time when he grafted new stock onto Strentzel's trees. When Muir retired from the ranch by 1891, the orchard was maintained by his brother David, and according to Helen Muir was left to go wild. Although much of the land at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch was sold and leased at this time, this parcel remained in the family.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1939 aerial shows that this part of the Alhambra Valley was still dominated by neat rows of orchards and vineyards. However, it also indicates the pear orchard had many missing trees as well as the presence of some filler trees. By 1962, the orchard was subdivided and much of the land was transformed into a residential subdivision. However, some of the trees were retained and incorporated into residential landscapes (some of which can be seen today). The family gravesite and the extreme southern end of the old orchard – the present boundaries of the Gravesite Unit – remained in the Hanna family. An archeological study in 1974 reported that the orchard had recently been raked and disked, but it is not known by whom.<sup>5</sup> The root stock of the orchard still exists today, making it the one of the oldest surviving commercial orchards in central California. There are nineteen historic pear trees in the orchard and they are located in the northern half of the parcel. They vary in condition and are set within a meadow consisting of herbaceous plants and weeds that include foxtail, Bermuda grass, cut- leaved geranium, and filaree.<sup>5</sup> However, there are no discernable rows because of the many gaps in the grid pattern and the presence of several California bay shrubs and coast live oaks. Twelve pear trees and three peach trees are located in the southern half of the parcel and are not historic. They are clearly younger than the older fruit trees to the north and detract from the historic setting of an old orchard.

*Evaluation: Contributing (pears in northern half of parcel)*

The pear trees in the northern half of the Gravesite Unit, planted sometime after 1853 by Dr. Strentzel and grafted by John Muir in the 1880s, contribute to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The trees themselves are the park's most accessible example of orchard plantings that date from the historic period. However, the integrity of the orchard as a whole will diminish if the trees continue to deteriorate or if more trees are lost, which may render difficult the readability of the orchard as a whole.

*Evaluation: Undetermined (pears and peaches in southern half of parcel)*

Additional research will be needed to determine the history of this area during the historic period and the age of the current trees.

**Eucalyptus, incense cedar, and other plantings south of pear orchard**

*Historic Condition:* Dr. Strentzel purchased this parcel in 1853; in addition to planting pear trees he planted eucalyptus and incense cedars just east of the family gravesite. Although it is unclear how many were planted, it is possible that the trees marked the southern extent of a pear orchard. When Strentzel was buried at the family gravesite in 1890, Muir noted the size of one of the eucalyptus trees and likened it a guardian angel watching over the graves.<sup>33</sup> Muir's funeral was held under the spreading branches of the massive eucalyptus tree in 1914. There is no information on the incense cedar during this period.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The eucalyptus and possibly the incense cedar are visible in the 1939 aerial. In 1952, the John Muir Memorial Fellowship was founded at gravesite with the intent to erect a memorial near the eucalyptus tree Muir had long admired, and beginning in 1959, one of the rituals of the Sierra Club's memorial walks was to link hands around the eucalyptus and sing "Auld Lang Syne." Today, the eucalyptus tree may be well over 200' tall and the incense cedar upwards of 100' tall. The two trees are part of a larger linear mass that includes sweetgum, pomegranate, and California bay that merges with plants around the cemetery and along the creek.

*Evaluation: Contributing (eucalyptus)*

The eucalyptus, planted by Dr. Strentzel prior to 1890, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The massive tree is one of the largest of its kind

in the park. Not only does it convey the passage of time and add to the historic character, it serves as an appropriate marker for John Muir's final resting place.

*Evaluation: Undetermined (incense cedar, sweetgum, pomegranate, and California bay)*

Additional research and field analysis will be needed to determine the history of these trees.

### **Riparian vegetation and plantings around graves**

*Historic Condition:* An entry from Mrs. Strentzel's diary in 1881 tells of Muir burning brush along the creek, making gulleys to divert water, and planting buckeye trees.<sup>54</sup> Helen Muir also recalled her parents planted elderberry and willow on the bank opposite the gravesite. Although these references do not provide great detail, it can be presumed that the banks of the creek featured some degree of vegetation during this period. Muir reportedly planted Cherokee roses around the graves in the 1890s, although the exact locations are not known. According to Helen Muir, these and other roses, as well as various other plants and bulbs, were watered by a hand pump, the location of which is also unknown. Additionally, Mr. Briones recalled that Muir had the Chinese workers maintain the grass around the graves.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the 1930s, pilgrimages to the cemetery began and Linnie Marsh Wolfe, a Muir biographer, described myrtle and the seal of Solomon that "rambled unforbidden over the grave." She also mentioned a rose bush trailing along the railing, "sending forth a wealth of white blooms as it did fifty years ago." Nearby was an immense white hawthorn.<sup>55</sup> These plants were probably part of a much larger mass of vegetation shown along the creek in the 1939 aerial. Today, the creekside vegetation is comprised of a deciduous forest of sycamores and California buckeyes and many exotic trees such as Ponderosa pine and eucalyptus. The understory is composed of a few shrubs and exotic vines and there are a few herbaceous plants growing in the channel.<sup>56</sup> The overhead canopy is generally dense south of the gravesite and more open to the north, while a thin understory allows views across the creek. The multi- stemmed hawthorn still exists on the south side of the cemetery fence and is about fifteen feet tall. Other large California bay, and several coast live oaks, incense cedar, and coast redwoods grow alongside the fence. Weeds previously around the gravemarkers have been removed and the area is now bare ground. The area west of the gravesite is maintained as part of the

orchard meadow, and nearby, to the south, is a large patch of vinca (periwinkle).

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible (buckeyes)*

The buckeyes, likely dating from after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic vegetation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, this type of tree was remembered by Mrs. Strentzel along the banks of this creek, and the trees meet Conditions 4 and 5.

*Evaluation: Undetermined (Ponderosa pine, eucalyptus, sycamore, hawthorn, California bay, coast live oaks, incense cedar, coast redwood, vinca)*

Additional research and field study will be needed to determine the presence of these plants during the historic period.

#### **Vegetation along north and west boundaries**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. These areas were of the pear orchard during this time.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* None of the plants appear on the 1939 aerial, and their locations suggest they were set out in the early 1960s when this former orchard space was subdivided. Today, the east end of the north boundary is defined by a large coast redwood and coast live oak, a small clearing, and a tall hedge comprised mostly of oleander intermixed with a coast live oak and remnant pear trees. The west boundary is dominated by a massive Sitka spruce and coast redwood as well as a coast live oak and a small oleander hedge at the far northwest corner. The two hedges partially screen views of the surrounding neighborhood and funnel visitors from Strentzel Lane into the Gravesite Unit.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

Vegetation along the north and west boundaries, planted sometime after the early 1960s when this land was subdivided, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). These types of plants have no historic precedence in this area.

#### **GR: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.50)**

##### **Strentzel family gravemarkers (HB-16)**

*Historic Condition:* The family gravesite was formally set out in 1890 when Dr. Strentzel died, although it may have been established as early as 1857 with

the death of Strentzel's son John Erwin. It is not clear if a marker was erected at that time, but sometime in the 1890s, three small Raymond granite headstones measuring twenty inches wide, eight inches deep, and ten inches high with arched tops were installed. The names Jonnie (John Erwin, the Strentzel's son, died 1857), Lottie (the Strentzel's other daughter, date of death unknown), and Uncle Henry (Dr. Strentzel's brother, died September 3, 1865) are engraved into the tops of the markers. It is not known if any of them are actually interred at the site.<sup>57</sup>

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are no documented changes to the three markers since the end of the historic period. The markers are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Strentzel family gravemarkers, three structures erected in the 1890s, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining structures of the historic period (1849- 1914). The markers are associated with Dr. John Strentzel, John Muir's father- in- law.

#### **Strentzel family monument (HB-14)**

*Historic Condition:* The family gravesite was formally set out in 1890 when Dr. Strentzel died on October 31, 1890. A granite obelisk was erected on a two- tiered chamfered granite base measuring four feet by four feet and five feet high overall, and inscribed with Dr. Strentzel's name, date of birth, and date of death as well as the names of wife Louisiana and son John Erwin. Mrs. Strentzel died on September 24, 1897.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are no documented changes to the monument since the end of the historic period. The monument is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The Strentzel family monument, erected in 1890, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The monument is associated with John Muir's father- in- law and his family.

#### **Granite enclosure (HB-17)**

*Historic Condition:* The low rectangular- shaped Raymond granite cope was constructed around the cemetery plot at the time of Dr. Strentzel's death in 1890. The enclosure measured twenty- six feet by thirty- four feet and was



one- foot high and one- foot- wide set upon a concrete foundation. It was broken by a four- foot- wide granite step entryway on the west side, which was flanked by two eighteen inch- high pillars inscribed with the date 1890.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are no documented changes to the enclosure since the end of the historic period. Some mortar joints are in need of repair, but otherwise the structure is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The granite enclosure at the cemetery, erected in 1890, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The enclosure is associated with Dr. John Strentzel, John Muir's father- in- law.

**Louie Strentzel Muir gravemarker (HB-13)**

*Historic Condition:* Louie Strentzel Muir died August 6, 1905. The granite marker measured three feet by fourteen feet at the chamfered base and was three feet tall with an arched top and rusticated sides. The front surface was polished and inscribed with her name, birthplace and date, date of death, and a floral engraving.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are no documented changes to the enclosure since the end of the historic period. The headstone is leaning slightly but otherwise is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The gravemarker of Louie Strentzel Muir, erected in 1905, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). The marker is associated with the wife of John Muir.

**John Muir gravemarker (HB-12)**

*Historic Condition:* John Muir died on December 24, 1914 and was buried at the family gravesite next to the pear orchard. The top stone was an eight inch by twenty four inch by three- foot piece of Black Academy granite and featured an arched top and rusticated sides. The stone was set on a three- foot by fourteen inch by one- foot chamfered Raymond granite base. The front surface was polished and inscribed with his name, birthplace and date, date of death, and a floral engraving thought to represent a Scottish thistle.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* There are no documented changes to the enclosure since the end of the historic period. The marker has a slight lean but otherwise is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The gravemarker of John Muir, erected in 1914, contributes to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914).

**Hanna family gravemarkers (HB-15)**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Wanda Muir Hanna died on July 29, 1942 and Tom Hanna died on October 26, 1947. The two granite markers are roughly cut into three- foot by fourteen inch by eight inch- thick slabs and lie on the ground next to each other. The top surfaces are inscribed with their names, date of birth, and date of death.<sup>58</sup> There are no documented changes to the enclosure since the end of the historic period. The markers are in good condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The gravemarkers of Wanda Muir Hanna and Tom Hanna, erected in 1942 and 1947, respectively, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining structures of the historic period (1849- 1914). The markers are associated with John Muir's eldest daughter and son- in- law and are situated within the Strentzel- Muir cemetery enclosure. The LCS currently lists the markers as contributing structures.

**Iron picket fence enclosure and gate (HB-17)**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* John Hanna, one of Tom and Wanda Hanna's sons, surrounded the gravemarkers and the granite enclosure with a cyclone fence to forestall vandalism in the 1960s. Sometime after 1993, the American Land Conservancy replaced this fence with an iron picket fence with a locked gate opposite the entryway.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The iron picket fence, erected after 1993, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic structure of the historic period

(1849- 1914). However, the design and scale are compatible with the setting of the cemetery, and the materials are a reasonable protection for the site.

### **Bridge abutment**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In the early 1960s, a realtor constructed a bridge over the Arroyo del Hambre near the northeast corner of the parcel to provide prospective homebuyers access to new lots on the other side of the creek, along Wanda Way. The bridge was removed in 1980, leaving only the concrete abutments. The abutment on the Gravesite Unit side is about ten- foot- tall but is not visible due to its remote location along the creek bank away from the gravesite. The structure will be used as a headwall for the culvert project.<sup>59</sup>

*Evaluation:* Non- contributing – Incompatible

The bridge abutment, a remnant of a feature constructed in the 1960s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a character- defining structure of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, its remote location at the gravesite makes it unnoticed by a majority of visitors.

## **MT. WANDA UNIT – (WA)**

### **WA: CIRCULATION (FIGURE 8.51)**

#### **Farm road, Strain Ranch**

*Historic Condition:* The eastern portion of this road may have existed in some form to provide access to the bungalow, constructed c.1910, from Alhambra Valley Road. It likely extended from the bungalow to the west to provide access to corrals, pens, and pasture areas in this flat area and on the slopes of Mt. Wanda.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Between 1930 and 1968, several barns and other portable buildings were constructed west of the bungalow. Use of the road likely increased in 1978 when a second single- family residence was built around 1978 west of the corral areas. Today, the road connects these two houses. The road exists as a broad earthen and gravel pull out area off Alhambra Valley Road and then becomes a two- track earthen and gravel lane alongside the corrals and the house. It is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional documentation will be needed to determine the history of this feature. However, the road's layout, width, and surface material evoke the appearance of an old farm road. Most of the road is located within the park's Mt. Wanda development zone.

**Main fire road and other fire roads**

*Historic Condition:* During their frequent walks to Mt. Wanda, Muir and his family probably reached the upper slopes of Mt. Wanda on some form of roads or trails. These routes and possibly others may also have been used to move livestock to grazing areas on the open upper slopes during Tom Hanna's tenure as ranch manager.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Any remnant roads and trails from the historic period were likely used to some degree for grazing operations by Tom Hanna, his heirs, and subsequent owners of the land. Today, the main fire road begins at the extreme northeast corner of Mt. Wanda. The trail begins near the northwest corner of the CALTRANS park and ride lot and ascends the east slope in a southerly direction, turns west and passes the nature trail loop, and then heads southwesterly along a high open ridge and eventually off site. Three other fire roads intersect with the main fire road, two of which lead to the Strain Ranch. The widths and surfaces of the all of the roads vary considerably from broad earthen and gravel sections, to two distinct lanes, to barely perceptible grass traces. The only specific information regarding the main fire road is that it was developed after World War Two. In 1996, repairs were made to the culverts, catch basins, and concrete masonry pipes along the main fire road. Other fire roads were improved with new low water crossings.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research needs to be conducted to determine the history of the main fire road and other fire roads to determine if these routes may have existed in some form during the historic period. Despite the lack of context, the layout, widths, and surface materials of the fire roads evoke an undeveloped appearance.

**California State Riding and Hiking Trail**

*Historic Condition:* Not present. This part of the trail is the approximate upper extent of the historic hillside pear orchard that filled the lower northern slopes of Mt. Wanda.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* Although its former route is not known, new construction associated with State Route 4 in the mid- 1960s required relocation of this trail, and this alignment exists today. The new route descends from the hills to the west, crosses the Canyon Way cul- de- sac, passes alongside the House Unit's southwest corner, and then travels through the tunnel under the highway. On the other side, the trail heads eastward along the lower slope of Mt. Wanda and passes under the trestle to the park and ride lot, and then continues east. The width of the trail closest to the House Unit averages between ten and twelve feet. In this section, the earthen gravel surface is in poor condition with many runnels. The surface of the trail in the tunnel is currently compacted earth. On the Mt. Wanda side, the trail is approximately ten feet wide and features a compacted earth and grass surface scoured by numerous deep runnels. There is a section of broad wood steps at Franklin Canyon Road and a run of concrete swale on the upslope side. The trail is managed by the East Bay Regional Park District.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The California State Riding and Hiking Trail, developed after the historic period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The design and materials used along the trail, however, evoke the appearance of an undeveloped old path that is compatible with the historic character.

**Park and ride lot**

*Historic Condition:* Historic photographs show the lower slopes of Mt. Wanda planted in pear trees and suggest the southeast farm road passed under the railroad trestle in this area.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Sometime between 1921 and 1955, a house was built in this low flat area situated south of the railroad viaduct, at the northeast slope of Mt. Wanda. After State Route 4 was redesigned in the late 1960s, the house was removed and the area bounded by Franklin Canyon Road and Alhambra Avenue was redeveloped by CALTRANS as a park and ride lot. Today, in addition to that role, the lot also serves as the primary trailhead parking area for visitors hiking up to Mt. Wanda. The earthen gravel lot is accessed from Franklin Canyon Road and is bounded by wood timber wheel stops. Unmarked spaces are shoehorned amongst scattered conifers that have been retained over the years.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The park and ride lot, developed in the 1960s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although the use of earthen and wood materials and the retention of trees around the perimeter soften the appearance of the parking area, this type of land use is not historic. The parking area is, however, a necessary provision for visitors to Mt. Wanda.

**Nature trail loop**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Condition:* In the 1990s, a 1.3- mile nature trail loop was developed off the main fire road along the upper north slope. The single- track earthen trail features several wood footbridges, benches, information kiosks, and interpretive signs. Numbered guideposts correspond to a brochure available at the kiosk. The trail offers views of the Franklin Creek Windmill and a portion of the west and middle orchard spaces in the House Unit as well as a panoramic view of the Alhambra Valley, City of Martinez, and the Straits of Carquinez. Although non- historic, the trail is inconspicuous in the landscape and provides access to historic viewsheds.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

The nature trail loop, developed in the 1990s, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic circulation feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The design and materials used on the trail, however, evoke the appearance of an old path that is compatible with the historic character.

**WA: VEGETATION (FIGURE 8.52)****Woodlands and grasslands**

*Historic Condition:* Since the 1840s, when Mt. Wanda was part of the Cañada del Hambre, the scattered woodlands and grasslands were used for timber production and grazing activities. By 1885, the land was folded into the massive Strentzel- Muir Ranch, but unlike most of the other ranch parcels was largely left to be a natural place except for the lower slopes. Mrs. Strentzel admired the “dark green of the buckeye, laurel (California bay), and live oaks” from her vantage at the Alhambra ranch house and envisioned a time when “other generations will be here to enjoy the scene.” In the same spirit, Muir chose to preserve the hills for their beauty, natural character, and

botanical variety and maintained it as a preserve for frequent walks and botany excursions with his daughters, friends, and colleagues. On these walks they viewed such plants as brodiaea or larkspur, bright with red Indian paint brush on rocky slopes, open glades full of buttercups, and maidenhair ferns situated next to little springs.<sup>60</sup>

A photograph from c.1905 illustrates the contrast between the wooded upper north slope of Mt. Wanda and the treeless hillsides across the valley to the east.<sup>61</sup> After 1906, Tom Hanna began grazing cattle, horses, and hogs in the hills south and west of Redfern Place, and some of this activity may have occurred on top of Mt. Wanda.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1939 aerial shows that the upper slopes of Mt. Wanda were mostly grassland bordered by patches of woodlands that extended down into the ravines and draws of the mountain. At that time, the steeper- sloped northern and eastern sides were more wooded than the southern and western slopes. In 1960s, even as the Alhambra Valley was transformed from a mostly agricultural landscape to a suburban landscape, the pattern endured, and in 1988 inspired the park to acquire Mt. Wanda as both a representation of the upper Alhambra Valley during the historic period and as backdrop for the Muir House. The Strain family began grazing cattle on the upper slopes beginning in the 1950s, and this use as well as hay production continued off and on until 1996.<sup>62</sup> An inventory of native and non- native vegetation on Mt. Wanda conducted in 2002 identified the two dominant types of vegetation – grasslands and blue oak woodlands – as well as mixed evergreen forest and chaparral.<sup>63</sup> The report identified a few small areas of native grasses but was not specific.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

Woodlands and grasslands contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although the exact boundaries of these two areas have changed since then because of natural growth, the overall pattern of hillside woodlands and upland grasslands remains intact.

**Eucalyptus trees (2), lower north slope**

*Historic Condition:* A planting of eucalyptus trees on the Redfern Place was referenced in 1877 diary entry by Mrs. Strentzel.<sup>64</sup> Although the exact location of this planting is not known, they are likely part of a mass that appears in a historic photograph from the late 1890s, which shows numerous tall eucalyptus trees along and near Franklin Creek south of the Martinez Adobe.

These two blue gum eucalyptus trees may have been planted to shade the corrals and barns that were located in this area, as suggested in a photograph from c.1901.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The aerial photograph from 1939 suggests that the construction of the Arnold Industrial Highway likely took out some of the eucalyptus trees in this area. The photograph also suggests some were retained along the banks of the creek north of the road, while a few appear as a conspicuous mass direct across the road to the south. When the highway was upgraded to a full freeway in the 1960s the trees on the north side were removed and the creek was diverted into a culvert under the highway. However, the trees on the south side were retained, and today are upwards of 200' tall.

The trees are located in a flat area east of the Maintenance Building at the site of a proposed parking lot that will accommodate thirty- three cars and two buses. A "Technical Assistance Report" produced by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in 2002 noted that the 1991 GMP/EA recommended retaining large existing trees on this tract unless determined to be hazardous. To this end, the report recommended consultations with an arborist to determine their age, condition, and anticipated health if surrounded by a parking lot. An alternative layout from the report that preserves the trees in a protected island is discussed in Chapter 5 and shown in Figure 5.35.

However, as of October 31, 2004, the design plan for the parking lot has been approved and will take out the trees. According to the Environmental Assessment for this parking lot project:

...it became apparent that the proposed parking lot and large eucalyptus cannot coexist in the same area because the crown spread of the tree and the potential health and safety challenges. Eucalyptus has a tendency for "summer drop", meaning limbs will sometimes break off the tree and drop without warning and in good weather. Even if the tree were adequately pruned and maintained it would not be prudent to allow public use, especially school groups, to use the site around the tree. A fence would have to be constructed about 25 feet from the base of the tree, effectively eliminating adequate space for parking.<sup>65</sup>

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The two eucalyptus trees, likely dating from the 1890s, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). Their growth conveys the passage of time and adds to the historic character. The trees, which are the last remnants of the corral and stable areas that were located in this vicinity, are some of the tallest in the park.



**Walnut trees, lower north slopes**

*Historic Condition:* These trees may date from the historic period, but there is no historic record of their existence. Walnut trees were planted in the west orchard space during the historic period, which at that time extended south to Franklin Creek and possibly up the lower slope of Mt. Wanda.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Scattered groupings of California black walnut and English walnut trees are growing on the lower northeast and northwest slopes of Mt. Wanda, roughly between the park and ride lot and the maintenance building. The California black walnut is listed as “species of concern” by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.<sup>66</sup>

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

There is not adequate documentation available for this area from the historic period. The walnut trees may be original or may be volunteers from seed.

**Apricot orchard**

*Historic Condition:* This orchard is located on the south- facing slope overlooking the Strain Ranch. Although there are no direct historical references to this orchard, an inventory of native and non- native vegetation on Mt. Wanda conducted in 2002 concluded that the apricots dated to the time of John Muir.<sup>67</sup> According to a historic map from 1885, the land was owned by Dr. Strentzel.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The 1939 aerial provides the first photographic view of the orchard and reveals broken rows oriented in a northeast- southwest direction set within a large open meadow. This pattern is no longer evident today as only a few trees remain. They currently are not maintained by the park and appear to be in fair to poor condition.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The apricot trees, possibly dating from as early as 1885, contribute to the significance of the park as character- defining vegetation features of the historic period (1849- 1914). However, because of the loss of trees and the continued decline of those that remain, there is a reasonable expectation that the character of this orchard may continue to diminish.

**Olive orchard**

*Historic Condition:* Unknown.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Little information is available regarding this orchard, which is situated on a high east- facing hillside south of the Strain Ranch. It may be the orchard visible in the 1930 aerial photograph (Figure 4.6). The orchard is not maintained, and according to the 2002 vegetation inventory, the species is considered weedy and is spreading into the adjacent mixed evergreen forest.<sup>68</sup> The orchard is not visible from Alhambra Valley Road or the Strain Ranch area. The trees are likely cultivated varieties.

*Evaluation:* *Undetermined*

Additional research and field study will be needed to determine the age, condition, and extent of the olive orchard.

**WA: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (FIGURE 8.53)****Bungalow**

*Historic Condition:* The bungalow was constructed in c.1910 in a draw on the east side of Mt. Wanda along Alhambra Valley Road, opposite the Alhambra ranch house. This area also included corrals, pens, and pastures for livestock. It is not clear who lived in the house, but it may have been a tenant or staff housing, or perhaps even the residence of one of Muir's relatives given its close proximity to the Alhambra ranch house.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* No information is available regarding the post- historic history of the building. This building is part of a complex visible in the 1939 aerial.

*Evaluation:* *Undetermined*

According to the California State Historic Preservation Office, the bungalow had no direct connection to John Muir. However, the bungalow dates from Muir's time and was on land that he owned. Its close proximity to the Alhambra ranch house suggests a link that should be explored with additional research.

**Strain Ranch buildings and structures**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* From 1930- 1968, four barns and several small portable buildings were built near the bungalow. This complex is

visible in the 1939 aerial. In 1978, a second single- family residence was built west the corral areas. The complex is leased until 2012 to the Strain family.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research needs to be conducted to determine the history of the other buildings and structures at the Strain Ranch.

### **Stock ponds and earthen dams**

*Historic, Post- historic, and Existing Conditions:* Although construction dates of the dams and associated ponds are not known, they may have been developed sometime after 1906 when Tom Hanna began grazing livestock on Mt. Wanda or in the 1950s when the Strain family used these areas for grazing. The western- most stock pond was breached by the NPS in 1993.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research needs to be conducted to determine the history of the stock ponds and earthen dams at Mt. Wanda.

## **PARK-WIDE FEATURES – (PW)**

### **PW: SMALL-SCALE FEATURES – FENCES AND GATES (FIGURE 8.54)**

#### **Boundary fences and gates, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* The earliest evidence of the use of fencing and gates at the Redfern Place comes from a photograph from the late 1880s, taken from near the large barn on the west side of Franklin Canyon Road. In addition to three- board and barbed wire fencing around the corrals, it suggests the presence of a picket fence and gate along the road opposite the Martinez Adobe. Another reference to a fence in this area dates from the early 1890s when Muir planted Cherokee roses along a fence between adobe and road. In 1908, the 4.83- acre Muir Homestead parcel was established. Research of two photographs from c.1910 as well as the 1915 plat map show that post and wire fencing was situated along its southeast, south, and part of the west boundaries. The photographs also show a gate across the main farm road. According to a 1915 plat map, the homestead property line followed Franklin Creek north of the main farm road and then turned easterly to hook into the fence along the lower east slope of the knoll, near the fourth incense cedar north of the Alhambra well. Although not visible in historic photographs, these latter two sections were presumably fenced in the same manner as the rest of the Homestead. Today, the fence lines comprise part of the House Unit's boundary.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Although the park was established in 1964, it was not until 1967 that the 8.9- acre property was enclosed with fencing. Extension arms and barbed wire were added to a chain link fence erected earlier by the State of California on the south property line situated at the bottom of the highway fill slope.<sup>69</sup> The remainder of the park was enclosed with a six to seven- foot- tall cyclone chainlink fencing with vertical redwood pickets (Rustake) attached to concrete post foundations. Most sections Locked gates were positioned at various points along the fences. Other gates included a turnstile at the park's main entrance, a breakaway gate at the main farm road entrance at Franklin Canyon Road to accommodate service and emergency vehicles, and a swing gate adjacent to the Franklin Creek Bridge to raise during high water events. In 1970, part of the north- west boundary fence was temporarily removed to facilitate construction of a retaining wall on an adjacent residential property and in 1976 a rupture in the sewer system damaged a section of this fencing.<sup>70</sup> In 1982, the swing gate was replaced after flood waters lodged overgrown vegetation against it. In 1998, most of the park's gates and boundary fences were rehabilitated. Today, the fences are in good condition, but their appearance varies greatly. Some sections feature painted light brown or dark brown pickets inserted vertically in the chain link fabric, while others do not. Some sections of fence are attached to unpainted posts, while other sections are on brown painted posts. Sections around the parking lot, Alhambra Avenue, State Route 4, and Canyon Way are topped with three strand runs of barbed wire attached to extension arms. There are several areas where the large sections of pickets are missing or damaged, which allow for views into the adjacent properties.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

Boundary fencing at the House Unit, originally installed in 1967 and rehabilitated in 1998, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Although portions of the fence follow the alignment of the Muir Homestead established in 1908, a majority of the fencing serves to delineate the unit's boundaries. However, the design, materials, and scale of the fences generally blend into the landscape.

**Boundary fences and gates, Mt. Wanda Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Several historic photographs from the historic period show a run of barbed wire and two or three- board fencing separating the pear orchard on the north slope of Mt. Wanda from the woodlands upslope. On portions of the upper slopes of Mt. Wanda, livestock was grazed by Tom

Hanna after 1906, and it can be presumed that some type of fencing was used.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Fencing and gates were undoubtedly used to control grazing on Mt. Wanda, which continued periodically after Muir's death until 1996. Today, a variety of barbed wire, woven wire, and board fences as well as steel and tubular steel swing gates supported by wood and steel posts are in use.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Compatible*

Boundary fencing at the Mt. Wanda Unit, likely installed after the historic period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). Except for the steel segments, the design, materials, and scale of the fencing used today is likely similar to what was used during the historic period.

#### **Oil valves fence, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The park's first fence was erected not along the property line but around the easement dedicated to the Union Oil Company valves and alongside the California State Riding and Hiking Trail in 1964.<sup>71</sup> For additional security, a second fence and gate were installed in 1968 inside the original fence, and in 1970 the Union Oil Company installed a manhole and valve box.<sup>72</sup> In 1987, negotiations commenced with Southern Pacific Pipe Lines regarding their installation of a new sixteen- inch pipeline within their easement. This work was completed in 1991 and involved the removal of four lemon trees. In 1998, this fence, along with most of the park's gates and boundary fences were rehabilitated. Today, the oil valve easement area within the fence is bare ground. Several plants are situated on the park- side of the fence and are all that remain of a larger planting; frequent spraying within the easement killed many of the plants. As such, cyclone (Rustake) fence around the valves is clearly visible today, but it effectively blocks views of the valves. The fence features painted light brown or dark brown pickets inserted vertically in the chain link fabric. Some of the posts are also painted, and the entire fence is topped with three strand runs of barbed wire attached to extension arms.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The fencing at the utility easement, installed in 1964 and 1968 and rehabilitated in 1998, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is

no historic precedent for a fence of this type in this area. However, the design, materials, and scale of the fencing generally blends into the landscape while screening distracting features.

**PW: SMALL-SCALE FEATURES – SIGNS (FIGURE 8.55)**

**California historical markers monument (HB-11), main park sign, and hours of operation sign, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* In 1939, the Muir House was designated a California Registered Historical Landmark (#312) in 1939. The Martinez Adobe was designated a California Registered Historical Landmark (#511) in c.1955. In 1983, a public dedication ceremony was held to erect California Historic Landmark plaques for the Muir House and the Martinez Adobe in front of the Visitor Center.<sup>73</sup> They were set into a wedge- shaped stone structure measuring eight- feet long, four feet wide, and thirty inches- wide at the base and tapering to twelve inches- wide at the top. The two plaques measure twenty- four inches by thirty- six inches and are set in the sloping south side. There is a smaller plaque on the east side. The structure is in good condition today. The two- sided main park sign is situated in a grass panel along Alhambra Avenue. The plastic sign measures four feet by eight feet and is attached to three wood posts. The sign is approximately eight feet tall and features white block lettering on a brown painted background and the NPS logo. This sign replaced an earlier version that features script lettering. A small wood sign displaying park hours is situated next to the California historical markers monument.

*Evaluation:* Non- contributing – Incompatible

The California historical markers monument (HB- 11), main park sign, and hours of operation sign, installed during the NPS period at the Visitor Center, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historic precedent for these features in this area.

**Interpretive signs, kiosks, and marker signs, Park-wide**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Most of the park's interpretive signs are located at the Visitor Center where they are attached to the patio retaining wall. The screen- printed and fiberglass- embedded panels are set within wood frames and are beginning to fade and crack because of

prolonged exposure to the sun. Marker posts that are positioned along the main roads in the House Unit and along the nature trail at Mt. Wanda are four inch- square posts. The tops of the posts are cut at angles and feature numbers that correspond to a trail brochure available for purchase at the Visitor Center. The signposts are in generally good condition. There are two kiosks on Mt. Wanda; one along the main fire road at the park and ride lot and another at the eastern terminus of the nature trail loop. Both are wood structures approximately four feet wide and eight feet tall with gabled roofs. Plexiglass frames display park maps and trail regulations and information.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

Waysides, kiosks, and marker signs throughout the park, installed during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historic precedent for these features in the landscape. However, their design, materials, and scale generally blend into the landscape.

#### **PW: SMALL-SCALE FEATURES – BENCHES (FIGURE 8.56)**

##### **Benches, Park-wide**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Although the designs vary, most of the benches are approximately four feet- long, are constructed of dimensional lumber, and are in good condition. The seating benches on the Visitor Center patio and east of the Muir House are prefabricated wood. About half of the benches within the House Unit include back rests, while the benches along the Mt. Wanda trails are backless. In general, the design, materials, and scale are compatible with the historic scene.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The benches throughout the park, installed during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no historic precedent for these features in the landscape. However, their design, materials, and scale generally blend into the landscape.

#### **PW: SMALL-SCALE FEATURES – MISCELLANEOUS (FIGURE 8.57)**

##### **Sprayer, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Horse drawn sprayers were used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to delivered herbicides and pesticides to the

fruit trees. This sprayer dates to c.1900 and was manufactured by the Bean Spring Company. It is not known if it was used on site.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Need more info. The sprayer is located at the east end of the north orchard near the Visitor Center retaining wall. It was donated by John Hanna in 1987, the oldest of the surviving Muir grandchildren and the only remaining grandchild that was born during the lifetime of Muir.

*Evaluation: Contributing*

The spayer, which dates from c.1900 and installed during the NPS period, contributes to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914).

#### **Fruit box, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The fruit box is situated along the main farm road northeast of the Martinez Adobe. The wood box is mounted on four rebars and features a lid and a bin within which fruit from the orchards is displayed and available to the public. The fruit crate is not level, but otherwise is in good condition. Its design and materials are compatible with the historic scene.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The fruit box, installed during the NPS period, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for this feature in the landscape. However, its design, material, and scale are generally in keeping with the historic scene.

#### **Picnic tables and grill, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The picnic tables and grill are located in the middle of the west orchard under the two pecan trees. The area is used by school groups. The tables and grill are in good condition but interrupt the rhythm of the orchard rows. There are also picnic tables north of the Visitor Center and at the ramada; because of their locations, they do not adversely affect the historic setting.



*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The picnic tables and grill, installed during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for these features in the landscape. The tables and grill in the west orchard detract from the rhythm of the orchard rows and from the historic scene. The picnic tables north of the Visitor Center and at the ramada (both are in the park's development zone) are not as noticeable in the landscape.

**Water faucets and hoses, House Unit and Gravesite Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Water faucets and hoses are situated throughout the House Unit (there is also one at the Gravesite Unit) and are used to irrigate the fruit trees, vines, and other plantings. Most are located along the boundary fences, although some are located within the orchard spaces.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The water faucets and hoses, installed during the NPS period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for these features in the landscape. Most are located along the boundary fences are not noticeable.

**Beehive oven, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A beehive oven was constructed south of the Martinez Adobe in 1992 for use by the Environmental Education Program. The structure was constructed by park employee Brian Garrett with federal funds associated with the 400th anniversary celebration of the sailing of Christopher Columbus. The structure, painted white and situated on a square brick base, is in good condition.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The beehive oven, constructed in 1992, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for this

feature in the landscape. Although the white color of the beehive is noticeable, the structure is located in a relatively remote area of the park.

#### **Adobe brick-making pit, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* The Martinez Adobe was constructed of adobe bricks on the banks of Franklin Creek, but the exact location is not known.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The brick- making pit is located on the south edge of the west orchard space and consists of a rectangular pit, numerous “forms” for brick making, and a backless wood bench. The date of construction for this feature is not known.

*Evaluation:* *Non- contributing – Compatible*

The adobe brick- making pit, constructed by the NPS, does not contribute to the significance of the park as a characteristic small- scale feature of the historic period (1849- 1914). The design and materials of this feature evoke a historic construction technique that was likely used to construct the adobe.

#### **Hydrothermograph, beehive, trash receptacles, and security light, House Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* The hydrothermograph is situated along the west bank of Franklin Creek, next to the native plant garden. The beehive is located nearby and closer to the Franklin Creek culvert. A sign warns visitors to use caution when approaching the beehive. The security light is attached to a black- painted pole northeast of the Muir House at the top of the carriage drive- loop. Several trash receptacles are located at the Visitor Center patio and in other locations around the park. They are encased in wood frames to blend into the surrounding landscape. The installation dates of these features are not known.

*Evaluation:* *Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The hydrothermograph, beehive, trash cans, and security light, installed by the NPS, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for these features in the landscape.

#### **Livestock structures, Mt. Wanda Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Tom Hanna grazed livestock on Mt. Wanda after 1906, and this activity likely included watering troughs and other structures.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* Several troughs, cisterns, and other structures are scattered throughout Mt. Wanda and are remnants of past grazing activities. Many are visible from the network of fire roads.

*Evaluation: Undetermined*

Additional research will be needed to determine the history and function of these structures.

#### **Weather station and radio repeater, Mt. Wanda Unit**

*Historic Condition:* Not present.

*Post- historic and Existing Conditions:* A weather station and a radio repeater are situated on two hilltops within the grasslands atop Mt. Wanda. Both are accessible via the fire roads and visible from numerous areas.

*Evaluation: Non- contributing – Incompatible*

The weather station and radio repeater, installed after the historic period, do not contribute to the significance of the park as characteristic small- scale features of the historic period (1849- 1914). There is no documented historic precedent for these features in the landscape. The design and materials of these features distract from the historic scene.

#### **ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER EIGHT**

<sup>1</sup> “Background Information For Vital Signs LTEM Monitoring Workshop,” undated report: 4. JOMU files.

<sup>2</sup> JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>3</sup> Background Information For Vital Signs LTEM Monitoring Workshop, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.” Denver, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, January 1991: 41.

<sup>6</sup> Eric P. B. Jepsen and Andrew G. Murdock, “Inventory of Native and Non- Native Vegetation on John Muir National Historic Site, Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, and Port Chicago National Monument.” PRBO Conservation Science, Spring 2002: 22.

<sup>7</sup> Martinez Chamber of Commerce Date: (undated); JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Sunset Western Garden Book*. Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Publishing Corporation, 1996: 28.

<sup>9</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey in April 1965. JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>10</sup> “Notes from Viticulture Class,” 15 January 1975 (author unknown). JOMU files.

<sup>11</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 14.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Herb Thurman, Chief of Maintenance to Regional Chief of Interpretation, Western Region, 13 December 1993. JOMU files.

<sup>13</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 7- 10.

<sup>15</sup> For a complete list of threatened and endangered species as well as locally rare species, see Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 16.

<sup>16</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 37.

<sup>17</sup> A photograph from c.1923 (Figure 4.6) informed the decision regarding the cobblestones. See Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 2 October 1981 (Reference No. 97). PWRO folder “JOMU Folder 1973- 1994.”

<sup>18</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>19</sup> Telephone conversation with Kimball Koch, 2 September 2003.

<sup>20</sup> James K. Agee, “Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site.” San Francisco: CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 43.

<sup>21</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>22</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>23</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>24</sup> Information from Jose Figuerado, 1967- 1968. JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>25</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –

<http://memebbers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Notes from Faire S. Sax when visiting Helen Muir at her home in Spokane in 1958. Transcribed by Hussey, April 1965. Copy in JOMU files, Park Maintenance Binder 1.

<sup>29</sup> “List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site.”

<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>30</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California.” San Francisco, CA: US Department

of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 4.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Chief, Park Historic Preservation, Western Region to Superintendent, Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on the Cultural Resources, 29 March 1993 (reference No. WR 1433). PWRO folder "JOMU Folder 1973- 1994."

<sup>32</sup> "List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site."  
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>33</sup> Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938: 339.

<sup>34</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –  
<http://memebers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>35</sup> "List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site."  
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>36</sup> JOMU Landscape Management Plan –  
<http://memebers.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: II.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Comment by Herb Thurman, Treatment Charette, 16 July 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "Superintendent's Report," 2 May 1967: 2. JOMU files.

<sup>47</sup> "List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site."  
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Construct Patio and Repair Road," John Muir National Historic Site, NPS, Western Regional Office, May 1996, Drawing No. 426/80036, Sheets 1- 4. PWRO files.

<sup>50</sup> The only work completed on the parking lot was a resurfacing project in 1989. Completed Actions Affecting Cultural Resources. National Park Service, "Resources Management Plan, John Muir National Historic Site," 1993 Revision: 98.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Acting Chief, Division of Historic Preservation regarding archeological resources at John Muir National Historic Site, 15 August 1974. (Cited in National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment/Master Plan," March 1975: Appendix E).

<sup>52</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 14.

<sup>53</sup> Untitled newspaper clipping from JOMU files. (Cited in P.J. Ryan, "The Muir-Strentzel Hanna Cemetery." Typescript dated 1979: 1).

<sup>54</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 19 March 1881. JOMU files.

<sup>55</sup> Newspaper clipping, 28 April 1930, quoting Linnie Marsh Wolfe (newspaper unknown). (Cited in P.J. Ryan, “The Muir- Strentzel Hanna Cemetery.” Typescript dated 1979: 2).

<sup>56</sup> Richard Inglis, “Stability of Alhambra Creek at the John Muir Gravesite.” Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NRTR- 2002/297. Fort Collins, CO: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Water Resources Division, 2002: 1.

<sup>57</sup> “List of Classified Structures – John Muir National Historic Site.” <http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from George Turnbull, Superintendent of PWRO to Dr. Knox Mellon, State Historic Preservation Officer, 13 December 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Clark 1983: 28.

<sup>61</sup> National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment,” 1991: 37.

<sup>62</sup> From 1976 to 1991, approximately thirty cattle were grazed on Mt. Wanda.

<sup>63</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 7- 10.

<sup>64</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 24 February 1877. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, Diary.

<sup>65</sup> National Park Service, “Environmental Assessment for the John Muir National Historic Site Improvements Project.” Final Report, 29 September 2004: 10.

<sup>66</sup> For a complete list of threatened and endangered species as well as locally rare species, see Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 16.

<sup>67</sup> Jepsen and Murdock, Spring 2002: 23.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 14.

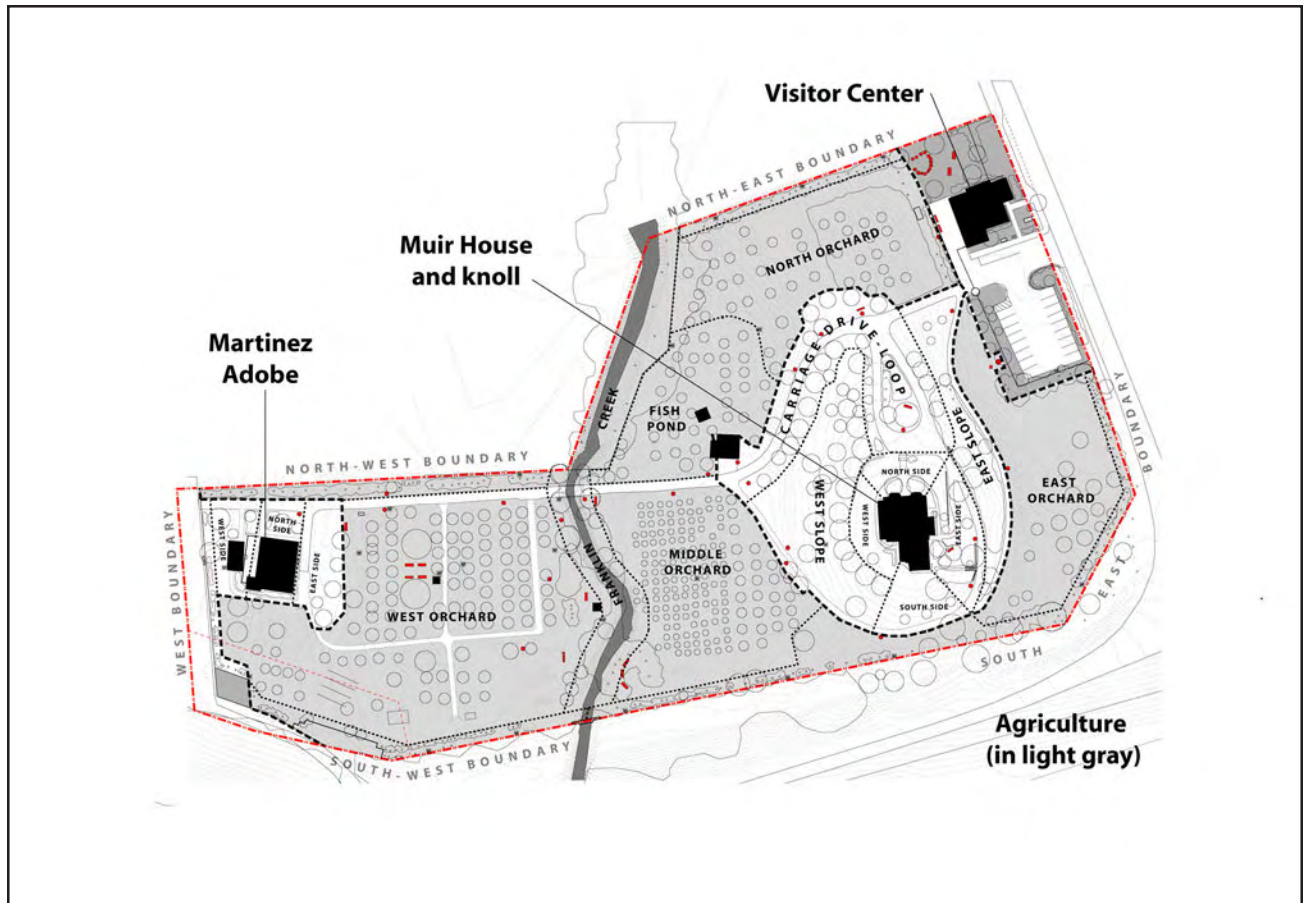
<sup>69</sup> Steve M. Burke, Diane L. Rhodes, Kevin L. Baumgard, Mark L. Tabor, and Charles R. Svoboda, “Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe, John Muir National Historic Site.” Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, August 1992: 60.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 67.

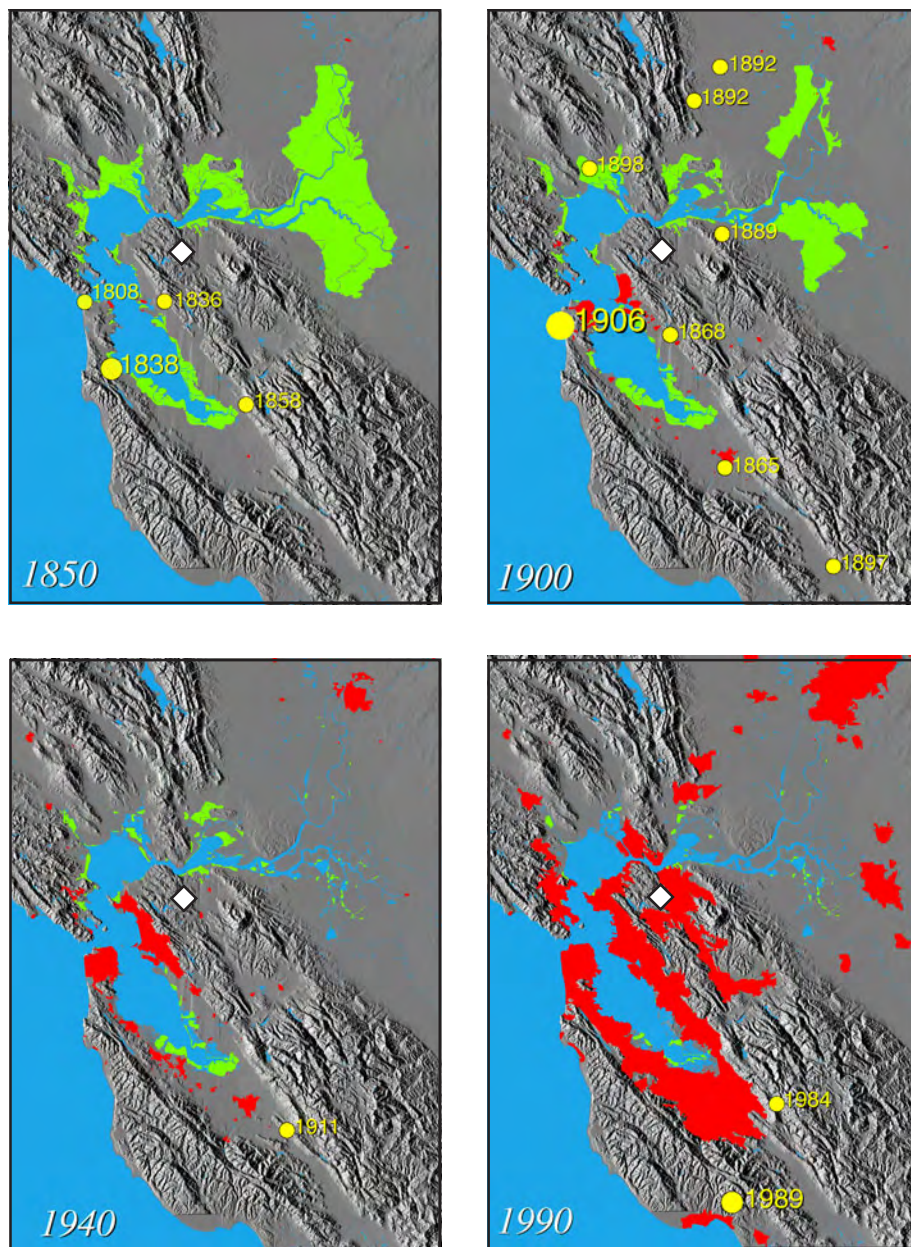
<sup>71</sup> In November 1965, the Steins granted an easement and right- of- way to Southern Pacific Pipelines, Inc. to install an eight- inch gas line through the southwest corner of the adobe property. In August 1966, another easement was conferred to the Union Oil Company for underground pipelines and surface valves across the same area. The Steins officially transferred the 3.63- acre adobe property, consisting of land in Parcels 2 and 3 of the Rancho El Pinole, to the US Government on 15 August 15 1966. The transfer is recorded in Contra Costa County Deeds, Book 5188, 108- 109. (Cited in Burke 1992: 60- 61).

<sup>72</sup> Burke 1992: 64- 67.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 77.



**Figure 8.1: Character areas and feature zones at the House Unit. White areas represent the Muir House and knoll and Martinez Adobe areas, light gray indicates agricultural areas, and dark gray represents the Visitor Center area and utility easement. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.2: Geological and hydrological context: series of USGS maps showing the terrain of the San Francisco Bay region and locations of major earthquakes. The maps also illustrate the change in land use, with the dark gray showing urban areas and the light gray showing tidal wetlands. The white diamond represents the location of the park. (<http://sfbay.wr.usgs.gov/access/IntegratedScience/IntSci.html>).**

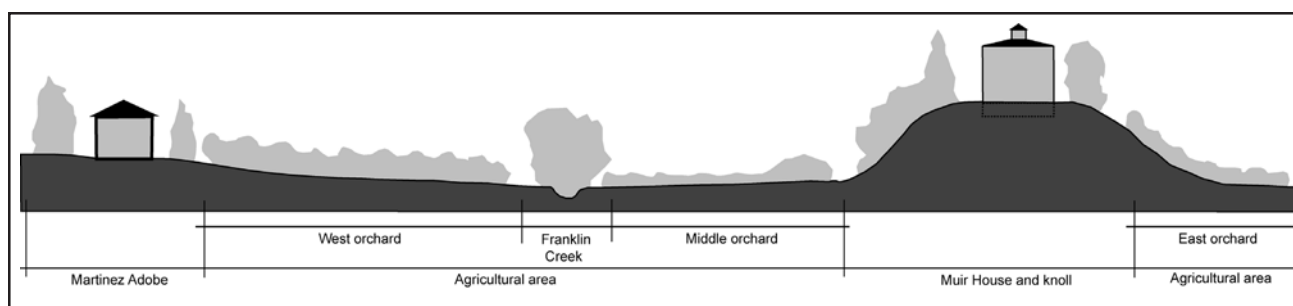




**Figure 8.3: Predominant land use at the House Unit at the end of the historic period and in 2003. Light gray areas indicate agricultural uses; medium gray represents non-agricultural uses, and dark gray indicates contemporary, or park uses. (OCLP, 2003).**

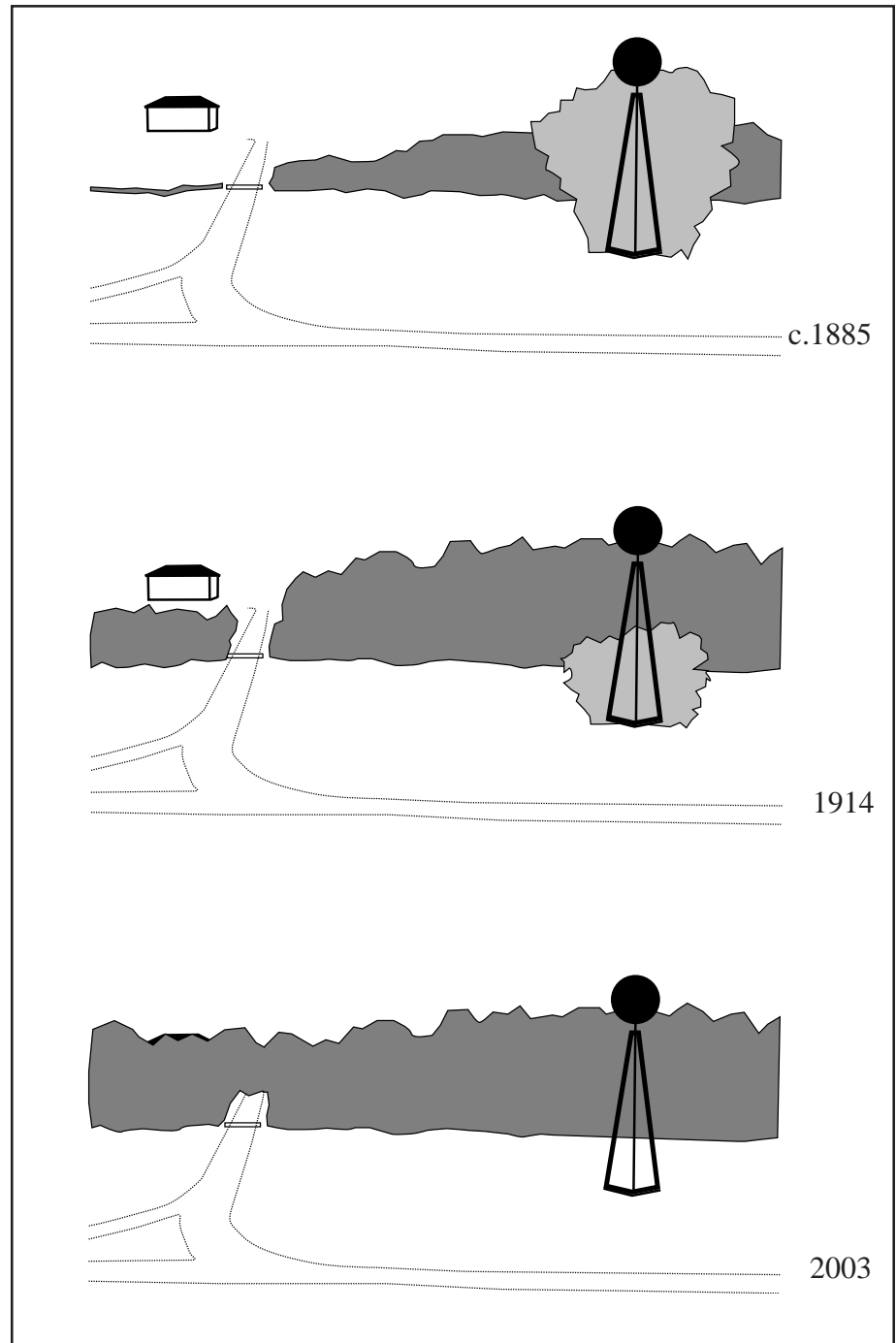


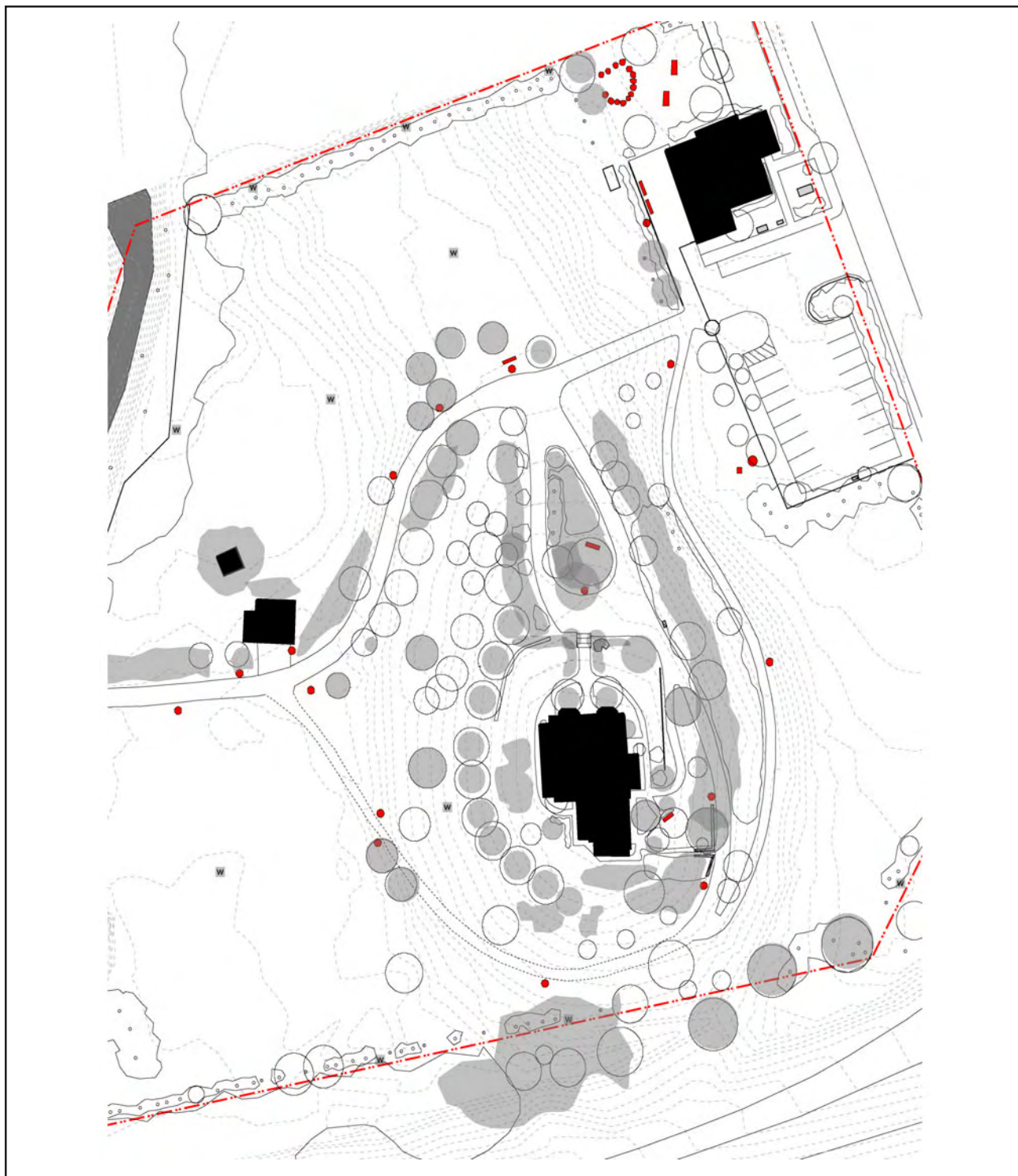
**Figure 8.4: Circulation, buildings, and structures at the House Unit at the end of the historic period and in 2003. Dark lines indicate roads and paths with asphalt and concrete surfaces, and lighter lines represent earthen and gravel surfaces. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.5: East-west cross-section through the House Unit illustrating the topography and land uses. (OCLP, 2003).**

**Figure 8.6: Diagram showing the relative heights of riparian vegetation along Franklin Creek (shaded in dark gray) and around the Franklin Creek Windmill and Well (shaded in light gray). This “view” is based on the c.1885 photograph taken from the west slope of the knoll and looking eastward to the main farm road, bridge, and the Martinez Adobe on the other side of the creek. By 1914, the height of vegetation along both sides of the creek had increased but decreased around the windmill. Today, the creekside vegetation has joined to arch over the road. (OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.7: Individual and mass plantings present in 1914 around the Muir House (shaded in gray and extracted from the 1914 Period Plan) overlaid with plantings present in 2003. (OCLP, 2003).**



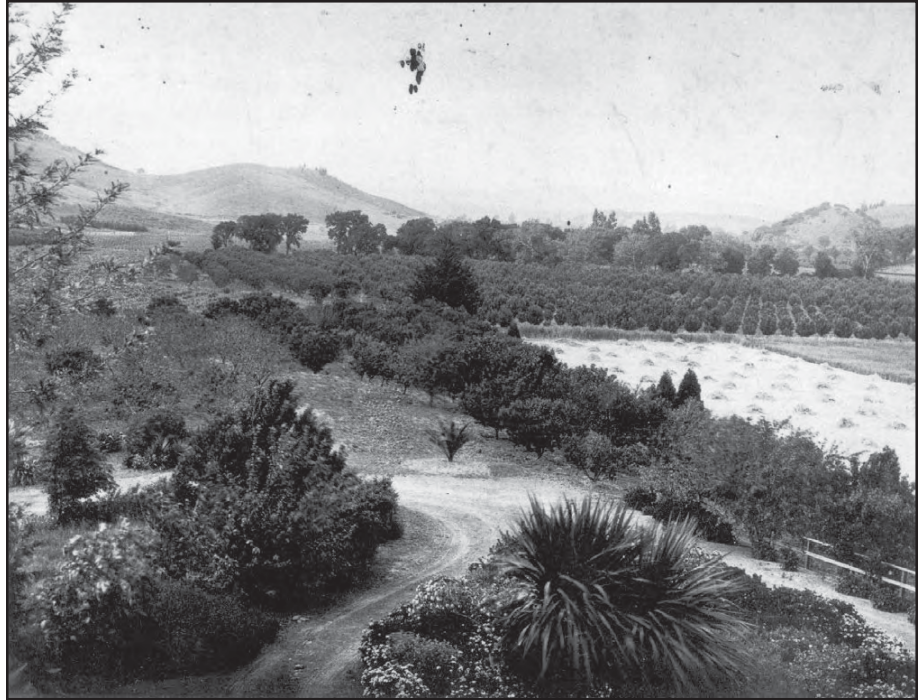


**Figure 8.8: Views looking west from the west slope of the knoll in c.1885 and 2003. (D6-1, Ref: 1885cP17 and OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.9: Views looking southwest from the west slope of the knoll in the late 1890s and 2003. (JOMU, no file # and OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.10: Views looking northeast from the second floor of the Muir House in c.1900-1905 and 2003. (D3-2, JOMU, Ref: 1900-05cP30 and OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.11: Views approaching the Muir House from the west on the main farm road heading towards Franklin Creek (a) and just after passing over it (b). (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.12: Views from the Muir House and knoll looking east toward the State Route 4 westbound off-ramp (a); southeast toward the westbound on-ramp (b); and east toward the Visitor Center, parking lot, and Alhambra Avenue (c). (OCLP, 2003).**

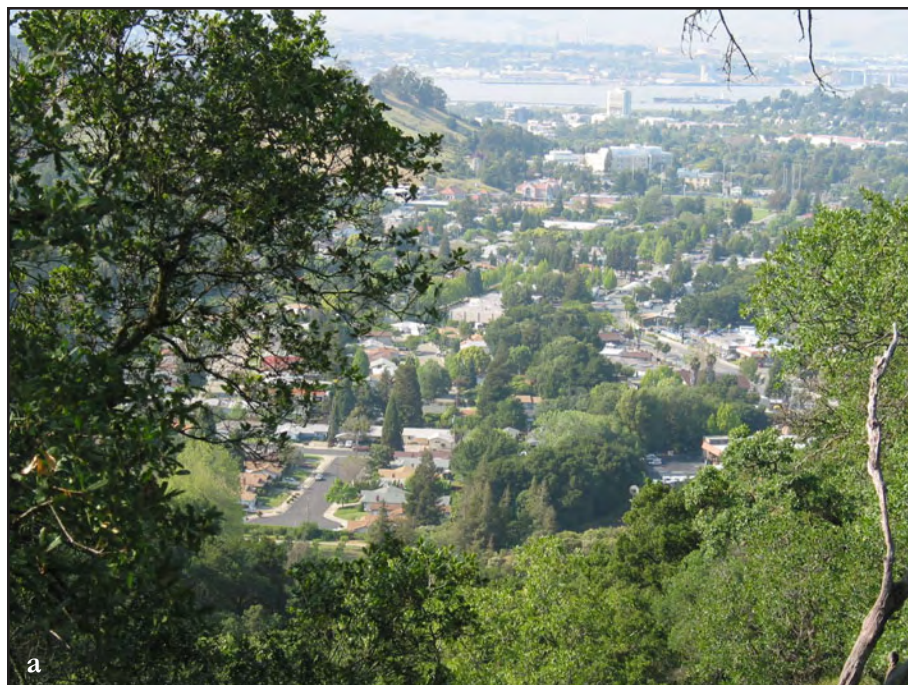




**Figure 8.13: Vegetation screens much of the residential development that surrounds the Gravesite Unit but still allows views of the distant hillsides (a). The exception is the small orchard space in the southern half of the parcel which features a private landowner's vegetable garden (b). (OCLP, 2003).**







**Figure 8.14: Views on Mt. Wanda reveal both changes in the Alhambra Valley and features that Muir would recognize today. The view looking north today offers a glimpse of the Franklin Creek Windmill and orchards in the House Unit, which is bordered by subdivisions that extend down the Alhambra Valley (a). Pastoral scenes of undeveloped hill land gesture to conditions that were likely present during Muir's time (b). (OCLP, 2003).**







**Figure 8.15: Muir House and knoll - Circulation**

(a) Carriage drive-loop, view southwest from bottom of loop; (b) Carriage drive-loop, view south from bottom of loop; (c) Front walk and steps, view south from top of loop; (d) Triangle intersection, view west from west slope of knoll; (e) Woodshed Road, view northwest from the road; (f) Woodshed Road and junction with easy access route, view northeast from the road. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.16: Muir House and knoll - Circulation**  
 (a) Junction from Woodshed Road and east driveway, view south from carriage drive-loop; (b) Walkway in Victorian garden, view west from stone steps; (c) Walkway at incense cedars, view southwest from northwest area of lawn; (d) Fire lane, view west from bottom of knoll; (e) Easy access trail, view south from fire lane. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.17: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (West slope) Incense cedars southwest of Muir House, view east from lower Woodshed Road. (OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.18: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (Carriage drive-loop)**

(a) Carriage drive-loop, view northeast from near fish pond; (b) Carriage drive-loop, view southwest from bottom of loop; (c) Center island of carriage drive-loop, view south from bottom of loop; (d) Center island of carriage drive loop, view north from top of loop; (e) Island and west side of carriage drive-loop, view north from front walkway at Muir House; (f) Island and east side of carriage drive-loop, view north from front walkway at Muir House. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.19: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (East slope)**  
 (a) Grass covered north end of east slope, view south from fire lane; (b) Incense cedar at top of east slope, view south from top of carriage drive- loop. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.20: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (North side and foundation)**  
 (a) California fan palms on north side, view southwest from top of loop; (b) Northeast lawn area, view southeast from top of loop; (c) Rose and vinca in northwest lawn area, view southwest from top of loop. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.21: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (East side and foundation)**

(a) Mourning cypress and iris, view south from bottom of east driveway; (b) Vinca, strawberry tree, and trunk of Canary Island date-palm, view southwest from east driveway; (c) Vinca bed, canopy of Oregon white oak, and mourning cypress, view east from Canary Island date-palm; (d) Small common myrtle and Victorian garden, view east from near kitchen steps of house; (e) Foundation plants on east side, view northwest from top of east driveway. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.22: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (South side and foundation)**  
**Herb garden, view east from southwest side of house.**  
 (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.23: Muir House and knoll - Vegetation (West side and foundation)**  
 (a) Banksia rose, chasmanthe and at far right apple, view south from northwest lawn area; (b) Orange tree and chasmanthe at foundation and privet hedge, view southeast from west lawn. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.24: Muir House and knoll - Buildings and structures**

(a) North (front) and east facades of Muir House, view southwest; (b) South and east facades of Muir House; (c) Stone wall and steps along Woodshed Road, view northwest from road; (d) Brick wall along Woodshed Road, view south from road; (e) South (front) and east facades of Carriage House, view northwest from lower part of Woodshed Road. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.25: Martinez Adobe - Circulation**  
 (a) Driveway on east side of Martinez Adobe, view south from north end of driveway; (b) Gravel path and patio on west side, view southwest from main farm road; (c) Stone path on south side, view east from west boundary fence. (OCLP, 2003).

**Figure 8.26: Martinez Adobe - Vegetation (West boundary)**  
 Western redbud along fence surrounding utility easement, view west from near lemon orchard. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.27: Martinez Adobe - Vegetation (North side and foundation)**  
Trunk of elderberry and canopy of Douglas fir, view west from adobe driveway. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.28: Martinez Adobe - Vegetation (East side and foundation)**  
(a) Quince and coast redwood southwest of adobe and foundation plants in front, view south from driveway; (b) Two Colorado blue spruce frame a white spruce on the east side of the adobe, view west from the oranges in the west orchard space. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.29: Martinez Adobe - Vegetation (West side and foundation)**  
Perennials and lawn area on west side of Martinez Adobe. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.30: Martinez Adobe - Buildings and structures**  
(a) East (front) and south facades of Martinez Adobe, view northwest from orchard; (b) North and west facades of adobe, view southeast from near main farm road. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.31: Agriculture - Circulation**

(a) Main farm road, view east from near Martinez Adobe; (b) Farm lane in west orchard near Franklin Creek, view north from orchard. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.32: Agriculture - Vegetation (North-west boundary)**

(a) Toyons and young figs, view northeast from main farm road; (b) Butterfly-bush, toyon, and star jasmine (on fence), view northeast from main farm road. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.33: Agriculture - Vegetation (South-west boundary)**

**(a) Boundary plantings along south-west fence, view east from near utility easement; (b) Fig and coast live oak on edge of non-historic planting bed, view southeast from west orchard. (OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.34: Agriculture - Vegetation (South-east boundary)**

(a) Large eucalyptus and row of small seedling oaks and redwoods along fence, view west from Woodshed Road; (b) Historic eucalyptus and new highway plantings on CALTRANS property, view south from Woodshed Road; (c) Trunk of historic Canary Island date-palm and mass of coast redwoods and oaks along fence, view east from easy access trail; (d) Distant view of a non-historic Mexican fan palms and coast redwoods and oaks along fence line. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.35: Agriculture - Vegetation (North-east boundary)**  
Oaks and coast redwoods along the north-east fence, view northwest from near patio retaining wall. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.36: Agriculture - Vegetation (Franklin Creek)**  
(a) Massive coast live oaks on the creek side of the boundary fence north of the bridge, view north from near main farm road; (b) Gap in riparian vegetation along Franklin Creek at the bridge, view northwest from east end of bridge. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.37: Agriculture - Vegetation (Franklin Creek)**

**(a) Dense canopy of riparian plants along Franklin creek south of bridge, view north from west creek bank; (b) Native plant garden on west side of Franklin Creek, view northeast from near beehive. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.38: Agriculture - Vegetation (West orchard space)**

**(a) Pear trees in the west orchard, view southwest from main farm road just west of the Franklin Creek Bridge; (b) A California black walnut and an orange tree set within lawn area on south side of the Martinez Adobe, view southwest from gravel portion of driveway. In the background are two tall Deodar cedars.. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.39: Agriculture - Vegetation (Middle orchard space)**  
**Grape vines and plums in middle orchard, view southeast from near Franklin Creek Bridge. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.40: Agriculture - Vegetation (Fish pond space)**  
**(a) Apricots and almonds in upper area of fish pond, view southwest from north orchard; (b) Quince and figs on north side of main farm road, view east from road. (OCLP, 2003).**



**Figure 8.41: Agriculture - Vegetation (North orchard space)**

(a) Almond trees in north orchard, view southwest from near north-east boundary fence; (b) Peach tree near high point of north orchard, view northeast from south side of the orchard. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.42: Agriculture - Vegetation (East orchard space)**

(a) Apple trees in south end of east orchard, view northeast from easy access path; (b) Open north section of east orchard space, view north from near apple trees. (OCLP, 2003).





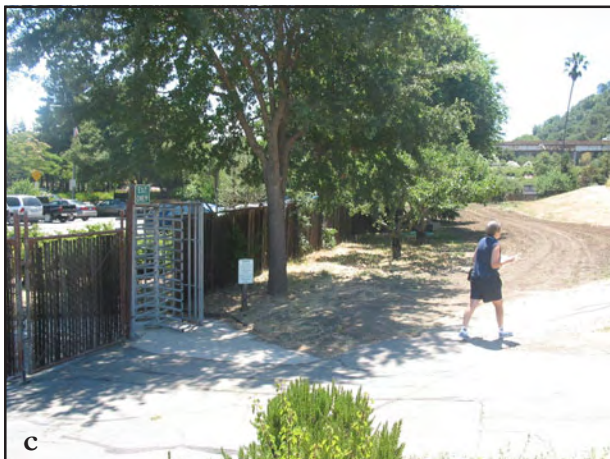
**Figure 8.43: Agriculture - Buildings and structures**  
 (a) Franklin Creek Windmill and Well, view north from grape orchard; (b) Franklin Creek Bridge, view west from main farm road; (c) Alhambra well, view north from near parking lot fence; (d) Top of dam below Franklin Creek Bridge at the park's boundary fence, view north from bridge; (e) Outfall of Franklin Creek culvert that passes under State Route 4. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.44: Visitor Center - Circulation**  
(a) Parking lot and entrance, view southwest from sidewalk along north side of lot; (b) Concrete and brick patio on west side of Visitor Center, view south from patio. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.45: Visitor Center - Vegetation**

(a) Coast live oak and Canary Island date-palm along north-east boundary fence, view north from patio; (b) Perennials and mass of rosemary along patio wall, view southwest from northwest of Visitor Center; (c) California white oak and apples along west parking lot fence, view south from patio retaining wall; (d) Mass of apricot, cork oak, and coast redwood along south parking lot fence, view east from easy access path; (e) Planting beds along east foundation wall, view north; (f) Coulter pine and foundation plants along north wall; view east from lawn. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.46: Visitor Center - Vegetation**

(a) Lawn area on northeast side of Visitor Center, view west from near boundary fence; (b) Mass of toyons in parking lot island, view southwest from parking lot. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.47: Visitor Center - Buildings and structures**

(a) Visitor Center, view north from parking lot entrance; (b) South end of patio retaining wall, view southwest from patio. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.48: Gravesite - Circulation**  
(a) View looking north at Strentzel Lane, a paper street, from the entrance clearing at the Gravesite Unit; b) View looking south at the same street and the entrance opening at mid-left. Both were photographed prior to recent plantings of olives. (OCLP, 2003).





a



b



c



d



e

**Figure 8.49: Gravesite - Vegetation**

(a) Remnant pear trees from the historic orchard occupying the northern half of the parcel, view northeast; (b) Non-historic pear and peach trees and a vegetable garden in the southern wedge of the property, view southwest; (c) Oleander and Sitka spruce frame the pedestrian entrance and designated staff parking area, view west; (d) Historic pear trees dwarfed by the historic eucalyptus, view south from orchard; (e) Mass of vinca under a canopy of riparian vegetation south of the gravesite, view north. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.50: Gravesite - Buildings and structures**  
 (a) Wrought iron fence on top of the cemetery enclosure that surrounding the graves, view southeast; (b) Strentzel family monument, view southeast; (c) Gravemarkers of John Muir and Louie Strentzel Muir, view southeast. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.51: Mt. Wanda - Circulation**

(a) Entrance of farm road at Strain Ranch, view west from Alhambra Valley Road; (b) Farm road at Strain Ranch, view west from corrals; (c) Lower trailhead of main fire road, view south; (d) Section of California Riding and Hiking Trail on north slope of Mt. Wanda, view east from trail; (e) Park and ride lot at trailhead, view north; (f) Footbridge along nature trail loop, view southwest. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.52: Mt. Wanda - Vegetation**

(a) Grasslands and part of a woodland on a south-facing slope at Mt. Wanda, view east from main fire road; (b) Woodlands and grasslands on top of Mt. Wanda, view northeast from radio repeater tower; (c) Remnant apricot trees on south-facing slope above Mt. Wanda, view north from Strain Ranch farm road; (d) Historic eucalyptus tree at lower north slope of Mt. Wanda. (OCLP, 2003).



**Figure 8.53: Mt. Wanda -  
Buildings and structures  
(a) Earthen dam and pond  
south of main fire road, view  
east; (b) Breached earthen  
dam east of western end of  
main fire road, view  
northwest. (OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.54: Small-scale features - Fences and gates**

(a) Portion of House Unit boundary fence with missing slats, view northwest from fish pond; (b) Portion of west boundary fence at the House Unit, view southwest from main farm road; (c) Portion of wire and board fencing along west boundary of Mt. Wanda, view southwest from main fire road; (d) Interior of Union Oil Company easement at southwest corner of House Unit, view northeast from Canyon Way. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.55: Small-scale features - Signs**

(a, b, c) Trail signs at the House and Mt. Wanda units; (d) California historical marker monument, hours of operation sign, and main park sign at the Visitor Center, view northeast from parking lot; (e) Wayside signs attached to the patio wall at the Visitor Center, view northwest from patio; (f) Bench and interpretive sign off of Mt. Wanda nature trail,, view south; (g) Kiosk and fire danger sign at foot of main fire road on Mt. Wanda, view southwest. (OCLP, 2003).





**Figure 8.56: Small-scale features - Benches**

**(a) Bench at House Unit at Franklin Creek; (b) Two types of benches amongst the redwood grove along Franklin Creek; (c) Bench with back northeast of Martinez Adobe; (d) Bench along main fire road near the park and ride lot. (OCLP, 2003).**





**Figure 8.57: Small-scale features - Miscellaneous**

**(a) Fruit box northeast of Martinez Adobe; (b) Grill and picnic area in west orchard; (c) Beehive oven south of adobe; (d) Adobe brick-making pit in west orchard; (e) Security light northeast of Muir House; (f) Remnant livestock grazing structures on top of Mt. Wanda. (OCLP, 2003).**

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ABRIDGED LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY**

1760s	The Karkin Tribe of the Ohlone Indians lives in this area.
1769	Spanish expeditions find San Francisco Bay; peak of Mission life in California.
1822	Mexico wins independence from Spain.
1823	Don Ignacio Martinez receives 17,700 acre Rancho El Pinole land grant in Contra Costa County; grant is finalized in 1842.
1838	John Muir born on April 21 in Dunbar, Scotland.
1848	United States takes California in war with Mexico; gold discovered at Sutter's Mill.
1849	Vicente Martinez, son of Don Ignacio, inherits 1660- acre portion of Rancho El Pinole land grant, called the Cañada del Hambre, and builds adobe home; Col. William Smith acquires 120 acres from Martinez family and establishes city of Martinez.
1853	Dr. John T. Strentzel buys 20 acres in the Alhambra Valley and builds a house and plants orchard; establishes gravesite for his only son alongside Alhambra Creek in c.1857.
1869	Strentzel extends markets by devising carbonized- bran method of shipping fruit; transcontinental railroad completed.
1874	Strentzel purchases 244- acre Redfern farm; acquisition includes Martinez Adobe, which is used for storage and as a headquarters for the ranch; main farm road likely in place by this time.
1877	Central Pacific Railroad reaches Martinez and provides long-distance shipping for Alhambra Valley produce.
1879	Muir engaged to Dr. Strentzel's daughter, Louie.

1880	Muir marries on April 14 at age 41; the couple moves in with the Strentzels at the Alhambra ranch house.
1881	Daughter Wanda born; Strentzel retires from ranch operations; after third trip to Alaska, Muir returns to assume management of the ranch for the better part of the next ten years; ends period of agricultural experimentation and focuses on the most marketable fruits.
1882	Dr. Strentzel builds 14- room Italianate Victorian house on knoll at the old Redfern farm; Franklin Creek well and windmill constructed, carriage drive loop and southeast farm lane in place.
1884	Telephone service installed in Strentzel House.
1886	Daughter Helen born and suffers health problems. Muir travels little.
1888	At the urging of Louie, Muir resumes travel and conservation writing projects; still returns to work at ranch in between travels and projects; Muir and Louie begin to sell off land and are able to live comfortably off of these earnings and from the ranch profits.
1890	Father- in- law Dr. Strentzel dies; Muir and his family move into Strentzel House with Mrs. Strentzel.
1890s	Muir adds brick water tank and music room to back of Muir House.
1891	Muir finally passes control of ranch operations to his sister Margaret and her husband, John Reid; Muir begins to focus solely on writing and traveling.
1897	Mother- in- law Mrs. Strentzel dies.
1905	Wife Louie dies; Muir House and 4.83 acres of land known as the Muir Homestead passes to Wanda and Helen.

1906- 1907	Muir repairs damage to Muir House and Martinez Adobe caused by 1906 earthquake; remodels first floor of house; Martinez Adobe remodeled into residence for Wanda and her husband Tom Hanna.
1908	Muir Homestead transferred to Helen Muir.
1912	Muir buys homestead back from his daughters.
1914	Electrical service brought to Muir House; Muir dies in Los Angeles; Muir Homestead passes back to Wanda and Helen.
1915- 1921	Remaining lands of Strentzel- Muir Ranch sold; Muir Homestead parcel passes through a variety of owners and eventually passes out of the family in 1919; Martinez Adobe and forty- acres of land surrounding the Muir Homestead sold to Pond family and other individuals; Mt. Wanda and gravesite pass to Wanda Muir Hanna.
1921- 1955	Martinez Adobe property owned by Daniel Parsowith, who makes exterior improvements; land is extensively farmed; Muir Homestead owned by Curry and Kreiss families, who eventually repair and remodel the Muir House; plants around house become overgrown; Mt. Wanda and gravesite owned by Hanna; pilgrimages to gravesite begin; Arnold Industrial Highway constructed (eventually becomes State Route 4).
1955- 1964	Martinez Adobe property reduced to 3.8 acres and sold to Stein family, while Muir Homestead sold to Sax family; both families agree to preserve buildings and surrounding lands as a memorial to John Muir; most vineyards and orchard spaces are in decline or gone by this time.
1962	Gravesite becomes part of subdivision; cemetery and remnants of pear orchard included in 1.27- acre parcel.
1964	John Muir National Historic Site, a nine- acre park comprised of the Muir Homestead, Martinez Adobe property, and intervening lands is authorized on August 31 after years of

proposals and studies; Mt. Wanda remains undeveloped and gravesite is part of a subdivision.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1988    | Acreage of park grows to approximately 340 acres with the acquisition of the 326- acre Mt. Wanda Unit, 1.3- acre Gravesite Unit, and 3.3- acre city tract. |
| 1991/92 | Acquisition of Mt. Wanda completed.  |
| 2000    | Acquisition of the Gravesite Unit completed.   |

## APPENDIX 2

### SELECTED DIARY ENTRIES AND LETTERS

The following table of references regarding the agricultural plantings at the Strentzel- Muir Ranch comes from Mrs. Strentzel's diary (John Muir's mother-in-law) and correspondences between Muir and his wife Louie and their children Wanda and Helen.

Selected Diary Entries and Letters		
Date	Subject(s)	Text
1881 Jan 19	Pecans	Mrs. Strentzel: The Dr. has with several men over at the other place planting pecans (500) tree for several days past. <sup>1</sup>
1881 Feb 19	Almonds Grasses	Mrs. Strentzel: Hills covered with grass several inches high, and the almond trees in full bloom. <sup>2</sup>
1881 Feb 28	Fruit trees	Mrs. Strentzel: Louie has been taking daily walks in the in the orchard with John and seems to have greatly benefited by the exercise (Louie is pregnant with Wanda)... The cherries, plums, pears, quinces are coming out in full bloom. The figs and pomegranates are budding out and give promise. <sup>3</sup>
1881 Mar 8	Apricots	Mrs. Strentzel: The Dr. has been planting apricots on the hillside above Rodgers fence. <sup>4</sup>
1881 Mar 27	Fruit trees	John to his mother: The weather is warm and tranquil & the sun is beaming lovingly on the green hills & blossoming orchards about our home, & the larks & linnets are singing in full springtime chorus...The cherry trees in particular are one mass of white petals looking as if laden with fleecy snow, while the purple & rose flowers of the quince & peach & apple trees, & the white of the plum is hardly less showy & lavishly abundant. <sup>5</sup>
1882 Jan 6	Grapes	Mrs. Strentzel: Mr. Lleewina (?) came for grape cutting. The Dr. and John with about 10 Chinamen worked all day and bound and labeled over 12,000 cuttings, what a great vineyard they will make. <sup>6</sup>
1882 Feb 6	Grapes	Mrs. Strentzel: John Muir laying of grape rows in lower field – made fine road down center of field. <sup>7</sup>
1882 Mar 15	Grapes	Mrs. Strentzel: John is getting along finely planting grapes, he will finish in a few days more. <sup>8</sup>
1884 Nov 8	Grapes, 'Isabelle'	Frank Swett: Got Some Isabelle grapes (a table grape) in Muir's vineyard. <sup>9</sup>
1885 Sep 12	Grapes, 'Zinfandel'	Louie to John: "...the squirrels, gophers, rats and mice are mightier than ever. The quails are attending to the Zinfandels, but they, the birds, will be all the better flavored for our dinners by and by." <sup>10</sup>
1888 Jul 31	Pears, 'Bartlett' Grapes	Unknown: Mr. Earl took 76 boxes. Bartletts, the others were sent to the city at good prices. Earl agreed to pay for each carload of grapes, and seemed anxious to get them. Wood and Strong also want some and prospects look better than last year. <sup>11</sup>
1889 Jul 12	Apricots Pears, 'Bartlett' Grapes, 'Tokay' Pruning	Louie to John: We sent about 50 boxes of apricots today to A. Levy. He telegraphed last night for 75 boxes shipping apricots, but father had none, and Ah Hee said ours were too ripe and I so telegraphed him. Hee put them in Larger boxes, and there was not time to repack them after I saw them, but I thought maybe Levy could repack some so sent them to him instead of Justi, the Bartletts are growing nicely. Frank peddles some fruit in Martinez every time. Received the receipt for \$600 from Mr. Hihn. The Chinamen have been trying to sulfur the vines, but the mornings have been very windy. Tokay vines are growing awfully long. Chinamen topping them today. <sup>12</sup>
1889 Jul 13	Pears Grapes, 'Tokay' Grapes, 'Muscat'	John to Louie, Grand Hotel, San Francisco: Sold the pears and Tokay and some Muscat. Tokay 50 per ton. <sup>13</sup>
1890 Jul 3	Grapes Apples	Louie to John: Edward and Coleman are cheerful and comfortable. Grape vines just enormous in length. Winds blowing. No more Chinamen returned. Apples sold at 90 cents to \$1.00. <sup>14</sup>

Selected Diary Entries and Letters		
Date	Subject(s)	Text
1890 Jul 12	Grapes Pears Apples, 'Alexander' Pruning	Louie to John: Yesterday, a hot norther blew here, 92 degrees, but most of the time our winds have been to cold. Many of the grape vines had to be topped again last week: they are breaking in pieces and flying off with the wind! The Alexander apples brought a dollar per 40 lbs. A fine lot of them too. Pear are growing well. Eastern prices for fruit shipments very good. <sup>15</sup>
1890 Jul 17	Pears, 'Bartlett'	Louie to John: The fruit you ask for we will try to send by Express tomorrow. Grandpa thinks the Bartlett pears may be good. <sup>16</sup>
1890 Aug 1	Pears	Louie to John: The pears are growing fast. Jounng came back and will go to making boxes tomorrow... The water lillies are in bloom. <sup>17</sup>
1890 Aug 12	Pears, 'Bartlett' Shipping	Louie to John: Levy's bookkeeper was here on Sunday and we sent a lot if Bartlett's yesterday. Earl's men are packing grandpa's pears, and Edward and Coleman came over to learn how to pack. We shall ship all the large ones right away. <sup>18</sup>
1892 Jun 2	Cherries, 'Bing' Maydukes	Wanda to John: But today is very warm and the cherries are ripening fast. Aunt Margaret has been pretty well all the time lately. We went to Uncle David's yesterday and everything looks nice there...the bing cherries are delicious and the May dukes are nearly ripe. The mosquitoes were dreadful though along the hedge and I am afraid they will come here and keep us in the house. <sup>19</sup> (David Muir lived in the Alhambra ranch house)
1893 May 31	Cherries	Louie to John: The cherries are ripe and fine, and more numerous than they seemed last month. <sup>20</sup>
1893 Jun 14	Maydukes Peaches	John to Wanda: I suppose the May- dukes & peaches will soon be ripe & then you will all have a good- time making and breaking those things you call 'cobblers.' <sup>21</sup>
1893 Jun 15	Cherries, 'Royal Ann'	Louie to John: The cherries are very large and beautiful, and there are more of them than anybody thought. Prices were good. All the trees and vines look well... Nearly all the Royal Anns will be shipped tomorrow. <sup>22</sup>
1893 Jun 16	Maydukes Peaches	John to Louie, New York: In reference to Helen. Above all, don't let her eat maydukes. Even the raw peaches should not be eaten. <sup>23</sup>
1893 Jun 21	Garden Magnolias	Louie to John: The weather has been most constantly delightful, ranging between 65 and 75 degrees so that we have spent most of the days out in the garden and among the trees... The magnolias are in bloom here. <sup>24</sup>
c.1895 May	Cherries Hay	Muir's Ranch Journals: Bought 1000 cherry "drawers" and one ton sulphur. Began hauling hay. <sup>25</sup>
1895 Jan 24	Grasses	Muir's Ranch Journal: Dodecattouou out... buttercups in flower... neimophila, chickweed mustard in bloom.. latter 4 feet high. <sup>26</sup>
1895 Jan 28	Grasses	Muir's Ranch Journal: Weeds to grass in the vineyards and orchards growing fast... Joe plowing. <sup>27</sup>
1895 Mar 22	Pears Peaches Prunes Apricots	Muir's Ranch Journal: Pears coming into bloom, some peach. Prunes in full bloom. Apricots formed. <sup>28</sup>
1895 Apr 24	Vines Apricots Hickory	Muir's Ranch Journal: Vines...shoots a foot long. Apricots large as hickory nuts now being thin. <sup>29</sup>
1895 Sep 1	Grapes, 'Rosa Peru'	Louie to John: The weather has been extremely cool here for several days, the nights are really cold, with heavy dew, a great relief after so many hot days, so I suppose the grapes will ripen more slowly. There will be a few boxes of Rose Peru for the next steamer, but no other fruit and the late grapes will not be ready for 3 or 4 weeks yet, so there is nothing about the ranch that need hurry you away from the mountains, as the Chinamen are nailing the boxes and attending to the squirrels. <sup>30</sup>
1896 Feb 18	Pears, 'Winter Nellis' Pears, 'Bartlett'	Muir's Ranch Journal: Duane grafting winter Nellie pears to Bartletts. <sup>31</sup>
1896 Jul 10	Vegetables	Wanda to John: Early this morning we walked over to Uncle David's (living at the Alhambra ranch house) and then we went up on the big east hill. We enjoyed the walk very much but the grass and flowers are all dry now. The corn and beans that we planted are growing finely. <sup>32</sup>



Selected Diary Entries and Letters		
Date	Subject(s)	Text
1898 Oct 10	Grapes Peaches Grasses	Louie to John: Our live- oaks look almost bright.. Most of the orchard, though, still is forlorn and droughty- looking and many of the trees are dead...Coleman is hurrying off what grapes are fit to send, for the weather is threatening again...The fields are green with new grass, and the peach trees are very handsome in their autumn dress, but I fear this drought stricken country will seem very dreary to you after the luxuriant freshness and the glowing colors of the eastern mountain ranges. <sup>33</sup>
1906 Jan 16	Cherries Grapes, 'Muscat' Grapes, 'Tokay'	John to Wanda and Helen: I think the cherry orchard had better be planted to muscat instead of Tokay. I think we can get fine rooted grafted vines from Frank Swett. We have no muscat & too many Tokay are being planted all over the state... <sup>34</sup>
1906 Feb 28	Almonds	Wanda to John: You speak of almond blossoms and spring weather. I had forgotten that this was the time for them, but it made me awfully homesick to think of them. <sup>35</sup>

### ENDNOTES FOR APPENDIX TWO

- <sup>1</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 19 January 1881. JOMU files.
- <sup>2</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 19 February 1881. JOMU files.
- <sup>3</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 28 February 1881. JOMU files.
- <sup>4</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 8 March 1881. JOMU files.
- <sup>5</sup> Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent, *Dear Papa: Letters Between John Muir and His Daughter Wanda*. Fresno, CA: Panorama West Books, 1985, 1- 2.
- <sup>6</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 6 January 1882. JOMU files.
- <sup>7</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 6 February 1882. JOMU files.
- <sup>8</sup> Louisiana Erwin Strentzel, diary entry, 15 March 1882. JOMU files.
- <sup>9</sup> Frank Swett (son of John Swett), diary entry, 8 November 1884. JOMU files.
- <sup>10</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 12 September 1885. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>11</sup> Letter, 31 July 1888. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>12</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 12 July 1889. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>13</sup> Letter from John to Louie, 13 July 1889. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>14</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 3 July 1890. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>15</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 12 July 1890. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>16</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 17 July 1890. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>17</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 1 August 1890. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>18</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 12 August 1890. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.
- <sup>19</sup> Clark 1985: 33.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 31 May 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>21</sup> Clark 1985: 36.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 15 June 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from John to Louie, 16 June 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 21 June 1893. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>25</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 11 May 1895 and 24 May 1895.

<sup>26</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 24 January 1895.

<sup>27</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 28 January 1895.

<sup>28</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 22 March 1895.

<sup>29</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 24 April 1895.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 1 September 1895. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>31</sup> Muir's Ranch Journals, 18 February 1896.

<sup>32</sup> Clark 1985: 51.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Louie to John, 10 October 1898. John Muir Papers, MS 48, Correspondence and Related Documents, Series VA, Bade Transcripts 1888- 1900.

<sup>34</sup> Clark 1985: 90.

<sup>35</sup> Clark 1985: 90.

**APPENDIX 3****NPS-DIRECTED ORCHARD ACTIVITY AT JOHN MUIR NHS**

The information in the following table is primarily from the JOMU Landscape Management Plan – <http://members.frys.com/~bpmosley/GOPLANTS.HTM> - unless otherwise noted. Blank cells indicate there is no information available.

Summary of NPS- Directed Orchard Activity at John Muir NHS			
	1964- 1976	1976- 1991	1991- 2004
<b>All fruits</b>	1969: 118 bare root fruit trees purchased (varieties unknown) 1972: Freeze event.	1988: Drought event	1998: Freeze event
<b>Almond</b>	1970: 5 almonds planted. <sup>1</sup>	12/1982: Planted 3 trees, var.. "Ne Plus." 1984: Planted 4 trees, var. "Non Pareill."	10/1995: By this time, all but three almond trees had died. The principal cause was water- logged soil for eight months in early 1995. Squirrels ate most of the nuts before they are ripe. Rather than kill squirrels, park decided not to replace dead trees. Instead, added other historic trees to the area such as white mulberry and carob.
<b>Apricot</b>	1969: Planted 10 "Blenheim" and 10 "Tilton" west of Franklin Creek.	8/1984: Planted 17 trees, var. "Blenheim" (Moriana rootstock). (May refer to fish pond area). 12/1990: Planted 1 tree, var. "Blenheim."	Early 1990s: Additional orchard north of windmill in fish pond and smaller one southeast of adobe. The two varieties planted are "Blenheim," "Royal," and "Tilton" (Blenheim and Royal are apparently the same variety). There is one Moorpark in New Cot II. 1995: Herb Thurman notes brown rot is most severe on trees under the pecans. 6/1998: One tree died, probably due to water logged clay soil caused by Adobe brick making nearby. 10/1999: Of the replanted trees, 15 remain.
<b>Apple</b>	9/1970: Planted 15(?) trees in southeast corner of site. Varieties believed to be "Gravenstein," "Jonathan," and "Yellow Pippin."	12/1982: Planted 5 trees, var. "Gravenstein" or "Jonathan." 12/1990: Planted 6 trees, var. "Red Astrakan."	3/1998: Yosemite National Park provided park with cuttings of varieties from their historic orchards (1859). They were grafted to the tree near southwest corner of Muir house (Granny Smith?).
<b>Carob</b>			1996: Planted as replacement for some of the almonds
<b>Cherry, sweet</b>	8/1970: Planted one tree on hill north of oval, var..? 1970: 1 cherry. <sup>2</sup>	12/1982: Planted 4 trees, var. "Bing" and "Black Tartarian." 8/1984: Planted 9 trees, var. "Bing" (Mazzard rootstock). 12/1990: Planted 2 trees, var. "Bing."	

Summary of NPS- Directed Orchard Activity at John Muir NHS			
	1964- 1976	1976- 1991	1991- 2004
<b>Grape</b>	<p>1969: The representative vineyard was planted with 200 vines. Included Muscat (60), Thompson Seedless (70), Lady Fingers (35), and Zinfandel (35). Varieties based on the record of Muir's vineyard in 1890.</p> <p>6/1971: Planted Muscat (9), Lady Fingers (15) and Zinfandel (26) to replace vines that died.</p> <p>11/1974: The presence of <i>Armillaria mellea</i> (Oak root fungus) was documented. It was suspected as early as 8/1969.</p> <p>5/1975 to 8/1975: All vines were pulled out. The vineyard was fumigated with carbon disulfide.</p> <p>5/1976: Vineyard replanted, root stock certified St. George.</p> <p>"Zinfandel, Flame Tokay, Golden Muscat." Replanting was done by John Hanna, Muir's grandson.</p>	<p>1989: Pierce's disease discovered, especially in those closest to Franklin Creek. Proposal to relocate the entire vineyard rejected because of the high cost and concerns that other soil might be contaminated. Park decides to replace only those plants farthest from the creek.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>1989: Discontinue Zinfandels because they were not popular.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>12/1990: Planted 25 vines, var. "Golden Muscat."</p>	<p>4/1998: Planted 24 bare root vines to replace missing/diseased vines. Donated by Sonoma Grapevines, Santa Rosa CA. and planted by Shell Refinery volunteers.</p>
<b>Lemon</b>	<p>3/1972: Planted 18 trees, var. "Eureka" in front of and south of Adobe.</p> <p>12/1972: Freeze killed 19 trees.</p> <p>1972: 8 Eureka lemons.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>1973: 20 lemons (planted 1974).<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>4/1986: Planted 7 trees, var. "Eureka."</p> <p>1986: Tree on east wall conservatory collapsed in 1985 and was replaced in kind. This tree may have been historic.</p> <p>1987: 20 trees added to grove.</p> <p>1990: Most lemons damaged in freeze.</p>	<p>1998: Most lemons damaged in freeze.</p> <p>10/1999: Six of the 18 original planting survive.</p>
<b>Mulberry, White</b>			<p>1996: 2 trees added to site in almond orchard north of fish pond. They represent Dr. Strentzel's failed attempt at silkworm project.</p>
<b>Orange</b>	<p>2/1973: Planted (?) trees east of Adobe. These trees are on dwarfing stock. Muir did not grow dwarf trees.</p>	<p>10/1985: One historic orange tree near tractor shed dies, leaving one near Adobe kitchen.</p> <p>4/1986: Planted 14 trees, var. "Washington Navel" east of Adobe.</p>	
<b>Peach</b>	<p>1969: 35 peach trees (varieties unknown).<sup>7</sup></p> <p>1970: 1 peach planted.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>12/1982: Planted 5 trees, var. "Muir" (?), "Crawford" (?), and "Elberta."</p> <p>1983: Peaches were on brink of demise from borers, leaf curl, and brown rot.</p> <p>8/1984: Planted 8 trees, var. "Elberta" (Nemeguard rootstock).</p> <p>12/1990: Planted 3 trees, var. "Fay Elberta."</p>	
<b>Pear</b>	<p>1967: Trees planted west of Franklin Creek.</p> <p>6/1970: Planted 2 trees.</p>	<p>12/1982: Planted 5 trees, var. "Bartlett" or "Winter Nellis."</p> <p>8/1984: Planted 6 trees, var. "Bartlett" (Winter Nellis" root stock.)</p>	
<b>Plum, European</b>	<p>4/1969: 10 trees planted. var.?</p> <p>Possibly historic varieties Cox's, York, Crawford, Stump, Ceres Golden Drop. Dr. Strentzel planted plum on peach stock including York, Crawford, Stump, and Cox's.</p>		<p>1999: No longer on site.</p>

Summary of NPS- Directed Orchard Activity at John Muir NHS			
	1964- 1976	1976- 1991	1991- 2004
<b>Plum, Japanese</b>		<i>12/1982:</i> Planted 4 trees, var. "Santa Rosa." <i>4/1986:</i> Tree in Muir house lawn removed (diseased). <i>12/1990:</i> Planted 3 trees, var. "Santa Rosa."	
<b>Walnut, English</b>	<i>1976:</i> Walnuts on north hill behind windmill removed so that other trees could be planted; they were probably infected with mistletoe.	<i>8/1984:</i> Planted 2 trees, var. "Eureka," (Ca. Black rootstock).	<i>9/1998:</i> One died due to "Blackline" disease. <i>10/1999:</i> Non- historic tree near north end of Ramada is dying.
<b>Walnut, California black</b>	<i>1976:</i> Many removed north of carriage house to make room for other trees, probably because infected with mistletoe.		

### ENDNOTES FOR APPENDIX THREE

<sup>1</sup> From JOMU files.

<sup>2</sup> From JOMU files.

<sup>3</sup> Handwritten correspondence, authors unknown, dated 27 February 1989. JOMU files.

<sup>4</sup> Handwritten correspondence, authors unknown, dated 27 February 1989. JOMU files.

<sup>5</sup> From JOMU files.

<sup>6</sup> From JOMU files.

<sup>7</sup> From JOMU files.

<sup>8</sup> From JOMU files.



## **APPENDIX 4**

### **MISSING LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

This section provides a description of major features that were present at the end of the historic period (1849- 1914) and are now missing. Only features within the boundaries of the House Unit are considered. Enlargements of historic photographs supplement the text, although the quality of some of the images is poor. The selected images are included because they represent the only evidence available to document the particular feature or a portion thereof.

#### **CIRCULATION FEATURES**

##### **Knoll path** (Figure A4.1)

The single- track earthen path connected the rear of the Muir House to the intersection of the southeast farm road and east- west farm lane. The path passed through a cypress or evergreen hedge near the top and formed the west edge of a dry yard as it descended the southwest side of the knoll. By c.1898, the dry yard was removed, but the path remained. Around this time, the Woodshed Road was constructed and cut across the path. Another photograph, from c.1910, also shows the path still relatively worn with use. The role of the path likely declined after Muir's death and the Muir Homestead was sold. The knoll path is not visible in the 1939 aerial.

##### **Southeast farm road** (Figure A4.1)

By c.1887, this farm road was one of the primary routes from the Muir House and knoll area to the fields to the south and east. The well- used earthen road, which was one of three roads that converged next to the fish pond space and the Carriage House, tracked in a southeasterly direction past orchards, vineyards, and a grove of eucalyptus before passing under the AT&SF trestle. It likely intersected with Alhambra Valley Road south of the trestle, which leads to the Alhambra ranch house. Use of the road probably declined after Muir's death and the Muir Homestead and surrounding ranch lands were sold and leased. By 1939, the presence of the Arnold Industrial Highway, and later State Route 4, effectively severed its connections to lands to the south and east.

#### **VEGETATION FEATURES**

##### **Monterey pine, northeast side of Muir House** (Figure A4.2)

Soon after the Muir House was completed in 1882, and before c.1885, a Monterey pine was planted on the northeast side of the Muir House. Historic photographs from c.1900- 1905 and c.1914 show that Banksia rose was growing on the tree trunk. By c.1905, the tree reached the height of the roofline and by c.1910 was



almost as high as the cupola. Another photograph from c.1923 shows the trunk of the tree still wrapped in roses but also shows the tree in declining health. By 1939, according to the aerial photograph, the tree had been removed.

**Cordyline trees and rose shrubs, north side of Muir House** (Figure A4.2)

Evidence of these trees, which are probably cordylines, first appears in photographs from the 1890s and c.1900- 1905. They were planted on either side of the steps at the carriage drive- loop and were remembered by Helen Muir. By c.1914, the height of one or both of the trees was equal to that of the second floor of the house. By c.1923, one of the trees approached the height of the roofline. The plants do not appear in any subsequent photographs. The c.1890s photograph also shows a mass of roses about three to four feet high alongside the walkway.

**Windmill palm, east side of Muir House** (Figure A4.2)

A palm on the east side of the Muir House in historic photographs was conditionally identified by Agee as a windmill palm (it may also be a California fan palm).<sup>1</sup> The tree was planted between c.1882 and c.1890. The plant thrived, as it was as high as the bottom of the second floor window in c.1914 and up to the eave by c.1923. The tree died or was removed by c.1955- 1960.

**Mass of tall trees southeast of Muir House** (Figure A4.3)

Historic photographs show a mass of trees southeast of the Muir House in the latter half of the historic period. The trees appear to be deciduous and similar in form to the Oregon white oak by the Woodshed and were almost as tall as the nearby Canary Island date palm. With exception of a loquat tree, the existing vegetation there now is much shorter. Part of this area is currently devoted to the Victorian flower garden.

**Vegetation around Franklin Creek well and windmill** (Figure A4.4)

A detailed photograph from c.1885 shows that the Franklin Creek windmill was surrounded with tall and irregular riparian vegetation. The character of the plants resembles giant reed grass (*Arundo donax*). These plants were apparently fast growing as the structure was only about three or four years old at that time. Later photographs from c.1900- 1905 and c.1910 show vegetation reaching only about half way up the windmill. The 1939 aerial suggests a small patch of vegetation wrapped around the north and east sides of the windmill, even though the structure had likely been removed by this time. In 1978, the windmill was reconstructed and in the 1980s pear and apricot trees were set out around it.

**Mass of pine or cypress, west side of Martinez Adobe** (Figure A4.5)

Historic photographs document the growth of a mass of cypress or pines on the west side of the Martinez Adobe. Some of the trees may have been planted by Thomas Redfern prior to Dr. Strentzel's purchase of the property. By c.1885, this mass was approximately 35' tall and reached just above roofline of the building and between 1900 and 1905 the mass of trees towered over the building. Some of the trees may have been removed when Tom Hanna installed a driveway in this area.

**Black locust trees (3), east side of Martinez Adobe** (Figure A4.6)

A photograph of the front of the Martinez Adobe from c.1912- 1913 shows one of the three black locust trees remembered by Mr. Figuerado. The number of trees was also remembered by Mr. Greerty, a tenant in the building from 1915- 1917. Both men described this area as quite shady because of the trees.

**BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES****Woodshed** (Figure A4.7)

By c.1887 a one- story, rectangular- shaped wood structure with a gabled roof was constructed on the southeast side of the Muir House near the kitchen door to store firewood and later a large iron and brick kitchen range. The long axis of the building paralleled the east façade of the house. Although there are no detailed photographs of the building, images from c.1887, c.1898, and c.1900- 1905 show glimpses of the roof and the east, south, and west elevations. The Woodshed was likely removed by the Kreiss family between 1937 and 1955, possibly around the time when they relocated the Carriage House to this area. In the 1965 Master Plan, the site of the old woodshed was to be interpreted, possibly with a reconstructed structure if adequate documentary evidence was located. However, since the Carriage House was converted for use as a park maintenance building around that time and not relocated to its original location until 1983, the Woodshed was not reconstructed.

**Bunkhouse/Ranch foreman's house** (Figure A4.8)

By c.1885, a one and one- half story building with vertical board framing and a gabled roof was located just southwest of the Martinez Adobe. It is believed the structure was used as a residence for the ranch foreman. From 1894 to 1897, the structure was occupied by Firth family. Between c.1907 and 1910, soon after Tom and Wanda (Muir) Hanna remodeled the adobe as their residence, this building was converted into a bunkhouse for ranch hands and may have housed some of the Chinese, Portuguese, and Italian laborers as remembered by Mr. Dickey. Although the building was not shown on a plat map from 1915, the Pond family

apparently rented the building to the Hirano family until c.1922. In the late 1920s, the building was rented to Charlie Curry. The structure was removed in c.1962-1963 except for the foundation. Between 1964 and 1976, the foundations of the Bunkhouse as well as the Cookhouse were removed or covered.

**Well/redwood tank northeast of Martinez Adobe** (Figure A4.9)

Between 1907 and 1910, Mr. Dickey reported that he helped Tom Hanna dig a thirty-foot well a short distance northeast of the Martinez Adobe to supply water to the building and water the plants. He recalled that mule power was used to haul the dirt from the excavation. From 1915 to 1917, the well was covered with boards; apparently the removal of one of the three black locust trees in front of the adobe had damaged it. According to Mr. Greerty, a tenant in the adobe, the well did not serve as a source of water. Between 1921 and 1955, a redwood septic tank was installed next to it, another indication that the well was probably not used. In c.1955, the pump was removed from the wellhead, probably around the time the adobe was hooked up to city water. In the early 1960s, the redwood tank was used for refuse disposal. Between 1964 and 1976, the well was filled and covered, and by 1977 the redwood tank was removed.

**Alhambra windmill** (Figure A4.10)

The Alhambra windmill and well were constructed on the lower east slope of the knoll, northeast of the Muir House, by c.1898. Water extracted from this structure likely irrigated fields and served the house – possibly to fill the water tank in the new rear addition. Various historic photographs show the wood tower from a distance, and suggest the tower was similar in design to that of the Franklin Creek windmill, but there are no known detailed views of the structure. Later photographs show that the Alhambra windmill was removed by 1963; the Kreiss family may have taken it out when they dismantled the Franklin Creek windmill. In 1965, the park's Master Plan did not recommend reconstruction of the windmill because of development, which presumably referred to the plans for a parking lot in this area.<sup>2</sup> This decision was upheld in subsequent planning documents because of the well's proximity to the eastern boundary fence around the parking lot.

**Pipe, catwalk across fish pond space** (Figure A4.11)

By c.1885, an irrigation pipe crossed the fish pond space from the Franklin Creek well and windmill to the main farm road. This pipe presumably conveyed water from the well to irrigate adjacent fields and supply water to the Muir House and possibly to the adobe area. The pipe was supported by a series of piers, and the railings atop the pipe suggest it doubled as a catwalk to allow service access

across the pond to the well and windmill. According to a photograph from c.1910- 1914, a new or second pipe ran from either the well or the west side of the Carriage House in a southwesterly direction. There are no railings associated with this pipe. The fate of the first pipe is unclear, and no other information is available after this time for either feature.

#### **SMALL-SCALE FEATURES**

##### **Two- and three-rail board fence on east side of carriage drive-loop/Woodshed Road (Figure A4.12)**

A three- rail board fence was erected on the east side of the carriage drive- loop sometime between 1882, when the Muir House and drive were completed, and c.1886. Along with roses and hollyhocks, the fence marked the transition from this gently sloped area to the steeper east side of the knoll. The fence appeared to be about four feet tall and extended toward the east driveway. A two- board fence appears in approximately the same location in a c.1900- 1905 photograph. It is unclear if the fence was painted.

##### **Post and wire fencing around Muir Homestead (Figure A4.13)**

The 4.83- acre Muir Homestead property was established in Wanda and Helen Muir's name after the death of Louie Muir (John Muir's wife). Historic photographs show that at least part of the homestead was delineated with post and wire fencing. These boundaries became more important after the death of John Muir in 1914 as the Strentzel- Muir Ranch was sold and subdivided. It is not known when the fences were removed, but some of the House Unit's boundary fences are in the same general locations.

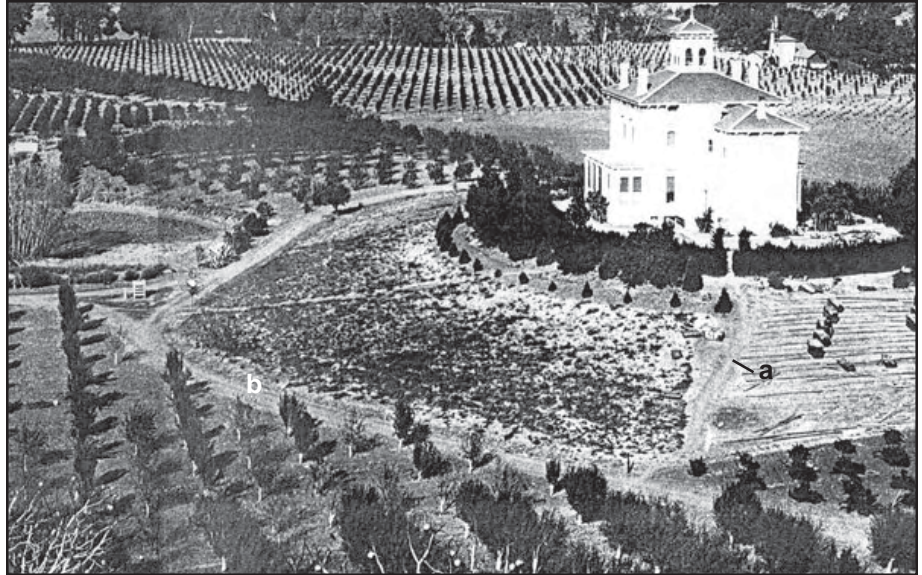
#### **ENDNOTES FOR APPENDIX FOUR**

<sup>1</sup> James K. Agee, "Historic Trees of John Muir National Historic Site." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, March 1978: 10, 20.

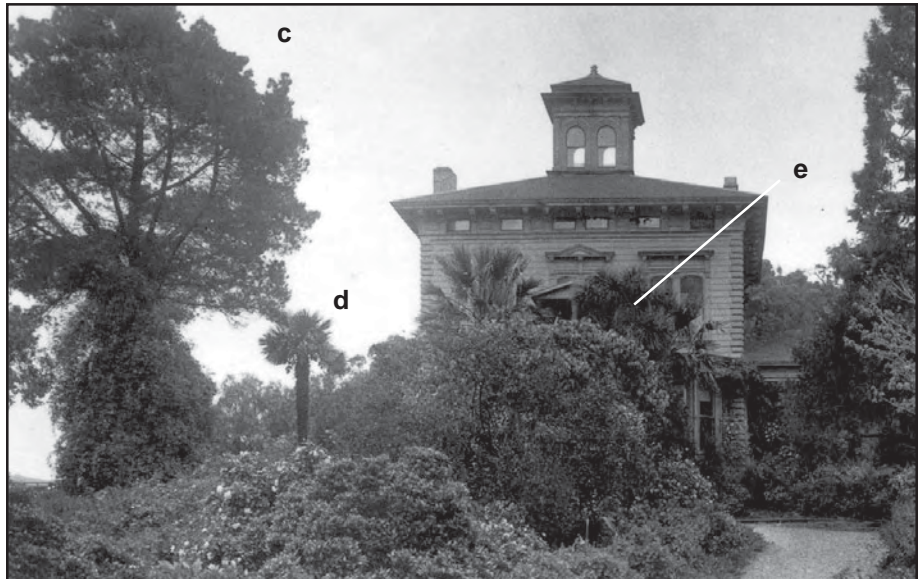
<sup>2</sup> National Park Service, "Master Plan for Preservation and Use, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California." San Francisco, CA: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Landscape Architecture, Design and Construction, 1965: 6.



**Figure A4.1: Closeup view of the knoll path (a) and the southeast farm road (b) in c.1887. (Isaiah West Taber photo No. 3707).**



**Figure A4.2: View northeast from the front walkway in c.1890s of the cordyline tree (a) and roses (b) on the east side of the walkway (above) and a view looking south at the Monterey pine (c), windmill palm (d), and cordyline (e) trees in c.1914 (right). (A-109 and A1-32, JOMU).**







**Figure A4.3: Three historical views of the mass of trees (a) southeast of the Muir House from the early 1890s (top left), c.1898 (top right), and c.1910-1914 (bottom). (F13, Fr. #651, Holt-Atherton; A1-20, JOMU, Ref: 1898c P24; and A1-30, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14c P29).**





**Figure A4.4: Two vantages of vegetation around the Franklin Creek Well and Windmill from c.1885 (top) and c.1910 (bottom). (D6-1, Ref: 1885cP17 and A1-19, Ref: 1910-14cP27).**

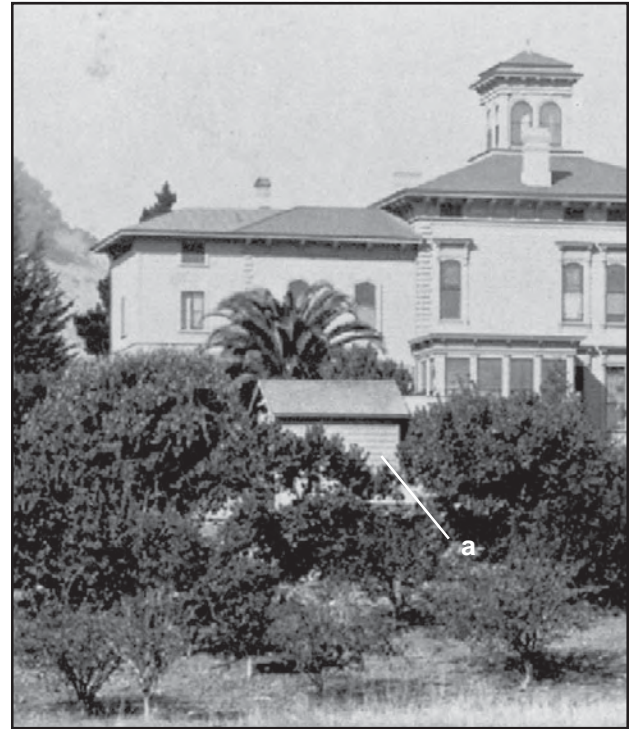




**Figure A4.5: Three detailed views of the mass of cypress or pines behind the Martinez Adobe in c.1885 (top); c.1901 (middle); and c.1900-1905 (bottom). (D6-1, Ref: 1885cP17; Historic Structures Report, Martinez Adobe; and F13, Fr. #651, Holt Atherton).**

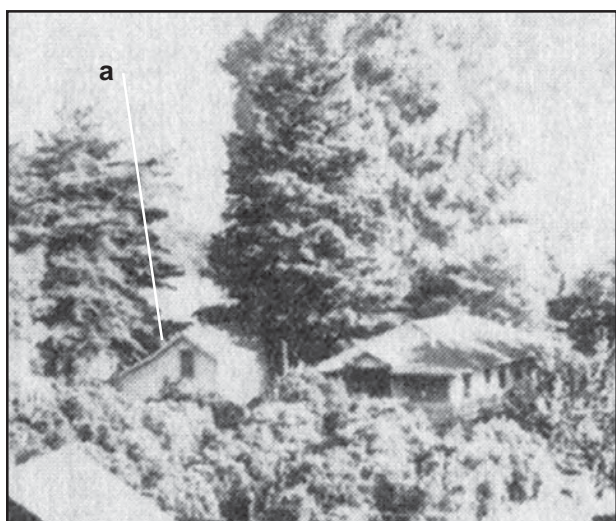


**Figure A4.6: Closeup view of one of the three black locust trees that grew in front of the Martinez Adobe from c.1912-1913. (B1-39, JOMU).**



**Figure A4.7: Three views of the Woodshed (a) on the east side of the Muir House from c.1887 (top left); c.1898 (top right); and c.1900-1905 (bottom left). (Isaiah West Taber photo No. 3707; A1-20, Ref: 1898cP24; and F13, Fr. #651, Holt-Atherton).**

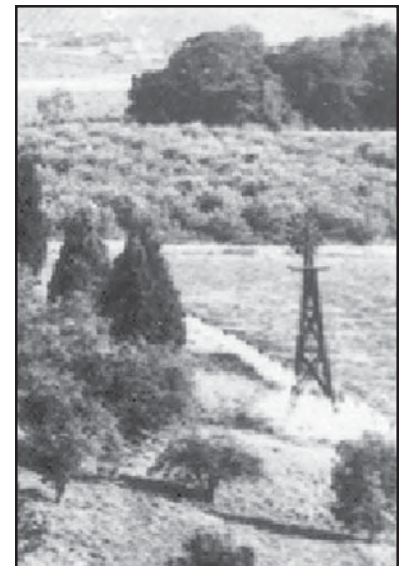




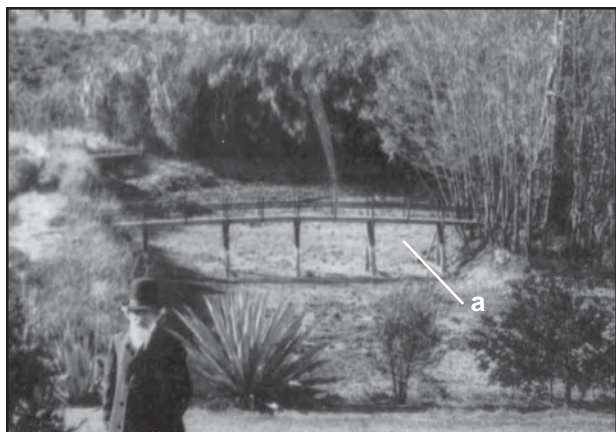
**Figure A4.8: Three views of the Bunkhouse/Ranch foreman's house (a) from c.1885 (top left); c.1901 (bottom left); and c.1912-1913 (right). (D6-1, Ref:1885cP17; HSR, Martinez Adobe; and B1-39, JOMU).**



**Figure A4.9: View of the redwood septic tank northeast of the Martinez Adobe in 1963. Beginning around 1907, a well was located in this area. (R.N. Mortimore, JOMU files).**



**Figure A4.10: Closeup views of the Alhambra windmill on the east slope of the knoll in c.1898 (left), c.1905 (center), and c.1910-1914 (right). (A1-20, JOMU, Ref: 1898cP24; A1-14, JOMU/F13 Fr. #641, Holt Atherton; and A1-30, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14cP29).**



**Figure A4.11: Closeup views of the pipe/catwalk across the fish pond space in c.1885 (left) and c.1910-1914 (right). (D6-1, Ref: 1885cP17 and A1-19, Ref: 1910-14cP27).**







**Figure A4.12: Closeup views of the three-board fence (a) along the east side of the carriage drive-loop in c.1886, a two-board fence (b) in approximately the same location in c.1900-1905; and the top of a fence (c) in c.1914 which appears to continue southward, east of the Muir House (A1-93, Ref: 1886cP1; D3-2, JOMU, Ref: 1900-05cP30; and A1-32, JOMU).**





**Figure A4.13: Post and wire fencing marked the boundaries of the Muir Homestead beginning in 1908. Two photographs from c.1910 show a section of fencing and a gate across the main farm road (left) and along the south side of the knoll (below). (A1-19, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14cP27 and A1-30, JOMU, Ref: 1910-14cP27).**



## APPENDIX 5

### SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

The features in this table are organized by landscape characteristic and landscape character area (and by feature zone for vegetation). The character areas – discussed in Chapter 8 – are coded as follows:

MH	Muir House and knoll area
MA	Martinez Adobe area
AG	Agriculture areas
VC	Visitor Center area
GR	Gravesite Unit
WA	Mt. Wanda Unit
PW	Park- wide (Small- scale Features)

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
<b>Natural Systems and Features</b>			
	Geology, hydrology, flora and fauna	Contributing	Present during and after historic period with some natural and man- made changes.
<b>Land Use</b>			
	Agricultural and non-agricultural pattern	Contributing	Essentially intact within park boundaries except for development zone; surrounding land uses dramatically changed.
<b>Circulation</b>			
MH	Carriage drive- loop	Contributing	Constructed in c.1882, paved in 1980s.
	East driveway	Contributing	Constructed in c.1885, paved in 1980s.
	Perimeter sidewalks and front steps, Muir House	Contributing	Constructed in c.1882.
	Woodshed Road	Contributing	Constructed by 1898, upper section paved in 1980s.
	Triangle intersection	Contributing	Constructed by c.1885, partially abandoned by 1964, partially paved in 1980s.
	Walkway, Victorian garden	Contributing	Alignment of path may date from c.1890.
	Walkway, incense cedars	Undetermined	Purpose and date unknown.
	Fire lane	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in late 1950s.
	Easy access trail	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1982- 1984.
MA	Driveway, east side of Martinez Adobe	Contributing	Constructed in c.1874- 1906, altered in 1930s, paved in 1980s.
	Patio, west side of Martinez Adobe	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1930s, expanded in 1998.
	Paths around Martinez Adobe and Ramada	Non- contributing (C)	Constructed in 1930s, altered in 1990s.
AG	Main farm road	Contributing	Constructed mid- 1800s, paved in late 1980s.
	Farm lanes, west orchard	Non- contributing (C)	Built by 1989.
VC	Sidewalks and patio	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1964, patio rebuilt in 1996.
	Parking lot	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed late 1960s.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
GR	Parking area and entrance	Non- contributing (I)	Developed beginning in the 1960s.
WA	Farm road, Strain Ranch	Unevaluated	May date from c.1910.
	Main fire road	Unevaluated	Likely a post World War Two road.
	California State Riding and Hiking Trail	Non- contributing (C)	This segment generally aligned along upper limit of former pear orchard.
	Park and ride parking lot	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1960s.
	Nature trail loop	Non- contributing (C)	Constructed in 1990s.
<b>Topography</b>			
	Gently- sloped and steeply-sloped lands, knoll	Contributing	Present during and after historic period with minor modifications.
<b>Vegetation</b>			
MH West slope	Row of incense cedars	Contributing	Planted in c.1882- c.1887.
	Lebanon and Atlas cedars	Contributing	Planted by c.1898.
	Black locust (2) along Woodshed Road	Contributing	Planted by early 1890s, replanted or resprouted in same location after historic period.
	Mexican fan palm, coast live oak (4), pomegranate (6), Deodar cedar, and California fan palm	Non- contributing (I)	Various dates after the historic period.
MH Carriage drive- loop	Giant sequoia	Contributing	Core dated to 1897. May have been planted as early as c.1885.
	Plantings along north side of drive, from fish pond space to bottom of loop	Contributing Non- contributing (I)	Four olives, Canary Island date palm, and two California fan palms are historic, pomegranate is not historic.
	Plantings along south side of drive, from fish pond space to bottom of loop	Contributing Non- contributing (I)	Arborvitae and honey mesquite are historic, tamarisks and incense cedars are not historic.
	Plantings along east side of loop	Non- contributing (I)	Height of vegetation blocks some views, types of vegetation changed.
	Plantings along west side of loop	Undetermined	Height of vegetation blocks some views.
	Plantings in center island	Non- contributing (C) Non- contributing (I) Undetermined	Roses, pomegranate, and quince are not historic but are compatible; agave and lawn are not historic and are incompatible; California bay is potentially historic.
MH East slope	Incense cedars (3), coast redwood, pomegranate, coast live oak (3), California white oak (3), English walnut, and vinca	Non- contributing(I) Undetermined	Two small incense cedars are not historic and are not compatible. Larger incense cedar, pomegranate, California white oak (6), English walnut, and vinca.
MH North side	Shrubs, front steps	Undetermined	Fewer plants today, and are lower in height.
	Lawn area, north side	Undetermined	Area historically featured a dragon tree, Monterey pine, and rose.
MH East side	Mourning cypress	Contributing	Planted in c.1909.
	Common myrtle	Non- contributing (C)	Planted in c.1910, replanted 1998.
	Oregon white oak	Contributing	Planted in c.1910.
	Strawberry	Undetermined	Possibly planted by 1914.
	California black walnut, loquat, deutzia, geranium, iris, and beds of vinca	Undetermined	May have been part of a larger mass of vegetation in this area.
	Lawn area, east side	Undetermined	Historically featured a windmill palm and a cistern.
	Victorian flower garden	Non- contributing (I)	Planted in 1984, replanted in 1996.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
MH South side	Herb garden	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by c.1898, replanted 1988.
	Matilija poppy	Non- contributing (C)	Remembered by Helen Muir, replanted in 1990s.
	Loquat, lemon, sweetbay, and apricot	Undetermined	Various dates.
MH West side	Lawn area, west side	Contributing	Lawn except for a few Monterey pines.
	Privet hedge	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by 1999.
MH Foundation plantings	California fan palms (2), north beds	Contributing	Planted in c.1882.
	Lemon, east bed	Non- contributing (C)	Planted in late 1880s, replaced in- kind in 1985.
	Canary Island date palm, east bed	Contributing	Planted between 1882 and 1890.
	Orange , west bed	Undetermined	Remembered by Helen.
	Plants, northwest and northeast beds	Non- contributing (I)	Species have changed since historic period.
	Plants, east beds	Non- contributing (I)	Species have changed since historic period.
	Plants, west beds	Non- contributing (C)	Most species are consistent with Helen's recollections historic period.
MA West boundary	Cherokee rose	Non- contributing (C)	Planted by Muir in early 1890s, planted by NPS in late 1980s.
	Pittosporum, rose, sage, coast redwood, western redbud, dwarf coyote brush, and incense cedar	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.
MA North side	North side area	Non- contributing (I)	Species have changed.
MA East side	East side area	Non- contributing (I)	Species have changed, much less shade.
MA West side	West side area	Non- contributing (C) Non- contributing (I)	Monterey pine is not historic but is compatible; two deodar cedars, English walnut, wisteria, and American dogwood are not historic and are not compatible.
MA Foundation plantings	Foundation, Martinez Adobe	Contributing Undetermined	Wisteria present on east side c.1912- 1913 and replanted by NPS; no definitive information regarding other plants.
AG North- west boundary	Row of fig trees	Contributing Non- contributing (I)	Planted by c.1885, replanted with clones beginning in 1986. Intermixed with historic figs are Monterey pine, toyon, California buckeye, pacific wax myrtle, English hawthorn, star jasmine, and butterfly- bush, which are not historic and are not compatible.
AG South- west boundary	Dwarf coyote brush, coast live oak, almond, fig, valley oak, California black walnut, coast redwood, and incense cedar	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.
AG South- east boundary	Eucalyptus grove (4)	Contributing	Planted in early 1900s, some not within park boundary.
	Canary Island date palms (2) and Mexican fan palm	Contributing	Planted by c.1905, one not within park boundary.
	Incense cedar, coast redwood, coast live oak, California white oak, olive, sweet cherry, cherry plum, pepper tree, and California black walnut	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
AG North- east boundary	Coast redwood, California white oak, California black walnut, and coast live oak	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS along historic boundary.
AG Franklin Creek	Riparian vegetation, north of main farm road	Non- contributing (C)	Height similar to conditions at end of historic period.
	Riparian vegetation, south of main farm road	Non- contributing (I)	Height exceeds conditions at end of historic period.
	Coast redwood	Undetermined	May be historic.
AG West orchard space	West orchard	Non- contributing (C) Non- contributing (I)	Apricots, oranges, lemons, walnuts, and pecans are compatible; pears and deodar cedars are not compatible.
	Native plant garden	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS, blocks views.
AG Middle orchard space	Middle orchard	Non- contributing (C)	Planted with plums and grapes at end of historic period.
	Coast redwood grove (g)	Non- contributing (I)	Donation planting to screen highway culvert in 1960s.
AG Fish pond space	Fish pond space	Non- contributing (I)	Was not planted at end of historic period.
	Quinces and figs	Contributing	Present in c.1885.
AG North orchard space	North orchard	Non- contributing (C) Non- contributing (I)	Peaches are compatible; cherries, almonds, white mulberries, and carobs are not compatible.
	Incense cedars	Non- contributing (C)	Young clones planted in historic locations.
AG East orchard space	East orchard	Contributing Non- contributing (C) Non- contributing (I)	Open field is a historic use; apples are non-contributing but compatible, although some are encroaching on space historically devoted to hay; pepper tree is not historic .
VC	Boundary fence areas	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.
	Foundation and lawn areas	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.
	Parking lot areas	Non- contributing (I)	Planted by NPS.
GR	Pear orchard	Contributing Undetermined	Root stock of pears in northern half planted by Strentzel, grafted by Muir; history of pears and peaches in southern half undetermined.
	Eucalyptus, incense cedar, and other plantings south of pear orchard	Contributing Undetermined	Eucalyptus planted along south boundary of orchard by Strentzel; incense cedar sweetgum, pomegranate, and California bay may be historic.
	Riparian vegetation and plantings around graves	Non- contributing (C) Undetermined	Buckeyes present in some form during historic period; sycamore, Ponderosa pine, eucalyptus, hawthorn, California bay, coast live oaks, incense cedars, coast redwoods, and vinca undetermined.
	Vegetation along north and west boundary	Non- contributing (I)	Historically part of pear orchard.
WA	Woodlands and grasslands	Contributing	Pattern present during historic period.
	Eucalyptus, lower north slope	Contributing	Visible in late 1890s photograph, many lost in 1960s.
	Walnut trees, lower north slope	Undetermined	Possibly historic.
	Apricot orchard	Contributing	Dates to the time of Muir.
	Olive orchard	Unevaluated	Considered invasive.
<b>Buildings and Structures</b>			
MH	Muir House	Contributing	Constructed 1882, altered by Muir in 1906, rehabilitated 1998- 2000.
	Stone/brick wall and stone steps, southeast of Muir House	Contributing	Constructed by c.1887, repaired in 1996.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
MA	Carriage House	Contributing	Constructed c.1891, lean- to added in 1910, moved by 1939, reconstructed in 1983.
	Martinez Adobe	Contributing	Constructed 1849, altered in c.1906, rehabilitated in 1993- 1996.
	Ramada	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1930s, rebuilt in 1980s.
	Patio wall and steps, Martinez Adobe	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1930s, altered in 1998.
AG	Franklin Creek Windmill and Well	Non- contributing (C)	Reconstructed in 1978 and 1983.
	Franklin Creek Bridge	Non- contributing (C)	Reconstructed in 1967 and 1996.
	Alhambra Well	Non- contributing (I)	Windmill removed in 1960s, well reconstructed in 1983.
	Culvert, check dam, and stabilization structures along Franklin Creek	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed by NPS and State of California.
VC	Visitor Center	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1964.
	Patio retaining wall, Visitor Center	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in 1964.
GR	Strentzel family gravemarkers	Contributing	Erected 1890s.
	Strentzel family monument	Contributing	Erected 1890.
	Granite enclosure	Contributing	Erected 1890.
	Louie Strentzel Muir gravemarker	Contributing	Erected 1905.
	John Muir gravemarker	Contributing	Erected 1914.
	Hanna family gravemarkers	Contributing	Erected 1942 and 1947.
	Iron picket fence enclosure and gate	Non- contributing (C)	Erected after 1993.
	Bridge abutment	Non- contributing (I)	Constructed in early 1960s, bridge span removed in 1980.
WA	Bungalow	Undetermined	Bungalow dates to c.1910 and is across road from Alhambra ranch house.
	Strain Ranch buildings and structures	Undetermined	Developed between 1930- 1978.
	Earthen dams and stock ponds	Undetermined	One pond breached by NPS in 1993.
<b>Views and Vistas</b>			
	Historic views	Non- contributing	Mature historic and overgrown non- historic vegetation diminishes integrity
<b>Park- wide Small- scale Features</b>			
PW Fences and gates	Boundary fences and gates, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS, portions align with Muir Homestead boundary.
	Boundary fences and gates, Mt. Wanda Unit	Non- contributing (C)	Formerly used in association with grazing activities.
	Oil valves fence, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Dates from 1964 and 1968.
PW Signs	California historical markers monument (HB- 11), main park sign, and hours of operation sign, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Historical markers installed in 1983.
	Interpretive signs, kiosks, and marker signs, Park- wide	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS.
PW Benches	Benches, Park- wide	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS.

Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Features			
Characteristic / Character Area (with Feature Zone)	Feature Name	Evaluation (C) Compatible (I) Incompatible	Comments
PW Miscellaneous	Sprayer, House Unit	Contributing	Dates from c.1900, donated by Muir's grandson.
	Fruit box, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS.
	Picnic tables and grill, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS, picnic tables and grill in west orchard are distracting.
	Water faucets and hoses, House Unit and Gravesite Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS.
	Beehive oven, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Installed by NPS.
	Adobe brick- making pit, House Unit	Non- contributing (C)	Design and materials are compatible and evoke a construction technique from the historic period.
	Hydrothermograph, beehive, trash receptacles, and security light, House Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Generally inconspicuous in the landscape.
	Livestock structures, Mt. Wanda Unit	Unevaluated	Generally inconspicuous in the landscape.
	Weather station and radio repeater, Mt. Wanda Unit	Non- contributing (I)	Distracting features situated on high points within the grasslands.