From Rancho to Reservoir:

History and Archaeology of the Los Vaqueros Watershed, California

edited by

Grace H. Ziesing

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES CENTER
SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC FOUNDATION, INC.
ROHNERT PARK, CA 94928

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Cover illustration: Mary Ferrario sits with Evelyn Bonfante and a friend on a Vasco hillside, ca. 1917.

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PREFACE

Archaeologists and historians from the Anthropological Studies Center (ASC), Sonoma State University Academic Foundation, Inc. (SSUAF), have been studying cultural resources in the Los Vaqueros Project area since 1980. The purpose of this volume is to synthesize more than a decade's worth of historical and archaeological research performed for the Contra Costa Water District's (CCWD) Los Vaqueros Project. The research was conducted in compliance with Federal environmental laws, with the Bureau of Reclamation acting as the lead Federal agency. Much of this information has been presented in a more academic format in the Project's many technical reports. This well-illustrated volume is intended to synthesize the information and to present it in a way that a wider audience will find interesting.

The text is divided into four chapters, arranged more-or-less chronologically. Each chapter includes a straightforward narrative overview of the period, followed by a series of essays focused on topics relevant to that time period. Each of the essays can stand alone, but is more meaningful in the context of the volume overviews. By the same token, a reader could get a capsule history of Los Vaqueros just by reading the overviews.

Authorship

This volume is a truly collaborative effort written by ASC staff members who have been involved in the Los Vaqueros Project in various capacities over the years. Primary responsibility for each of the focused essays was assigned to one of the contributors; their job was to synthesize existing data in a friendly writing style. Authorship has not been credited essay-by-essay because we all borrowed from one another as well as from previously published project material. As volume editor, I have also taken liberties moving information around, with the result that it would be difficult to assign primary authorship to some of the essays. Nonetheless, each essay was drafted by an individual author, and credit is due.

Mary Praetzellis is the Operations Manager at the ASC. She has a Master's degree in Cultural Resources Management from SSU, is a member of the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA), and is registered by the California Council for the Promotion of History as a Professional Historian. Mary has been working as Senior Historian on the Los Vaqueros Project for the past 15 years, almost since its inception, and as Co-Principal Investigator since 1994. She has coordinated, directed, and overseen all of the historical research done to date. Much of the material in the overviews, site-specific summaries, and general contextual information in this volume was taken from publications she authored or co-authored.

Karana Hattersley-Drayton is the Project Oral Historian; she earned her Master's in Folklore from the University of California, Berkeley. From 1992 through 1996 Karana conducted more than two dozen interviews with previous residents of Los Vaqueros and their families. She has also compiled an archive of historical photographs, which has been heavily mined for this report. Karana was primarily responsible for focused essays on Joaquin Murieta, the Black Hills, four immigrant farm families, folklife and ethnicity, women and children in the late 19th century, Fermin Valenzuela and Andrew Lindholm, Edith Ordway, and Graham Nissen. In addition, she contributed to the essay on research methods.

Elaine-Maryse Solari is a Historical Researcher for the Los Vaqueros Project. She has a Master's degree in Cultural Resources Management from SSU and is a member of the State Bar of California. Elaine-Maryse has been combing the archives for primary-source material on the inhabitants of Los Vaqueros since 1993. With a Juris Doctor from Santa Clara University, her specialty is the law and she has made a major contribution toward understanding the complicated legal maneuverings of the Los Vaqueros title chain. Elaine-Maryse was primarily responsible for focused essays on land feuds and court battles, Louis Peres, Simon Blum, and Oscar Starr.

Bright Eastman is another Historical Researcher for the Los Vaqueros Project; she is currently working on her Master's degree in Cultural Resources Management at SSU. Bright's research has focused on agricultural technology, farm buildings, and 20th-century social networks on the Vasco. Her writing responsibilities for the current volume included women and children during the ranching period, social networking and social events, Vasco architecture, and agricultural work.

Suzanne Stewart is the ASC's Staff Editor; she is also a fully trained archaeologist with a Master's degree in Cultural Resources Management from SSU and is a member of SOPA. Suzanne has participated in report preparation for most of the Los Vaqueros publications and was involved in some of the early field surveys. In addition to editing the current volume, she drafted focused essays on the legal framework of the investigations, ethnohistory, prehistory, the Alvisos, the Bascos, Charles McLaughlin, and Mary Crocker.

I (Grace Ziesing) am a Staff Historical Archaeologist with a Master's degree in Archaeology from Boston University; I am also a member of SOPA. I have been involved with the Los Vaqueros Project since 1994 when I analyzed and wrote up the artifacts for three historical sites excavated in 1993. In 1994 and again in 1995 I directed excavations at four historical sites, including the Vasco Adobe. Following excavation, I wrote the technical reports for all four sites. My primary responsibility for the current volume has been to coordinate writing and compile the chapters. In addition, my writing responsibilities were the four chapter overviews and focused essays on Cultural Resources Management, research methods, the Suñol and Vasco adobes, dining and breadmaking at the Vasco Adobe, Peres's fence, cowboys, the Bonfante site overview and blacksmith shop, refuse deposits at the Connolly and Rose sites, and Vasco Road.

Sources

The information synthesized in this report was gathered over the last decade, and much of it has been published in other, more technical formats. Reports relied on most heavily include the following:

Mary Praetzellis, Suzanne B. Stewart, and Grace H. Ziesing
1996 *The Los Vaqueros Watershed: A Working History*. ASC, SSUAF, Rohnert Park, California. Prepared for CCWD, Concord, California.

Mary Praetzellis, Grace Ziesing, Jack McIlroy, Adrian Praetzellis
1995 *Investigations at Three Historic Archaeological Sites, Summer 1993, for the Los Vaqueros Project, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California*. ASC, SSUAF, Rohnert Park, California. Prepared for CCWD, Concord, California.

Grace H. Ziesing
1996 *Investigations of Three Historic Archaeological Sites, CA-CCO-447/H, CA-CCO-445H, and CA-CCO-427H, for the Los Vaqueros Project, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California*. ASC, SSUAF, Rohnert Park, California. Prepared for CCWD, Concord, California.

Grace H. Ziesing
1997 *Archaeological Investigations of the Vasco Adobe Site, CA-CCO-470H, for the Los Vaqueros Project, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California*. ASC, SSUAF, Rohnert Park, California. Prepared for CCWD, Concord, California.

In an effort to avoid weighing down the text with detailed references, sources have been footnoted in topical groups where appropriate. Fact-by-fact sourcing can be found in the technical reports listed above or referred to throughout the volume. Suggestions for further reading have been limited to sources readily available in most public libraries.

Acknowledgments

I think that all of us who have been involved in the Los Vaqueros Project are grateful for the research opportunities it has afforded us. For these we have CCWD and the Bureau of Reclamation to thank—they have taken their responsibility to preserve the past for future generations seriously and have given us every possible chance to make the most of what Los Vaqueros has to offer. Janice Hutton of CCWD has expertly overseen the administration of our contract with CCWD, and has been flexible with scheduling adjustments when they were most needed. Terry Cox, CCWD's Watershed Manager, made sure the field efforts went smoothly and provided us with storage for our equipment. The Bureau of Reclamation, as the lead Federal agency for the Project, has been closely involved in the development and implementation of the cultural resources mitigation program from the outset.

County officials, archivists, and librarians have all been extremely helpful in facilitating our research efforts. Special thanks go to the following (in no particular order): Betty Maffei (Director) and volunteers at the Contra Costa County History Center in Pleasant Hill; Barbara Chambers (Assistant County Recorder) and Robert Westby (former Records Manager) at the Office of the Clerk-Recorder for Contra Costa County in Martinez; the staff of the Brentwood Museum who opened their doors to us and allowed us to copy their collection of historic photographs; Dave Smith (Secretary and Treasurer) at the Antique Caterpillar Machinery Owners Club; the helpful staff of St. Michaels Parish, especially Wilma and Donna; volunteers at the Livermore Heritage Guild; and the staff at the Contra Costa County Library in Pleasant Hill.

We would also like to acknowledge oral-history informants Paul Fragulia, his daughter Marie Bignone, Mary Cabral, Frances Vallerga, and Evelyn Sod, all of whom sat through multiple interviews and loaned us precious family photographs. Franklyn Silva, a gifted raconteur, also deserves special mention for the extra efforts he made to contact family members, draw maps, and write letters. He has also curated a wonderful collection of Los Vaqueros ephemera (including family photographs) and generously gave us access to it. Carol Hovey, a descendant of Pedro Altube, compiled an extensive family history that she graciously shared with us.

Several professional colleagues were also very helpful in making this study possible. Anne Homan and Kathy Leighton, both local historians, generously shared the efforts of their own work and archival holdings. Dr. Margaret Purser (Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University) inspired the concept of social networking used in one of the essays in this volume. Thanks also to Randall Milliken for making available his genealogies based on mission-register research.

As volume editor, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the contributors, who cheerfully worked on a very tight schedule and made the best possible use of their time. Thanks also to Rose White, who expertly handled the illustrations and text formatting despite being in the middle of major life changes (moving and motherhood). Most of the staff members and many of the students at ASC have been involved in some aspect of the Los Vaqueros Project, and they all deserve acknowledgment, but that, of course, would be an unwieldy list. So let me single out Mary and Adrian Praetzellis, who have provided encouragement and countless research opportunities to all of us. Dave Fredrickson has been an inspiration throughout the Los Vaqueros Project, and, although officially retired, continues to preside over our meetings and offer modulated words of wisdom.

Finally, we must also acknowledge *all* the people of the Vasco, past and present, who made the watershed the fascinating place that we have tried to evoke in these pages. For those who have passed into history, we hope our effort resurrects them from the dusty archives. For those who contributed their knowledge through oral history, we can only hope that this volume provides a broader context for their own very personal experiences of Los Vaqueros. The watershed itself is a unique and wonderful place and, for battle-weary academics and career archaeologists, a true respite from the trials of everyday life. I, for one, relished my time amid the ruins of the Vasco, and will miss it when it is inundated.

Grace H. Ziesing
Oakland, California
April 1997

CHAPTER 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO LOS VAQUEROS

THE CHANGING COUNTRYSIDE

To look at the hills and valleys of Los Vaqueros now, one is impressed by how untouched the land seems. It appears to be a landscape stuck in time, refreshingly free from the agricultural and residential development that surrounds it on all sides. It is hard to imagine that very much has changed here over the course of the centuries. But, of course, like every inch of California, Los Vaqueros has countless stories to tell—one for each man, woman, and child who ever lived there, and one for each day, month, or year that has passed.

Thousands of years ago the valley was a different place, with more diverse plant life including madrone and big-leaf maple. Then, native people used it as a hunting area and seasonal home where they raised their families and buried their dead. After about 400 years ago, people spent less time in the valley. Finally, at the end of the 18th century, the Spanish arrived, bringing with them unfamiliar diseases and an intriguing but culturally devastating mission system. Within a few decades of European arrival, Los Vaqueros had become mission grazing land, largely unpopulated and unused.

Change came slowly to Los Vaqueros, and when ownership was finally granted to three Mexican citizens, the shift in its legal status barely made a mark on the landscape. Development of the land was gradual: a mud-brick house here and there, corrals, and stream diversions. And then fences went up, marking a profound shift in how the land could be used. Suddenly, this was private property, and the pace of change quickened. What had been wide-open grazing land was

Kellogg Creek Valley. View of the Los Vaqueros Project area shot from a hill at the north end of Kellogg Creek Valley, looking south. Note the meanders of Kellogg Creek and the native oaks dotting the landscape.

broken up into smaller tenant farms that people cultivated or ranched. The population grew markedly and a rural community, with a school of its own, developed.

For half a century, families—many of them recent immigrants from Europe—lived off the land of Los Vaqueros. Here, cash-poor farmers could make use of large tracts of land without the capital they would need to buy their own acreage. But just when the nation was plunged into the Great Depression, the benevolent landowner died tragically, and her estate eventually sold the land out from under the tenants. Smaller tenant farms were consolidated into larger ranches, and rather than paving the way for development, this move helped preserve the land as open space, once again perfect for grazing livestock.

The area we call Los Vaqueros has been known by many names over the years—names that reflect both the changing landscape and the people who used it. We will never know what the Native Americans called their valley, and the earliest Spanish explorers did not describe it. But later, when the mission fathers used the hills and valleys at the foot of Mount Diablo to graze their massive herds of cattle, it became known as *Poso de los Vaqueros*, or "Cowboys' Spring." After the missions closed their doors and the Mexican government granted the land to three Mexican brothers-in-law, it was appropriately given the official name of *Cañada de los Vaqueros,* or "Valley of the Cowboys." Some of the earliest cattle ranchers in the valley were Basques from the French and Spanish Pyrenees, and the name that stayed with the land well into this century—*The Vasco,* or *The Basco*—was derived from their tenure there. Other names are purely geographical, used to describe different parts of the area: Kellogg Creek Valley and the Black Hills.

But whatever you call it, Los Vaqueros has remained a place that appears to be stuck in time. Ironically, it is this very aspect that set the stage for the biggest landscape change of all, which, as of this writing, is still to come. The sleepy valley will be flooded within the next decade. Lest we forget the generations of Californians that have left this place behind, we will try to tell some of their stories.

WHAT IS THE LOS VAQUEROS PROJECT, AND WHY ARE WE WRITING ABOUT IT?

In 1937 citizens of Contra Costa County voted to establish the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD), to be responsible for insuring that public water supply would always be available. The Contra Costa Canal, which takes water from the San Joaquin River, was completed in 1948 as part of the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project. While the canal assured access to water, saline levels are unacceptably high at times. The Los Vaqueros Project seeks to address this problem and provide emergency storage by constructing a new water-intake point further upriver in addition to a reservoir of fresh water to be tapped in times of high salinity.

The project has several components that will affect the landscape: the reservoir pool itself will flood approximately 1,500 acres of the valley. The dam for the reservoir will be 192 feet high and require almost 3 million cubic yards of fill, much of it from the valley floor below. Utilities and transportation infrastructure located in the valley have already been moved in anticipation of the flooding—this includes four gas and petroleum pipelines, electrical lines, and the north-south Vasco Road traveled by thousands of commuters every day.

Construction of Los Vaqueros Dam, 1996. The hills at the north end of the valley are graded while soil is mined from the valley floor to construct the 192-foot dam that will hold back the waters of the new reservoir. *(Photograph courtesy Jack Meyer.)*

The new water pipeline—big enough for the tallest person to walk through, upright—will run 20 miles, all of it buried. Side-by-side trenches, twice as wide as the pipe itself, are being dug across the hills and valleys surrounding the Los Vaqueros watershed to accommodate the new pipeline.

All told, the Los Vaqueros Project will affect more than 16,000 acres of land—land that is home to a diverse array of wildlife and plants, land that generations of natives and immigrants alike have traversed, subsisted on, and occupied for the past 10,000 years. For this reason, the Los Vaqueros Project has to be more than just an engineering project, and CCWD has enthusiastically seized the opportunity to supply the community with much more than clean water. Countless professionals, including archaeologists, historians, and biologists, have been hired to make numerous studies to minimize the effects of the Los Vaqueros Project on the natural and cultural environment. As a result of these studies, precious plant and animal life will be relocated or the project will be redesigned around it, and the cumulative cultural history of this little-developed inland valley will be thoroughly examined, synthesized, and recorded so that anyone with an interest can read about it. It is hoped that, while the face of the landscape will be changed forever, something tangible about Los Vaqueros will be preserved for the ages.

This volume presents the results of one aspect of the cultural resources studies, that is, the history of Los Vaqueros. Much of the data used here has been presented in technical reports intended for professional audiences and resource managers. These reports satisfy the letter of the law, but CCWD has taken its responsibility one step further by supporting volumes like this, intended to present the information in a format that is accessible to the general public. We hope to capture something of the diverse heritage of Los Vaqueros and its generations of people, and communicate it effectively to a wide audience. This volume focuses mostly on the history of Los

Vaqueros after control of California was ceded to the United States by the Mexican government in 1848. Earlier periods and peoples are alluded to, but readers interested in in-depth studies of Native Americans at Los Vaqueros are referred to other published reports.[1]

THE LOS VAQUEROS WATERSHED

The hills and valleys of Los Vaqueros are a rural outpost surrounded by the bustling suburban developments of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta communities to the north and Livermore Valley's I-580 corridor to the south. From the Livermore Valley, Vasco Road climbs into the low hills on the north side of I-580 and wends its way between the hilltops into the Los

Project Location. The Los Vaqueros Project is located mostly in southeastern Contra Costa County, although a small portion crosses over into northeastern Alameda County. It is approximately 15 miles south of Antioch and 25 miles west of Stockton. Mount Diablo, whose summit is about 10 miles northwest of the watershed, dominates the surrounding landscape, although it cannot be seen from the valley floor.

Vaqueros watershed about 6 miles out. The landscape changes as soon as the road crests the first hill, and, for a moment, the undeveloped ranch land all around evokes a feeling of nostalgia for an earlier California. For the next 15 miles there are no subdivisions, no traffic lights, no shopping malls. Instead, ramshackle fences line the roadway, stock ponds nestle in small valleys, and farmsteads—spread out every mile or so—are arranged as clusters of wood and stucco buildings at the ends of long, unpaved drives.

On a summer morning, banks of fog from San Francisco Bay might hover above the hills to the west, diffusing the early morning light. But as the road rises over the low hills and moves into the Los Vaqueros watershed, the fog dissipates and the slanting sun casts long shadows across the road from the hills to the east. Before Vasco Road was moved to the uplands to the east, the descent into the valley was gradual because the road followed the paths of natural drainages between the hilltops. The gentle descent never afforded a broad view of the expansive valley floor—instead, the view widened gradually until all the surrounding hills were visible and the land on either side of the road was flat. To the east the hills are mostly gentle grass-covered slopes dotted with oaks and ranging in elevation from about 130 to 1,100 feet above mean sea level. The western hills, by contrast, are steep and rugged and are covered with dense stands of trees that make them appear almost black; the aptly named Black Hills rise to more than 2,400 feet. The open grassland of the flat valley floor is punctuated by gnarled oak trees and the meandering ribbon of Kellogg Creek as it makes its way north to the Delta waterways.

The Watershed's Natural Setting

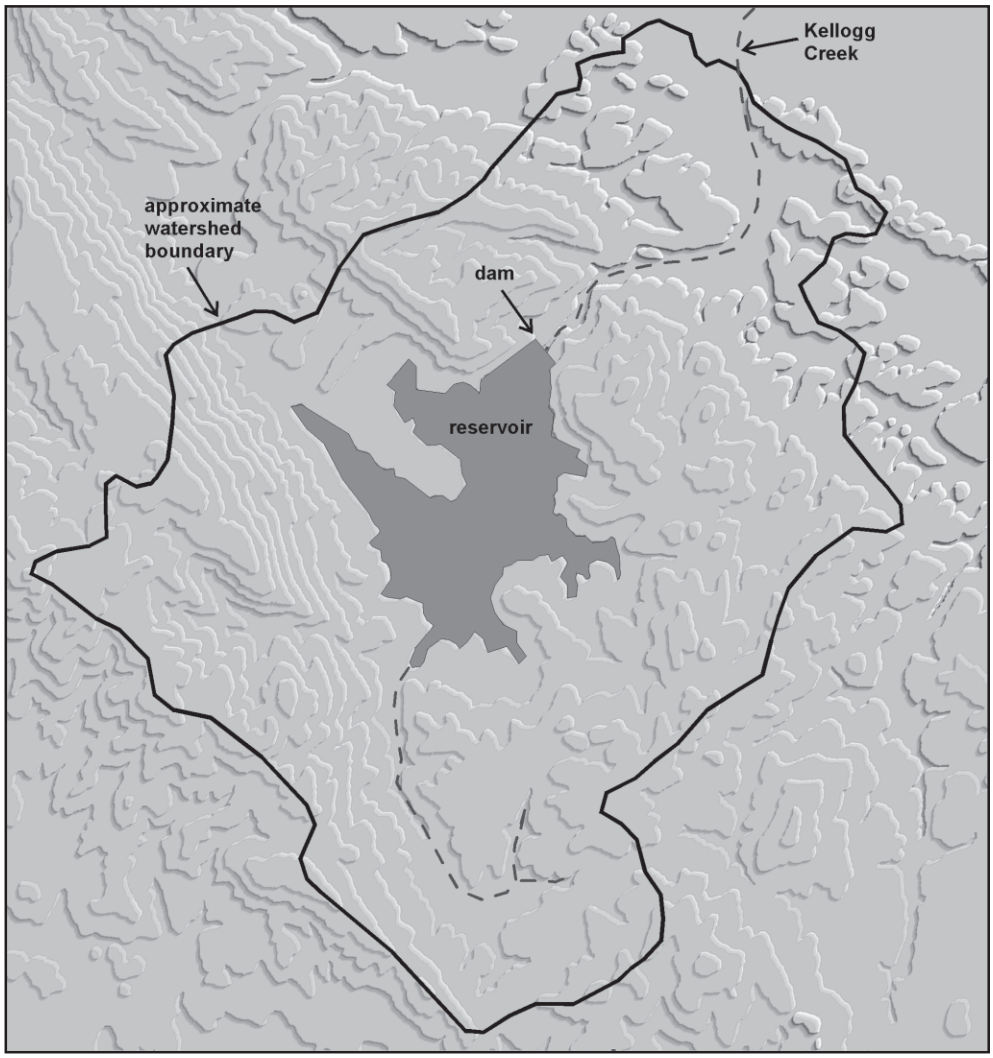
The Los Vaqueros watershed encompasses the upper portion of the Kellogg Creek drainage and is marked by southwest- and northeast-trending valleys, through which the waters of perennial Kellogg Creek and its tributaries flow. The deep canyon near the headwaters in the south opens out to the broad Vasco (or Kellogg Creek) Valley in the center of the watershed. There were once springs throughout the watershed; the best known of these, referred to simply as the *Poso*, or "watering hole," issued from the lower hills near the center of the valley.

The climate of this inland valley and its surrounding hills is typically Mediterranean, with wet winters that are mild to moderately cold, alternating with hot, dry summers. Characteristic of the hill country in this region are the high winds, which are particularly disagreeable in winter months. The protected valley of Los Vaqueros was favored by early stockraisers, who ran their cattle here to get out of the winds, while the rockshelters at Vasco Caves and elsewhere in the uplands served the same purpose for both humans and their stock. Another climatic trait that shaped the land use in the area was its aridity: about 90 percent of the annual precipitation occurs from November through April, with seasonal averages varying from about 13 inches in the east to 17 inches in the west. In the summer and fall, forage is sparse and pasture nearly nonexistent. While dry-farming was an economically viable enterprise in some portions of the watershed, irrigated agriculture—even small truck gardens—could not be supported.

Lying in the lower foothills of the northern Diablo Range at the edge of the Central Valley, the Los Vaqueros region is situated in the contact zone between the foothill woodland and valley grassland plant communities. Most of the eastern portion and much of the central portion are covered by valley grassland. Foothill woodland-savanna typically occurs on hill slopes in the

central and western parts, while patches of chaparral are found along the western boundary. A riparian plant community, including tules and cottonwoods, lines the principal drainages. The area may have been a considerably more wooded environment prior to the intensive grazing and logging activities of the 1850s and 1860s. Much of the watershed, however, is rockland—ranging from areas with only thin soils overlying bedrock to huge outcrops that extend for a mile or more along ridgelines.

The convergence of habitat types provides for a wide diversity of animal life in the Los Vaqueros watershed. The vast grasslands are home to birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles such as ground squirrels, tree frogs, gopher snakes, burrowing owls, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and meadowlarks, to name a few. Raptors such as the western screech owl, American kestrel, and red-tailed hawk feed on small grassland mammals and soar the currents that sweep up from the



Los Vaqueros Watershed. This topographic rendering of the Los Vaqueros Project area shows the natural valley that will be filled with the waters of the new reservoir. *(Adapted by Greg White from U.S.G.S. topographical maps.)*

valley floor. Spring shoots attract black-tailed deer. Various wetland habitats—streams, stock ponds, marshes, vernal pools, and intermittent pools that form amongst the many rock outcrops—provide sustenance for all manner of plant and animal life including the increasingly rare fairy shrimp and California tiger salamander. Patches of chaparral in the uplands of the watershed are home to the threatened Alameda whipsnake, while stands of oak provide nesting sites for golden eagles and red-tailed hawks.[2]

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE WATERSHED

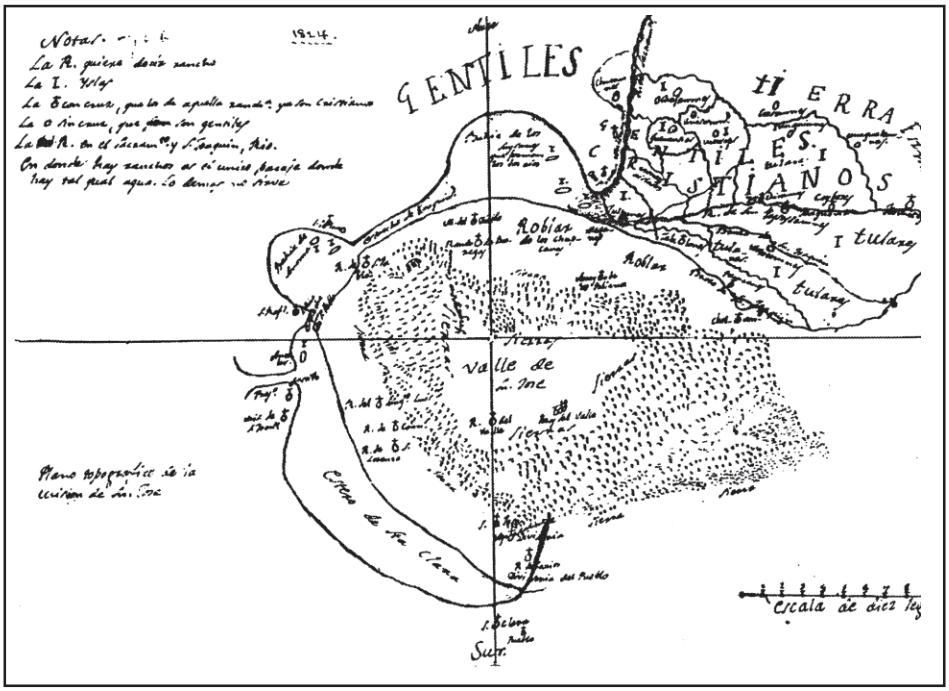
The ready availability of water, the protective barrier of the surrounding hills, and the natural rock outcrops that dot the hills of the Los Vaqueros area have been magnets for humans for centuries. Indeed, Los Vaqueros has a venerable history of human occupation. Archaeological evidence of human activity stretches back almost 10,000 years, which places Los Vaqueros among some of the earliest known sites in California. Over the next 9,000-some years, the watershed continued to be used by Native American populations, sometimes intensively. Curiously, the area appears not to have been occupied much after 400 years ago, or at least there is little evidence to suggest it.

In any case, an entirely new order of change came to Native Americans in the Los Vaqueros watershed at the very end of the 18th century, when Spanish missionaries encroached on the land. The disruption was so great that most of the people who lived in the area moved to Missions San Francisco (Dolores) and San Jose between 1803 and 1806. Much of what occurred is poorly understood because nearly a century would pass before the first systematic ethnographic work was conducted in California.

Mission San Jose, founded in 1797, was the largest population center in the region in the early 19th century. Beginning as the dominant institution to change the lives of native peoples of the East Bay and the Central Valley, the mission and later the Pueblo of San Jose became the center of political, social, and religious life for the Californios (Californians of Hispanic heritage) in the region. Under the Spanish, mission land use did not extend far inland, and the Los Vaqueros vicinity, having been used intermittently by the Native American populations and not yet settled by the Europeans, remained largely unoccupied. Beginning in 1821 under the Mexican regime, new settlements cropped up to maintain the mission system—some of them very near the Los Vaqueros watershed.

The Livermore, San Ramon, and Diablo valleys became vast grazing tracts for the livestock of Mission San Jose. An 1824 sketch map of the mission's lands shows two outstations in the Livermore Valley and two in the Diablo Valley. In addition, the map shows a village—*Arroyo de los Poblanos*—on Marsh Creek, very near Kellogg Creek. At that time, the lands that were to become Los Vaqueros were used for rodeo (or round-up) of mission cattle; the area was then known as *Poso de los Vaqueros*—"Spring of the Cowboys," or "Cowboys' Spring."

The California missions were secularized between 1835 and 1836 and their lands, which were supposed to have gone to the Indians, instead opened up for settlement through grants from the Mexican government. The area surrounding Los Vaqueros was soon claimed, but Los Vaqueros itself remained surplus. When Mission San Jose had closed its doors in 1836, its nearly 2,000 Indian neophytes had to find their own means of support. Many of the most recent arrivals from



Lands of Mission San Jose, 1824. Sketch map prepared by Father Narciso Durán of Mission San Jose; Los Vaqueros is in the lower left corner of the upper right quadrant.

the Central Valley returned to their old villages, and some of these groups took to raiding herds of horses to the west. Increasing violence incurred by Mexican reprisals discouraged settlement of lands adjacent to the San Joaquin Valley, including what was to become Los Vaqueros.[3]

LOS VAQUEROS ON THE EVE OF SETTLEMENT

Throughout the late 1830s Los Vaqueros remained unclaimed land and was used by surrounding rancheros for communal grazing, as it had been earlier for the mission herds. The unfenced hills were considered public and there were no restrictions on who could run cattle there.[4] As in the mission days, round-ups were held to gather together the roaming cattle, brand the new calves, and distribute the animals to their rightful owners. In these years, although no one officially lived at Los Vaqueros, Mexican and Indian vaqueros continued to graze cattle in the valley.

Although still wide open and largely undeveloped, the Los Vaqueros watershed was already transformed from the landscape the Native American populations had known a century before. The grazing cattle spread the seeds of European grasses far and wide, replacing the native groundcover; their hoofs dug small furrows across the hillsides, eroding the drainages; and grazing, though not yet intensive, may have begun the process of deforestation. In the early 1840s the seeds of profound change were planted when the legal status of Los Vaqueros shifted from unclaimed land to a Mexican rancho. Thus begins the history presented in this volume.

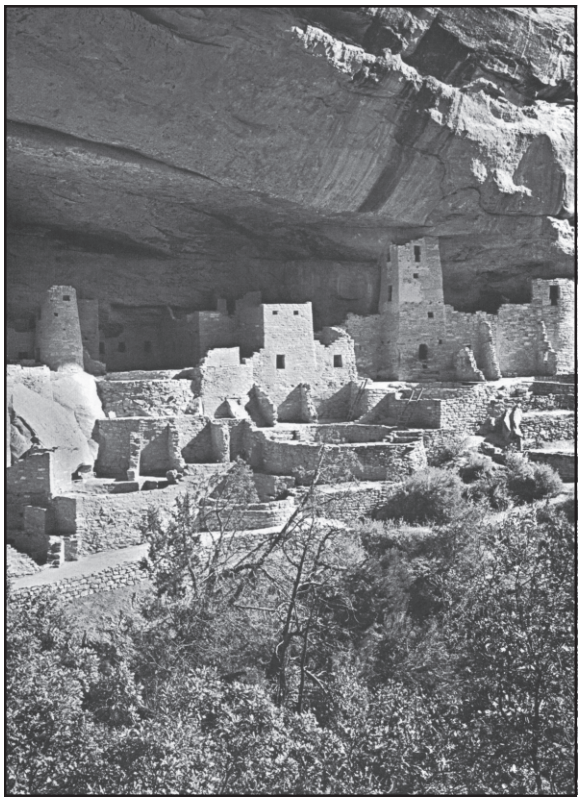
RESERVOIRS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Capturing and holding large masses of water have been of critical concern in central and southern California since the aqueducts of the early missions and the great reservoir and ditch systems of the Gold Rush. Small ponds were typically placed in drainages, while whole valleys were dammed to form reservoirs on a larger scale. These complexes unavoidably targeted the very spots most likely to contain historical buildings and prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. There was, in the 19th century, no law against such destruction. After 1906, when President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act, the federal government finally gave some protection to archaeological sites, requiring permits to excavate them on federal land; spectacular sites might be set aside as national monuments, but lesser ones were usually ignored.

Protecting the Past

Collecting information and artifacts from archaeological sites before flooding or grading got its first concerted government support from the Works Progress Administration, set up to provide employment and stimulate the depressed economy of the 1930s. With the main goal of keeping young men off the streets—not exploring past ways of life—the WPA efforts did little more than salvage information from major sites. Although the Historic Sites Act of 1935 provided some protection for sites of "exceptional value," others were pushed aside. To keep the economy rolling after World War II, the federal government undertook a massive public works program that included a focus on reservoir construction. Called the River Basin Salvage Program, the archaeological component had uneven success. With minuscule funding and no proper guidelines, the process has been described—perhaps unfairly—as "the 'quick and dirty' run-through . . . to find the best sites for excavation."[5] The archaeological remains of entire pioneer towns and Native American villages were lost.

The mid-1960s—a time of new approaches on all fronts—saw the beginning of a rich and complex system by which the federal government would support preservation positively, with one of the goals "to insure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our na-



Sites Magnificent and Humble. Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado *(left)* is a spectacular archaeological site that was recognized for its research value as early as the 1880s, long before historic preservation laws were enacted. The brick tankhouse platform at the Vasco Adobe site at Los Vaqueros *(right)* is humble by comparison, but speaks to important research topics such as modernization in 19th-century rural California. *(Cliff Palace photograph from Noble 1981, p.32; courtesy David Grant Noble.)*

tion." The regulations, and the laws that drove them, developed explicit ways in which federal and state governments and individuals could consult together over the effects of projects or the treatment of individual sites. Foremost is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, which created the National Register of Historic Places—the federal government's official list of important historic properties. Under NHPA's Section 106, Federal agencies must consider the effects of all federally funded or permitted projects on important cultural resources—that is those sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects that are eligible for listing on the National Register. While earlier legislation had sought to preserve only national landmarks and monuments (those "exceptionally valuable" properties of the Historic Sites Act of 1935), under NHPA properties of state and even local significance may be eligible. At the same time, information from sparse archaeological deposits or humble structures may contribute to our understanding of important themes in the history of the United States.

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

b. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

c. That 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. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

National Register Criteria. If a historical building or site meets any one of these criteria, then it "may" be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and any potential impacts to it must be considered during project planning.

Many cultural resources at Los Vaqueros—Oscar Starr's metal machine shed, the Perata/Bonfante ranch, Anna Connolly's cellar, and maybe even the Vasco Adobe, among others—would not have been studied three decades ago, a considerable loss to understanding a major way of life in late-19th- and early 20th-century California.

The Section 106 Process

The National Register of Historic Places is at the core of what cultural resources professionals refer to as "The 106 Process." All properties listed on, or even just eligible to be listed on, the National Register and that may be affected by a federal undertaking have to be considered before the project can proceed. Buildings, sites, and districts, once identified, have to be evaluated for National Register eligibility using an explicit set of criteria detailed in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (Title 36, Part 60).

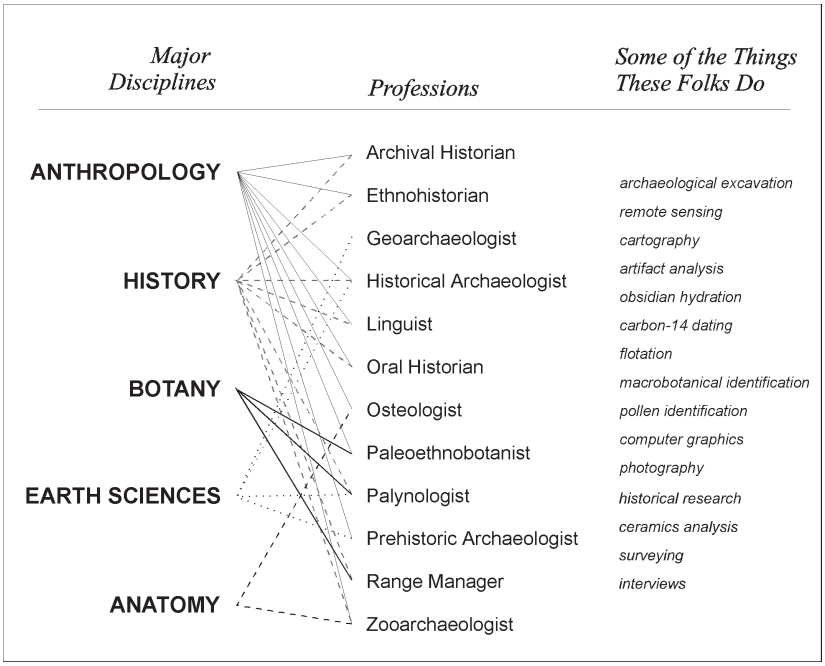
Once it has been determined what eligible properties may be at risk, the actual effects of the project on those properties must be assessed. Where possible, all effects determined to be adverse to the historical nature or research potential of the property are avoided or minimized. Sometimes the project plans are altered so that the historical property is avoided. More often—in the case of archaeological sites and districts—the project proceeds as planned, but only after the property has been thoroughly studied, excavated, and recorded. Such has been the case with the Los Vaqueros Project, which was determined to contain numerous properties of historical significance.

Today's system can be slow and demanding. But it is a great advance over the River Basin Survey days, when a pair of college students set off to determine—over the course of a weekend—what to salvage as a last look at the history and prehistory of miles of river lands.[6] Now, even the roads, maintenance buildings, caretakers' dwellings, and other features related to constructing and operating the water systems that catalyzed some of the earliest efforts at historic preservation are considered historically significant themselves!

PRESERVING THE PAST: CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AT LOS VAQUEROS

The people who undertake historic preservation studies required by federal and state laws are called "Cultural Resources Managers." This may sound like obfuscating legalese, and in a way it is. No single approach can be taken because so many different topics come to bear in the study of the past. A truly effective Cultural Resources Management campaign gathers professionals from a wide variety of academic backgrounds for an interdisciplinary study. Cultural resources are, of course, anything to do with people, and a typical multi-acre study area is likely to have a long and complicated history that reaches far beyond the scope that any one well-informed professional can be expected to master. At Los Vaqueros that history stretches back almost 10,000 years, and a clear understanding of the way people lived requires study of the changing environment, dynamics of soil deposition, and local geology, not to mention a mastery of archaeological site stratigraphy, artifact recognition, and the historical context in which the more recent populations lived.

Cultural resources studies associated with the Los Vaqueros Project went on in earnest for more than 18 years, beginning in 1979 and continuing through 1997 and beyond.[7] The Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University got involved in 1981 and since then has produced more than 30 technical reports on various aspects of the project; at the same time, researchers have contributed numerous articles and papers to professional publications and meetings. A full bibliography of the reports and papers fills six closely spaced pages of text. More than 50 people with backgrounds in diverse areas of study have been involved in the project over the years as field and laboratory crew, cartographers, specialists, supervisors, managers, etc. Report authors alone number more than 20.



Cultural Resources Management Chart. These are some of the academic disciplines and professions that Cultural Resources Managers for the Los Vaqueros Project were trained in. Note how interconnected they all are. *(Graphic by Grace H. Ziesing.)*

One Step at a Time

How does a project of this magnitude get done? The answer, of course, is step by step. Broadly sketched, the steps are to identify what cultural resources exist within the project area, determine which ones are historically significant, and devise ways to minimize negative effects on those that are. All steps of this process require input from many professional disciplines in order to responsibly manage the cultural resources present.

The identification process itself is a massive undertaking that involves both historians and archaeologists—the former search archives and the latter walk across the landscape looking for obvious signs of human activity. Those of us who focus on historical resources (that is, sites associated with

Field and Lab Workers. To mitigate project impacts at Los Vaqueros historic sites, numerous field and laboratory skills were required. *Clockwise from upper left:* drawing a barn floor with portable grid; drafting computer graphics; one-time Vasco residents at the Vasco Adobe site for oral-history interview; sorting and identifying animal bone; conducting magnetometer survey; examining seeds.

19th- and 20th-century settlers) rely on written records, maps, and oral history to predict the locations of sites and identify what we find. Prehistoric archaeologists rely more heavily on the natural sciences, the physical environment, and geological studies to predict and identify sites. Historical sites may be marked by standing structures, alignments of stones, bits of glazed pottery, or incongruously flat spots (where building foundations might have been). Prehistoric sites may be identified by pieces of flaked or ground stone, blackened soil from intensive occupation, smooth mortar holes in bedrock outcrops, or art painted on a rockshelter wall. At Los Vaqueros, 68 sites were identified as a result of this phase of research. What is more, the entire watershed was recorded as the Los Vaqueros Historic District, which included all associated sites and isolated features.

Once a site is identified it must be evaluated for its historical significance to determine if it is important enough to be studied in detail. This involves understanding the broad context in which the site functioned. All identified sites were evaluated within the appropriate context; of the 68 sites identified, 63 were determined to have sufficient integrity and research potential to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. The interdisciplinary nature of the work is carried into this phase because many sources of information are necessary to understand this context. At Los Vaqueros it was not enough to search libraries and archives for information on the historic period (from the mid-1800s on), or to synthesize existing scholarship about the prehistoric period. In addition, that critical but somewhat nebulous period just before and during the era of Spanish contact had to be understood. This project required new research into early mission records and early 20th-century ethnographies to try and establish who lived at Los Vaqueros on the eve of European settlement.[8]

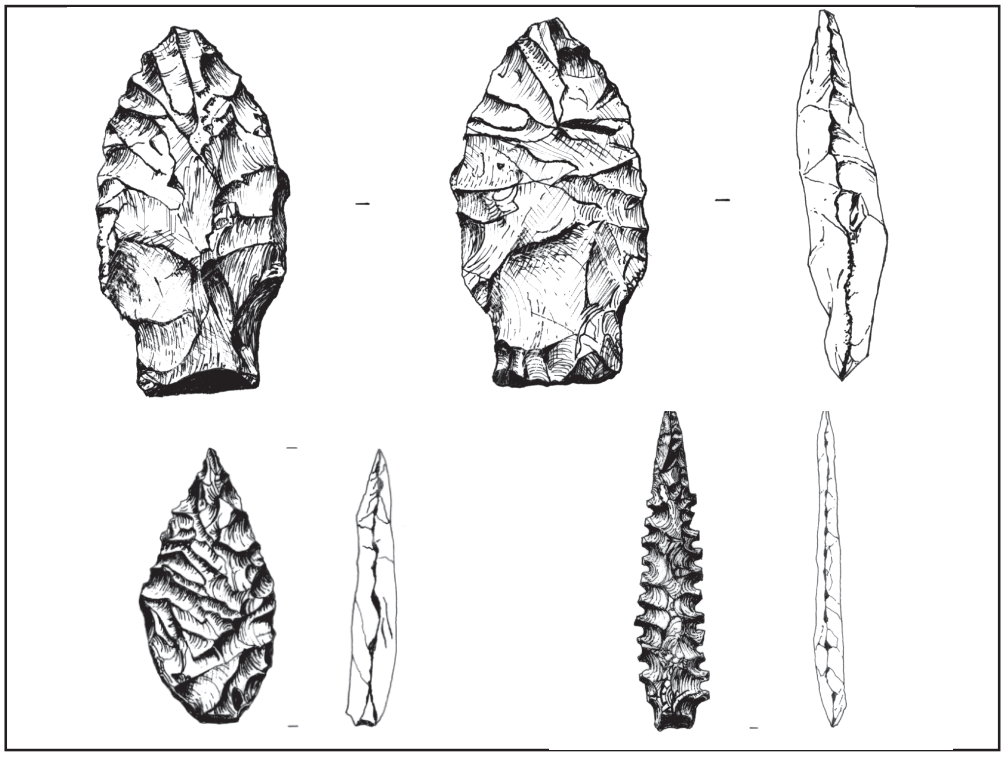
Minimizing threats to historically significant sites usually means recovering the information they contain before it is lost to the world forever. The major approaches to data recovery are further historical research, archaeological excavation, and architectural recordation. These approaches involve bringing in experts from diverse fields to help identify, interpret, and record all aspects of the site. The list of specialized areas of expertise is long, but includes architectural drawing, cartography, ceramic analysis, computer graphics, geoarchaeology (analyzing soil formation processes), obsidian hydration (dating obsidian artifacts), osteology (analyzing human bone), paleoethnobotany (identifying and analyzing seeds and other organic matter), palynology (studying pollen grains and spores), photography, phytolith analysis (identifying opal grains contained within plant cells), remote sensing, stratigraphy (analyzing the superposition of cultural and natural deposits, including soils), and zooarchaeology (identifying and analyzing bone from archaeological contexts). Specialists in all of these areas, and more, have contributed to studies of the six historic and eight prehistoric sites that have been fully investigated for the Los Vaqueros Project so far.

Our job as Cultural Resources Managers is to carry out studies that will ensure the preservation of information from the past for future generations. We cannot, nor do we wish to, hinder responsible growth and development. It is, however, our legal and ethical responsibility to make sure that progress does not irrevocably destroy access to information about how the people and places that came before us shaped the present. We use every tool at our disposal to make this a reality, and are rewarded when we hear statements like what local resident and Vasco descendent Terry Rooney said: "I was sad when they were going to build the dam. But now I am happy the history is recovered."[9]

A DIFFERENT PLACE: THE PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPE

Today's visitors to the Los Vaqueros area see a very different landscape from the one of 2,000, or even 200, years ago. Clambering up hot August hillsides with only dry shrubs for shade or a handhold, or plodding step by step through winter mud across the treeless valley, archaeologists first studying the modern landscape saw a marginal setting. The Kellogg Creek drainage would have been used only occasionally, it was reasoned, until populations grew so great that all other niches were filled. Archaeological studies supported this view: artifacts found on the surface were nearly all of recent types, and occupation sites were few and simple. A moister, more nurturing climate could have existed in the past, but evidence was hidden. Finding out about past environments required recognizing that Los Vaqueros, like many places in the diverse terrain of central California, is a dynamic landscape—in fact, several landscapes assembled over a period of thousands of years.

The secret to finding prehistoric archaeological sites at Los Vaqueros is an understanding of the conditions that have changed the landscape. Landscapes are formed by the processes that remove sediments (soil, rocks, and clay) from one area and deposit them in another. *Paleosols* ("old soils") are formed when sediments weather for a long period at the surface of a stable landscape. It is in periods of stability that archaeological deposits can become quite complex through the concentration of artifacts, food bone, and other discards of human activity. These deposits may be sealed over gradually, through the slow contribution of sediments borne by wind or water; they may be abruptly buried through landslide or flood; or they may be whisked away in the next erosional phase. By studying a



Prehistoric Stone Tools. These three artifacts represent the different weapons used in the Los Vaqueros area. The large stemmed specimen at top is a spear or dart tip more than 7,000 years old. The leaf-shaped specimen is a dart point less than 2,500 years old, and the narrow piece is an arrow point less than 1,000 years old. *(Drawing by Julia Jarrett.)*

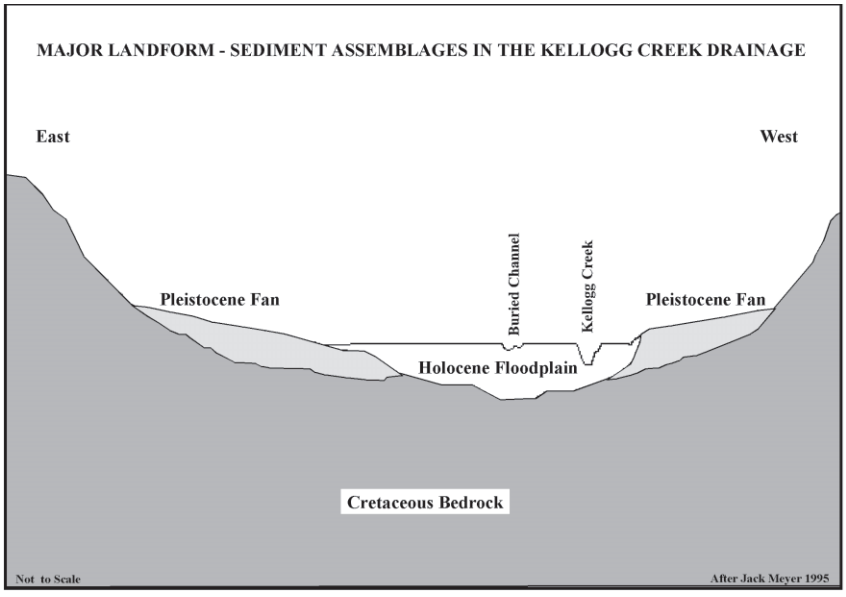
cross section of these deposits, the history of the changing landscape can be read.

Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists found evidence of land quite different from the surface today and lifeways a good deal more complex than was originally suspected for this area. More than 40 radiocarbon dates have been obtained—some to date the archaeological finds but most to identify periods of soil stability and instability, and what it means for understanding the use of this valley and of central California as a whole.

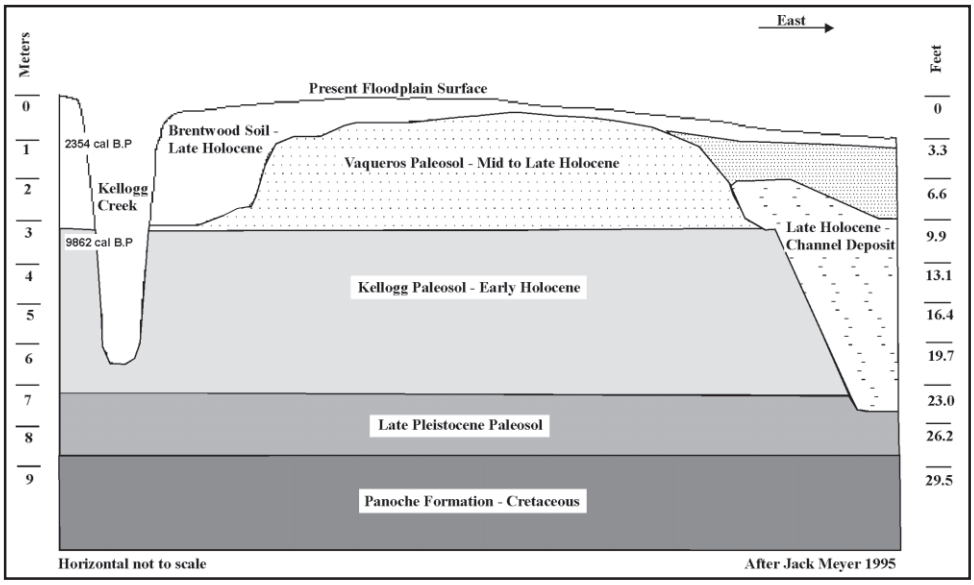
Early Occupation

Ten thousand years ago—before glacial melt filled up the sea and flooded inland—the Delta was merely a series of streams, and the outlet of San Francisco Bay was a canyon. The radiocarbon dates from the archaeological excavations at Los Vaqueros show us that people began using the Kellogg Creek valley at a very early time: by about 9,800 years ago—a period archaeologists refer to as the Lower Archaic—and perhaps before. This early date came from archaeological site CA-CCO-696, a previously unknown camp that was found during construction near the base of the proposed dam. Equally old is the large obsidian spear or dart point found with the radiocarbon-dated materials; with these items were chipping and grinding tools that suggested much more than just an accidental visit into the valley. These remains were found in a paleosol at a depth of more than 3 meters (at least 10 feet); to reach it, heavy equipment had dug through more recent archaeological remains—a paleosol buried under more than 1 meter (about 3 feet) of non-cultural soil.

There are only a handful of similarly early dates from archaeological sites in central California, and most of these are in areas of more obviously distinctive resources: Borax Lake in Lake County, Buena Vista Lake in the southern San Joaquin Valley, Salt Springs Valley in the Calaveras foothills, and Clarks Flat on the Stanislaus River. Does this make the Los Vaqueros site something extra special? A site of extraordinary significance? Yes and no. The site earns much of its importance precisely because its location is mundane. It suggests that Paleoindians did not just cluster at a few marvelous spots with vast resources, but rather that they may have used the same kinds of locations that people used thousands of years later. Thus many more of these ancient sites are likely present in stream deposits and alluvial fans across California. From information contained in the sequence of soils on the valley floor, we can also propose what might have



Cross Section of Kellogg Creek Drainage. The surface landscape of Los Vaqueros concealed earlier landforms below.



Cross Section of Prehistoric Site CA-CCO-696. Ancient archaeological materials were found on old land surfaces near the Los Vaqueros dam site under as much as 10 feet of soil. (Radiocarbon dates are given in years before present.)

happened to dozens (maybe even hundreds) of other archaeological sites of this period: project archaeologists identified two unstable periods that occurred between 6,600 to 5,600 years ago and 4,500 to 3,500 years ago. Any earlier, Lower Archaic-period sites along the creek in this area may have been swept away, the ground surface scoured down to that of a previous time.

Later Occupation

The upper paleosol at CA-CCO-696 was also eye-opening. There, under nearly a meter of soil, was an archaeological site showing all indications of full residence: hearths and possible housefloors, ceremonial objects, hunting tools, and equipment for grinding food. Also present were more than 170 human graves—a clear indication that the spot was important to the group and in regular use for a long time. Radiocarbon dates, artifact styles, and dating of obsidian items combine to tell us that this community lived here from about 3,000 to 1,500 years ago.

The inhospitable nature of the present-day landscape at Los Vaqueros—the summer and winter scenario presented above—does not fit well with the location of a village of scores of people for several generations. Clearly the location's use as an important living site is already evidence that the environment was different. More tangible evidence was yielded by material in a buried stream channel: remnants of trees, semi-preserved because of waterlogged conditions. Today even heat-loving oaks are rare in the valley, but these ancient samples from buckeye, madrone, and big-leaf maple indicate that the valley was once home to tree species that are no longer present in the valley today. The wood samples date to 2,380 years ago, during the use of the site.

The latest period of Native American use of Kellogg Creek valley was visible on the modern surface of the valley floor. This area also saw long-term occupation, with refuse-filled pits, a housefloor, fire hearths, and human graves. Several centuries of living occurred here. The sites excavated, however, were not used in earnest after about 300 years ago—nearly a century before Spanish explorers first entered San Francisco Bay. Had the climate of the Los Vaqueros area become less agreeable? Environmental explanations are not the only ones, and there may be many reasons why the Kellogg Creek drainage was used less frequently in more recent years. What is clear, however, is that at least for some period, and at least for some people, this small drainage was of great value.

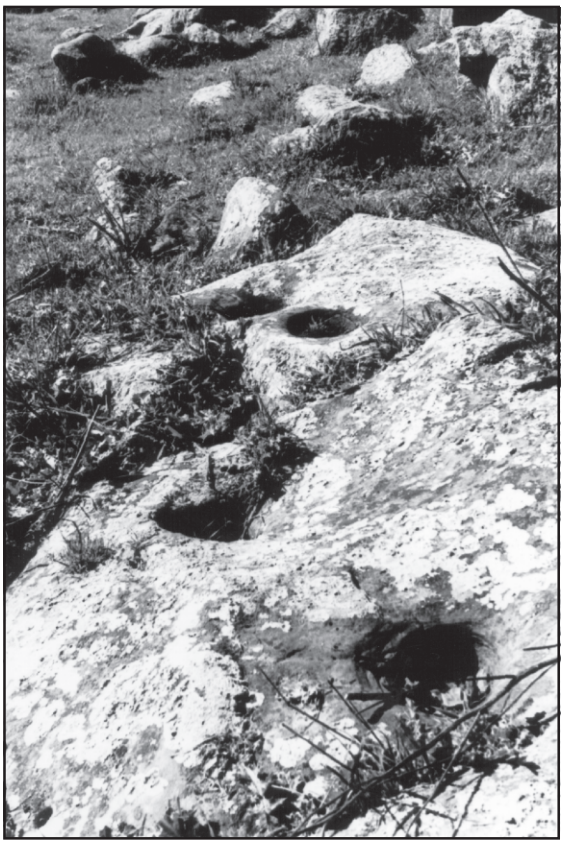
EARLY RESIDENTS OF LOS VAQUEROS

Who was living in the Kellogg Creek drainage 300 years ago? What group controlled the area, monitored trespass, and parceled out resources? For some California locations, such questions are fairly easily answered. In the vicinity of Mount Diablo, however, tremendous changes occurred at the time of Spanish contact, and what is now known was only learned in recent decades. Answers come from painstaking research by scholars working with the records carefully kept by Franciscan padres at missions San Francisco and San Jose. From their research, we can say that the residents were either Volvons—a group of speakers of the Bay Miwok language who had their major villages along Marsh Creek—or Ssaoams—a group of speakers of the Costanoan language whose villages were in the Brushy Peak area east of Livermore.[10] As ethnohistorian Randall Milliken points out, the precise boundary between these two groups cannot be drawn because of their rapid and total absorption into the mission system; those groups virtually disappeared from the landscape between 1803 and 1810 and none of them or their descendants was ever interviewed by historians. While individual Native Americans lived in the region after that time—with immediate family or as part of a ranch workforce—traditional group living in the area ended nearly 200 years ago.

Life at Los Vaqueros

How did people live at the Kellogg Creek sites in the years before the Spanish arrived? Only very general statements can be made, based on information from other west-central California groups who escaped the direct effects of Spanish contact. Living in multi-family tribelets (also known as village communities) of about 200 people each, they made their living hunting and gathering food and other resources from their lands. They also kept in regular contact with neighbors, trading for items not available in their home territory, and exchanging marriage partners and ideas as well as goods.

Although the climate would have been roughly similar to that of today, the area was probably more wooded before Spanish, Mexican, and American cattle-grazing and woodcutting. Scattered oaks and even some groves of trees would have provided the staple acorn, which was pounded in the bedrock mortars ("Indian grinding rocks") found across the Los Vaqueros landscape. Tiny nutritious grass seeds collected by the thousands from the open fields could also be processed there. The patchwork nature of the Kellogg Creek watershed and environs would have presented a range of other options, which were exploited in different ways based on individual desire or seasonal need. Kellogg Creek and nearby Brushy Creek would have provided fish at various seasons, while the Los Vaqueros area was a convenient hike from the sloughs of the Delta and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River, where a variety of swift-water and stillwater fish could have been taken. On the west in the high rugged Black Hills,



Bedrock Mortars. Mortar holes like these are found in boulders and bedrock outcrops throughout the Los Vaqueros Project area. Stone pestles were used to grind acorns in the mortars.

chaparral species were featured, desirable to humans and also to deer and other important game. The open hills on the east offered sandstone outcrops for mile upon mile, their caves and overhangs providing shelter for an array of predators and prey. There was easy access to the Livermore Valley and its springs and fertile fields, as well as to a major trade and travel route—the Altamont Pass—that linked coast with Sierra uplands and all points in between.

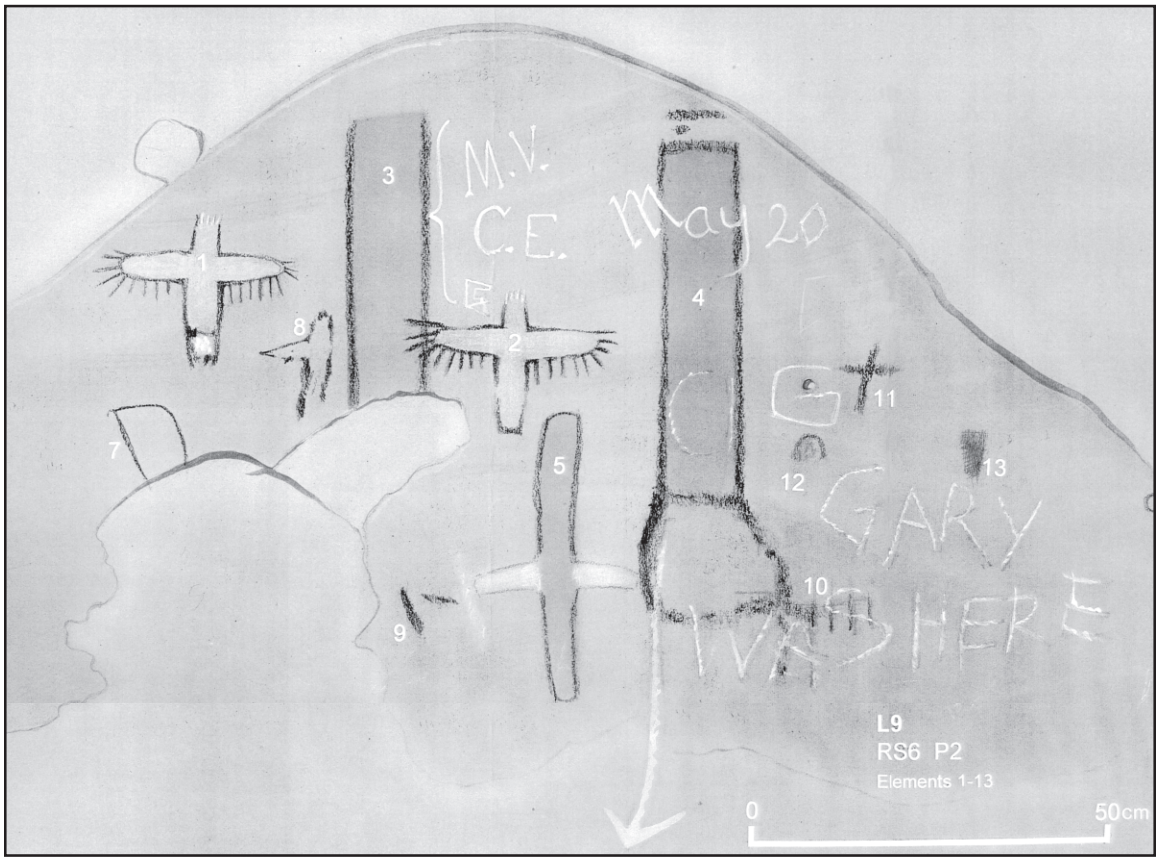
Despite the diversity on hand at Los Vaqueros, Volvon and Ssaoam territory was rugged hill country overlooking the San Joaquin Valley, a dry land watered only by intermittent creeks and small springs. Village populations in these summer drought lands must have broken up and reconvened at various camps throughout the year, much in the same way that village populations did in the arid Great Basin in eastern California and Nevada. Given this varied lifestyle, there was need to coordinate how and when people used resources, their interactions with neighbors and more distant groups, and the nature and timing of the families' seasonal moves. This was done by an individual generally referred to as a "captain" by early Spanish observers and later by ethnographers. These individuals guided rather than dictated their group's action.

The Sacred World of Los Vaqueros

As with most native California groups, dances and their associated festivities were probably the main forms of communal religious expression, organized by formal secret societies of the Kuksu Cult. The dancers themselves were considered to have supernatural powers; only properly prepared individuals could touch their persons or the feathers of their capes and other regalia while they were sanctified. Dances were seen not only as acts of veneration, but also as activities that maintained an undistorted world order.

Los Vaqueros was situated in the heart of a landscape recognized by generations of native Californians as sacred, a fact that was surely of profound importance to the people who lived there. Several accounts of the creation of the world and the beings in it were taken down by ethnographers and linguists speaking with Indian people from neighboring areas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Dancers at Mission San Jose, 1806. By the end of this year, all Ssaoam and Volvon people were living at the mission. *(Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.)*



Vasco Caves Rock-Art Panel. Note the prevalence of avian imagery and the layers of graffiti. Two episodes of 19th-century markings are visible in the center of the panel and 1980s graffiti is on the right. The white numbers refer to design elements (discussed in the technical report). *(Drawing by Christine Gralapp.)*

Mount Diablo is integral to the sacred tradition of several groups, while Brushy Peak and Vasco Caves also figure in some tales; it is Falcon and Condor who create the world with its Indian people, music, food, and medicine. Rock outcrops and boulders are prominent features in one series of tales. Even the caves themselves fit into the story. According to an Indian elder from the Byron Hot Springs area, the caves in those huge outcrops were made by Coyote: "They say that when Coyote was in mourning for his son, he passed through a rock, and he left holes in the rock where he passed through eastward."

The extraordinary rock art of the Vasco Caves, in perhaps the same sandstone outcrops that figure in Native Americans' creation stories, provides another rare glimpse into this sacred world. It is clear that the artists considered birds—probably the diverse kinds of hawks, eagles, and other raptors that soar above this windswept area—to be of great importance, as they were depicted over and over. Some fly up, others down, while at least one appears to be poised and waiting; some are lifelike creatures (one even appearing as a bird-headed human), while many are abstract forms (such as crosses) that suggest birds. Looking at the rock art with the stories of Falcon, Condor, and Prairie Hawk in mind, the pictographs might be seen as direct illustrations of some of these tales. Other shapes and figures cover the rock-art panels in a variety of colors and a wide range of diverse styles. This variety suggests that different groups—perhaps arriving from some distance and several directions—may have contributed to the art.

Very little has been recorded about how native artists executed these works or how the caves may have been used by other members of a group. One

can guess that pictograph artists or other individuals visiting the caves may have required preparation just as dancers did. One thing is clear from analysis of the rock art for the Los Vaqueros study: with a few exceptions, rock art was never considered complete, at least not by new observers of the work. Some portion of a pictograph would later be rubbed to smooth it, pecked to roughen it, or added to with new lines or figures in different colors—at times obscuring and at times enhancing the original.

The Lonely Valley

The San Francisco mission priests turned their attention to the tribelets along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay during the fall of 1794. We can be fairly certain that Ssaoam and Volvon people had heard about the goings-on across the bay before that time. In the winter of 1794-1795, they would have felt this first-hand, as their near neighbors—the Saclan from between Mount Diablo and San Francisco Bay—were encouraged to go live at the mission. They fled back home after an epidemic broke out, no doubt bringing disease with them. The priests waited until 1797, then built Mission San Jose on the southeastern bayshore. Thus Spanish outreach moved a step closer to the Los Vaqueros area. Moving to the mission was sometimes presented, and accepted, as an invitation to a better life. On other occasions Indian people were harassed to go "voluntarily," while others were indeed rounded up and moved forcibly. Through a variety of these means, by the fall of 1806 Ssaoam and Volvon tribal culture had ceased to exist in the hills and little valleys of the Los Vaqueros Project area. Over a five-year period, from November 1801 through July 1806, 126 Ssaoams had moved to Mission San Jose and 106 Volvons had moved to Missions San Jose and San Francisco. By the fall, 88 of the Volvons and Ssaoams who had gone to San Jose were dead from an outbreak of measles at the mission. Ultimately, less than half a dozen lived to see the missions close.

Thus by the fall of 1806 the Marsh Creek and Brushy Peak areas were open for use by native groups from the San Joaquin Valley and the Delta. For the next few years members of these San Joaquin River tribelets may have gone into the empty hill country of the Los Vaqueros Project area to hunt and gather seed crops. They may also have continued the traditions surrounding the rock art at Vasco Caves. In a few years, however, they too were residing at the missions. Under the Mexican regime after 1821, Indian vaqueros from throughout central California ran cattle and sheep in the hills and valleys of the Kellogg Creek drainage as a part of the mission outpost.

The end of the mission system had been planned from the start. Under the original Spanish law and subsequent Mexican law, a mission's Indians were to be given its lands and cattle when it closed. At the time that Mission San Jose had its properties confiscated, there were more than 1,900 Indian neophytes living in its village and its outlying ranches. But only one tiny piece of land between the Mission San Jose compound and Alameda Creek was granted to any Mission San Jose Indians. Everywhere else, the Hispanic elite families took over not only the lands, but the mission cattle herds and the tiny mission outstation buildings as well.

Some of the dispossessed Mission San Jose Indian people became house servants to Mexican families in the town of San Jose. Others would have become the caretakers, vaqueros, and laborers on the new privately owned ranches. Through all the turmoil, many former mission Indians were lost from the record. Randall Milliken has identified a few Ssaoam and Volvon descendants for the Los Vaqueros Project, but work has not been done to follow the track of the descendants into the later 19th century and the 20th century. That task would be a difficult one. For six years, from 1846 to 1852, the Catholic Church in California was in a state of disarray. Many Indian people stopped going to church. Many priests failed to keep adequate records of the births, marriages, and funerals that they did perform. Then, as the civil record-keeping of the Americans began to develop, the marginalized Indian people were often left out of early censuses. Much information is available—in family oral histories as well as archives—about Indian families that formed in the melting pot of tribal groups in the East Bay. By the time record-keeping restabilized after the Civil War, however, the paper trail for the life histories of many Indian families seems to have been lost.

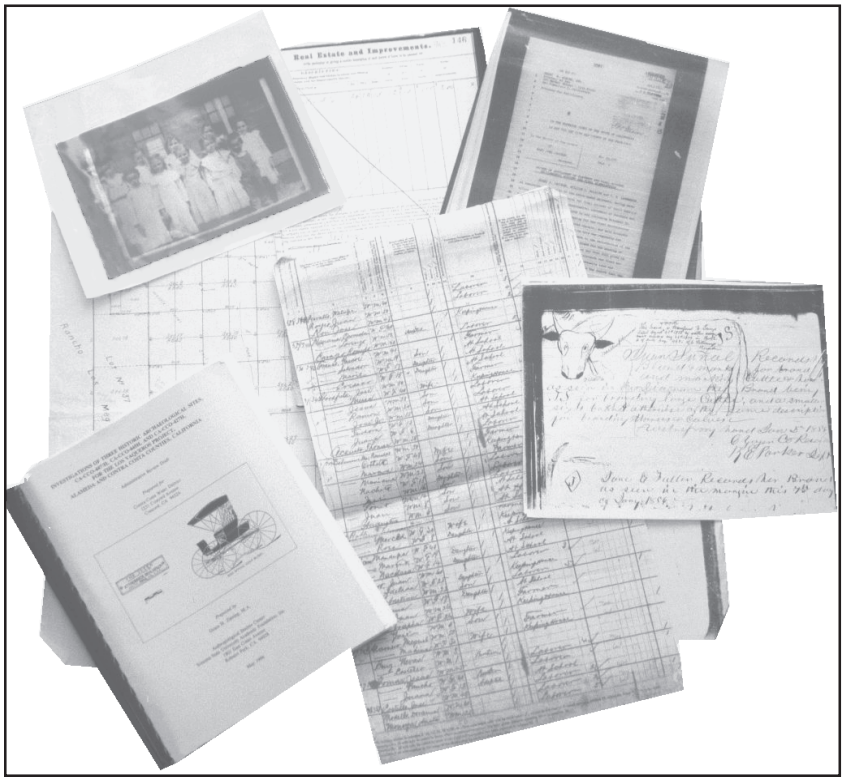
THE WAYS AND MEANS OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Historical and archaeological research is a lot like good detective work. One must follow clues, establish verifiable evidence, and (ideally) solve the mystery. Far from the glamour of a Mickey Spillane novel or an Indiana Jones movie, detectives and historians spend mind-numbing hours in painstaking research, whether in a forensics lab or a computer lab. The payoff comes when the story gels and, in this case, a clearer understanding of a community like the Vasco is finally realized.

The history presented in this volume is the result of more than a decade of research and field work using professional methods learned in school or improvised from experience. Three major avenues of primary research were followed: archival research, oral history, and archaeological field work. Each of these approaches to gathering information has its own time-honored methods and makes a distinct contribution to the overall story. To reconstruct the history of the Bonfante Ranch, for example, researchers consulted archival sources (such as tax records and census data) for information, talked to family members who grew up on the site, and finally conducted an archaeological investigation.

Archival Research

Archival research is perhaps the most widely recognized avenue of historical reconstruction. The historian searches through archives for primary documents that record details of the past. These raw data must then be synthesized and interpreted. Some of the most common documents consulted



Historical Documents. These are some of the documents researchers used to reconstruct the history of Los Vaqueros. *Clockwise from upper left:* a photograph of a Vasco School class; a page from the county tax assessment book; Mary Crocker's probate; Juan Suñol's brand in the Contra Costa County register; a page from the U.S. census; and a draft of an archaeological report. Underneath all is a map of the area produced by the U.S. government's General Land Office.

for the Los Vaqueros Project include state and federal censuses, tax assessments, property deeds, probate documents, maps, court transcripts, parish records, voter registers, city directories, and newspaper articles.

The documents used by historians provide facts about peoples' lives, such as where they were born, what property they owned, where they lived, how much money they had, and who their children were. Some documents, such as newspaper articles, diaries, and court cases, tell us of important events in peoples' lives and provide a glimpse of what people thought of themselves or how they were viewed by their community. Successful historians do not just take these facts at face value or string them together to form a narrative. Rather, they read between the lines, synthesizing and interpreting the data, to create a truer understanding of an individual's or family's life history. The more data that can be gathered, the more complete the picture.

Oral History

Oral history, "the voice of the past," provides an important resource for the interpretation of 19th- and 20th-century archaeological sites. In theory everyone can contribute to our understanding of the past, and oral history, like historical archaeology, is thus profoundly egalitarian. To quote the late social historian Paul Thompson, oral history "gives back to the people who made and experienced history . . . a central place."[11]

As traditionally defined, the discipline of oral history refers to the tape-recorded, first-hand experiences of individuals who have witnessed or helped to shape history. In addition to personal experiences, most interviews also include other narratives (or oral traditions), such as family histories and local legends. Oral history creates a primary source of data. Ideally, the interview is transcribed and indexed, and a copy of the manuscript is deposited for future use in a local library or university archives.

How valid or truthful is this information? Probably as "truthful" as any other form of historical evidence. Memory is fallible and over time history is compressed, certain events remembered and others forgotten. Yet census records, minutes from meetings, and tax assessments are also problematic, and the good historian (like the detective) consistently cross-checks all sources of information. The unique gift of oral history is that it allows people to talk back. Thus the rancher, miner's daughter, or public official is asked to provide not only a checklist of facts and figures but also a personal interpretation of historical events and social issues.

One pragmatic use of oral history in archaeological research is that "old-timers" can help define and map a site. As an example, 89-year-old Paul Fragulia came out to the Vasco Adobe while the Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists were at work. His memories helped the researchers reconstruct the style and plan of the Adobe itself as well as the location of the 19th-century farmhouse that stood nearby. The Bonfante sisters, working with the oral historian, drew a map of their former tenant ranch that guided and informed the site crew when this ranch was dug in the summer of 1995.

Oral-History Informant. Juanita Hargraves (née Robles), the youngest daughter of Black Hills pioneer, Tomas Robles. Ms. Hargraves invited our oral historian into her home and shared her recollections of her father's life at Los Vaqueros.

But oral history obviously offers a more profound resource to the student of 19th- and early 20th-century social history. It provides for a more humanized history and one that presents many voices (that is, it is multivocalic). The "necessity" for doing oral-history work is also underscored by the fact that culture is often expressed ephemerally. How does one dig up a fiddle tune or a ballad or recon-

struct a quilting bee? Did farmhands in the Vasco eat with ranch families or was there a social distance between farmer and laborer? Did Italians continue to play *bocce* when they settled in the Vasco or did they even think of themselves as "Italians" at all? In short, oral history can serve as a first order of ethnography to address questions about cultural heritage, ethnicity and identity, gender relations, and the social use of space.

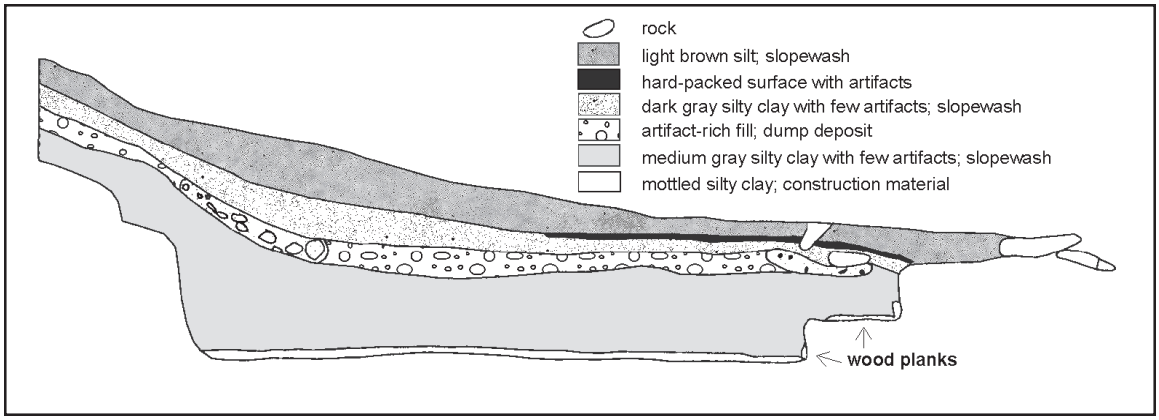
Archaeological Field Work

Archaeology can teach us about how people lived, how they shaped their physical environment, and what kinds of objects they chose to own and how they used them. It is particularly effective because it is reflective—that is, the material world embodies the conscious and unconscious decisions of its inhabitants and reflects truths about how they viewed their place in the world. A neatly landscaped front yard suggests a concern with the way outsiders perceive one's home; a set of matching dishes communicates to guests a certain sense of order and social status; while a hand-pumped well reflects an economic or technological reality within which a family was required to live.

The excavation methods of historical archaeology vary at least superficially from practitioner to practitioner, but the strongest tool—one shared by most historical archaeologists—is stratigraphic excavation. This means digging each distinct layer of sediment, fill, or cultural accumulation separately, from the most recently deposited at the top down to the oldest at the bottom. In this way, the depositional history of a site can be "read" and some of the events that occurred there can be reconstructed.

Events in the life history of an archaeological site are recorded in the layers that accumulate, because different activities result in physically distinct deposits. Picture an open pit, perhaps a hole dug to throw garbage into, or an abandoned well, or maybe even a drainage ditch. Over time, the pit will fill up with sediment or cultural detritus. A long period of inactivity may be recorded as a series of thin laminates of slightly different color washed into the hole by seasonal flooding, hillside erosion, or wind-borne dust. An episode of trash disposal will result in a layer of dirt mixed with artifacts or bones; if the trash included animal or plant material, the dirt itself might be dark and rich with decayed organics. Or material may have been brought in to fill the hole on purpose, to keep children or animals from falling into it; this might be free of artifacts but mottled in color, the result of different layers being mixed when the fill was moved from one place to another.

Other kinds of events can be understood in relation to these depositional layers. The construction of a wall, the laying of a floor, the digging of a ditch, the abandonment of a privy: these can all be placed within the sequence of events that shaped the archaeological site. As each of these "events" is excavated, the artifacts associated with it are kept separate. These are then carefully examined and identified, often enabling the archaeologist to date



Archaeological Cross Section. This drawing depicts various natural and cultural deposits that filled a cellar hole at Los Vaqueros.

the event. The artifacts can tell much more than the date, however, because they vary in kind and quality and reflect conscious or unconscious choices made by their users.

Historical archaeology is most effective when it is used to explore the material world of the people and places identified through the archival research and the oral history. We get the most out of the structures and artifacts we uncover when we know who built and used them, and what the economic and ethnic backgrounds of their users were. Sometimes this is impossible and we cannot know exactly whose "stuff" we are looking at, but even then, we can usually figure out when it was built or manufactured, and can try to understand it in its broader historical context.

Recovering History

Research for the Los Vaqueros Project consisted of moving back and forth between sources of information using both inductive and deductive reasoning and forming, answering, and then reforming questions. The first step was to understand the territory and how it was settled by looking at old maps and histories written in the late 19th century. Archaeological field work came in early in the process as the entire watershed was surveyed on foot to identify sites where people had lived, worked, and played.

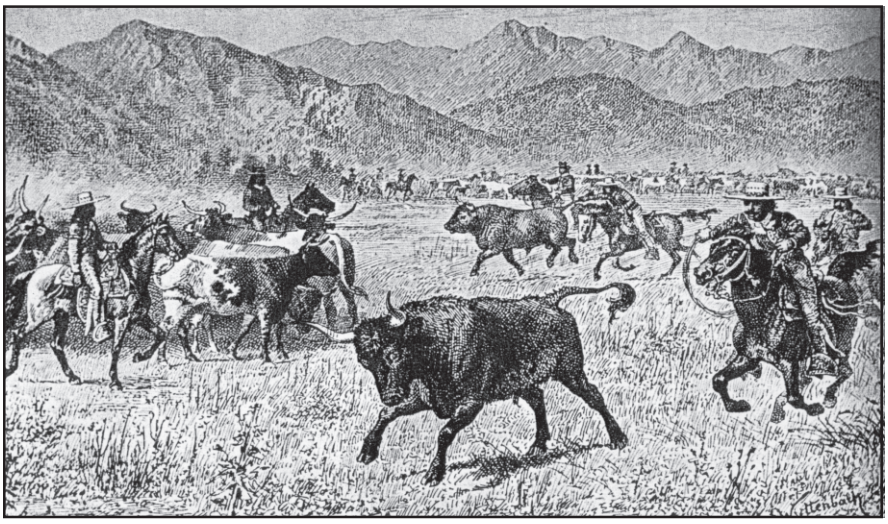
Locating the sites generated many questions about the identities of the area's residents. Some of these questions were answered by looking at land records and census records, and talking to people who knew the area or even lived there at one time. This research, in turn, generated more questions that were addressed through further research and archaeological excavation at selected sites. The archaeology raised new questions that were answered by further interviews with one-time residents, additional historical research, and consultation with various scientists specializing in aspects of the physical environment. All of this information was analyzed, interpreted, and synthesized to "recover" the history presented in this volume.

CHAPTER 2
DISPUTED RANGE:
RANCHING A MEXICAN LAND GRANT UNDER U.S. RULE, 1844-1880

For most of the 19th century, land use at Los Vaqueros was dominated by large-scale ranching. By the time the Mexicans had made it a rancho in 1844, its identity as excellent grazing land was well established. For 50 years after the United States seized California, men saw fit to battle in the courts for the right to claim the precious grassland at Los Vaqueros as their own. Los Vaqueros as disputed range in some ways foreordained its subsequent history as open land that, to this day, has remained largely unbuilt. Of course it all began with the Spanish missions, but it was the Mexicans and their land grants that got Los Vaqueros into the courts and kept it out of the hands of developers.[1]

THE RANCHOS

The rancho period has been described with such detail, drama, and romance that it is hard to believe how short that era actually was. Although Spain gave out some grazing permits, no ranchos were granted until secularization of the missions, beginning in 1834; Mexican defeat at the hands of the Americans was complete 12 years later. During those 12 short years of Mexican control, the government granted more than 800 patents of land—over 12 million acres—to Mexican citizens. Anyone of good character with cattle and funds for fees and taxes qualified. Grantees were required to submit an *expediente* (description) and *diseño* (map) of the area they desired. The first building erected on a rancho was usually of either wattle or *palizada* construction[2] to quickly



Cattle Round-Up. Vaqueros ride through the herd and rope cattle on the open range. *(Reproduced from Murphy 1958, p. 32.)*

prove a claimant's intention to settle; more permanent buildings of adobe were constructed after the land claim was granted.

Stockraising was the main economic pursuit on the ranchos during the Mexican period, as hides and tallow were the commerce of the day. With a guaranteed market of New England shoe manufacturers, hides and tallow provided neat profits for a relatively low cost of labor. Most of the year the cattle roamed free across an unfenced landscape. Labor was required only intermittently, during slaughtering and round-up. At slaughtering time, vaqueros would ride through the herds, killing cattle with a knife thrust to the neck, while laborers followed behind skinning and collecting the hides and fat. The meat was often left on the carcass to rot or be scavenged after the hides were removed. At least once a year, a rodeo was held to round up cattle, brand the new calves, and herd stock back to its owner's land. Year-round residence was not necessary to operate a rancho.

This system of large-scale land ownership and the widely successful hide-and-tallow trade began to change almost as soon as the United States declared war on Mexico in 1846 and laid claim to California in July of that year. The event catalyzed a minor influx of Americans hoping to find open land ripe for settlement and farming. Instead, the new immigrants found a confusing network of large private landholdings with unsurveyed boundaries and unclear titles. With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, it became clear that military victory did not release former holds on the land; the treaty upheld all legal claims to real property. Californios—Spanish-speaking native Californians—had the right to retain their lands or dispose of them at their will. They also had the right to remain in California as Mexican citizens, or they could choose to become citizens of the United States. Thus, on paper, there seemed to be no opportunity for Americans to acquire lands granted under Mexico. Once the legal boundaries of the Mexican grants were determined, however, the surrounding land would fall into public domain that could be settled and purchased at low cost from the federal government's General Land Office under the preemption act, as it had been elsewhere along the frontier.

Adding to the confusion was the reluctance of the federal and state governments to confirm the titles of the Mexican land grants and establish a system for distributing public land. The rancho boundaries were often described in relation to another grant, and were woefully unclear, particularly since very few land grants were ever surveyed or marked. Exacerbating the problem was the fact that free-range stockraising required minimal improvements to the landscape, such as fencing, terracing, or tilling that clearly signalled that the land was occupied. So the new American settlers took their chances on whatever piece of land appeared to be unimproved in the hopes that it would soon be surveyed and opened to settlement. Almost immediately, this set up an adversarial relationship between established ranchers and new settlers. The situation intensified greatly in the wake of the California Gold Rush, when thousands of disillusioned miners tried to return to the more stable occupations of ranching and farming.

It was not until 1851 that the federal government finally passed legislation to deal with the increasingly bitter land disputes arising in California. The Land Act of 1851 created the Land Commission, which was charged with evaluating the claims to each of the Mexican grants. The process was intended to weed out those claimants who had not conformed to Mexican law. While the process was designed to move swiftly, it often took years to settle a claim. Although most of the 813 Mexican grants were eventually confirmed, many of them had changed hands—a large

proportion going to Americans—partially on account of the enormous costs of the confirmation process. The opening up of public land was a slow process because surveying was required before it could be purchased or settled under the 1862 Homestead Act. As late as 1861—11 years after California had become one of the United States—only about one-quarter of the state had been surveyed, much of it in barren regions far from the hotly contested claims.

RANCHO CAÑADA DE LOS VAQUEROS—THE VALLEY OF THE COWBOYS

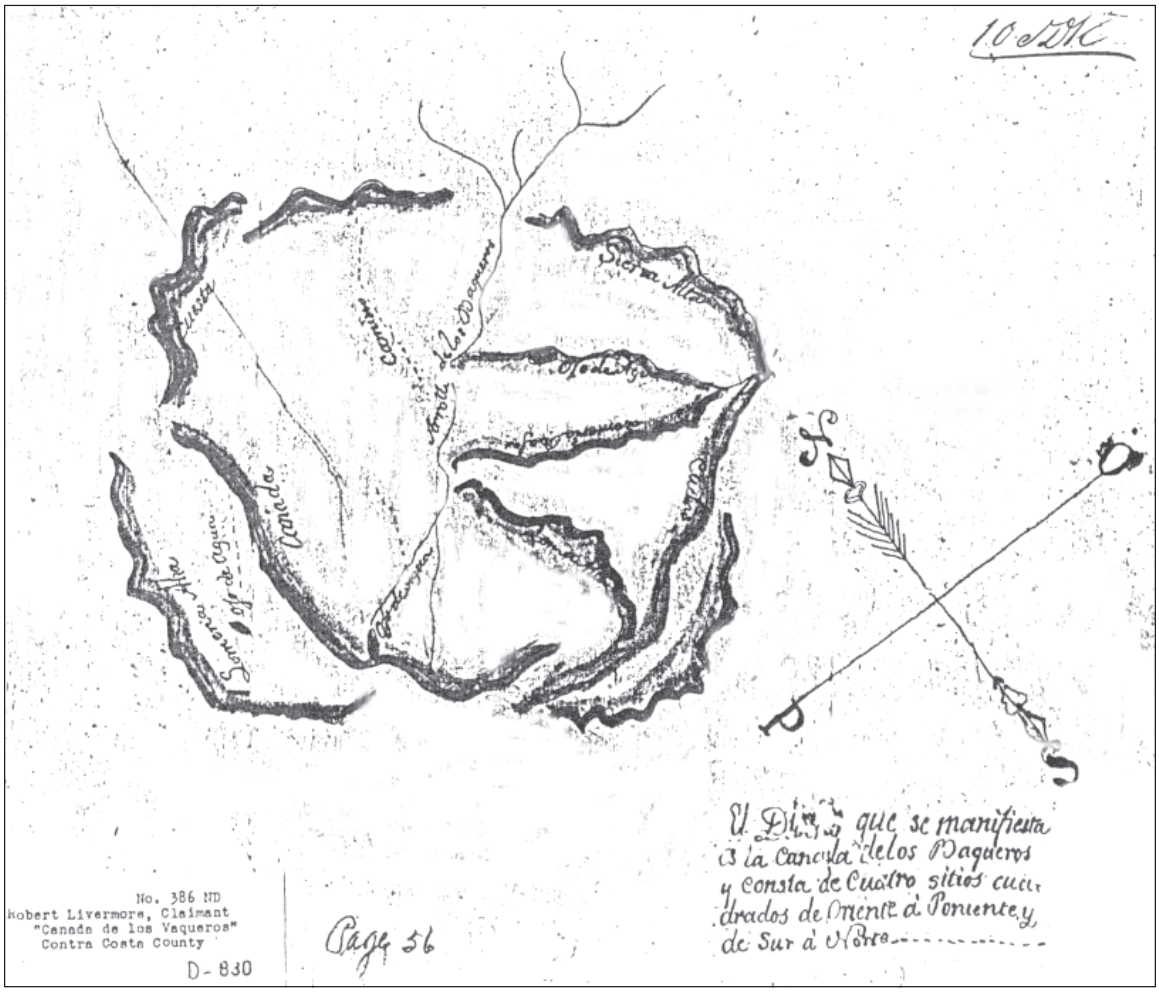
It was when California was still under Mexico's rule and millions of acres were being granted to her citizens that Euroamericans officially put the hills and valleys of the Los Vaqueros watershed to use. Most of the watershed became part of the more than 17,000-acre Los Vaqueros land grant in the 1840s; some of the more rugged portions were never claimed and, under American statehood in the 1860s, became public land eventually patented from the General Land Office.

The early 1840s was less than a decade after the missions had been dissolved. Horseraiding by ex-neophytes living in the Central Valley was nearly destroying the ranches in the Coast Range valleys; one observer noted that the perpetrators were "becoming daily more daring, and have rendered a residence in single farm-houses or estancias not without danger."[3] It had become common knowledge that frontier ranches should be avoided. With most Mexicans wary of settling here, only foreign immigrants—naturalized as Mexican citizens—had seen fit to lay claim to the beleaguered land. The original Native American inhabitants of the Los Vaqueros area had been badly used by the mission system, and it is unknown what happened to the handful that survived. So, at the beginning of the 1840s, Los Vaqueros was largely unoccupied land, and its closest neighbor was American John Marsh, who had laid claim to Rancho los Meganos to the north. Into this picture stepped three brothers-in-law, Francisco Alviso, Antonino (a.k.a. Antonio) Higuera, and Manuel Miranda. They first petitioned the Mexican government in May 1841 for a grant of land known as Cañada de los Baqueros (*sic*), comprising approximately 4 leagues (17,754 acres) of *sobrante* ("surplus") land. The three men did not secure the grant at that time because their description (*expediente*) was missing. They petitioned again in February 1844, and this time were promptly granted the rancho.

Like other ranchos throughout California, Cañada de los Vaqueros, or the Valley of the Cowboys, was a place to raise and graze stock—not a place intended to provide a home for the brothers-in-law and their families. While living on land farther west, they left their livestock at Los Vaqueros in the hands of Indian vaqueros "and some Californios."[4] The *diseño* for Cañada de los Baqueros shows three springs (*ojo de agua*) as well as the Creek of the Cowboys (*Arrollo de los Baqueros*), but no house or improvements. The earliest landowners did not, apparently, leave much of a mark.

Early Title to Los Vaqueros: A Cast of Characters

Los Vaqueros did not escape the confusion engendered by the shift from Mexican to American control and the speculative pressures that resulted. By 1858 various individuals held deeded interest totaling more than 200 percent of the grant's acreage; the chain of title was litigated for



Diseño of Cañada de los Vaqueros, 1844. Map submitted with application to Mexican government for Los Vaqueros land grant. This map was later tendered to the U.S. Land Commission by Robert Livermore when he sought confirmation of the land grant in the 1850s.

years, with the final suit not decided until almost 1900. Over the years, some of these individuals emerged as major actors in the Los Vaqueros drama, while others were bit players who may have held deeded interest for a short time, but never had a chance to affect the landscape.

Names well known in California history—Robert Livermore and José Noriega—held interests in Los Vaqueros at one time and made significant contributions to the legal quagmire that ensued. But the protagonists of the drama of Los Vaqueros as disputed range entered the scene in the mid-1850s. In 1856 Juan Suñol purchased a half-interest at a sheriff's sale, where the title had landed on account of an unpaid debt. The following year, Lorenzo Suñol, Juan's brother, purchased the other half-interest, while a group of Basque settlers including Juan Baptiste Arambide, Bernardo Altube, Bernardo Ohaco, and Carlos Garat purchased Juan Suñol's half from its current owner. For at least 10 years, the Suñols and the Basques—or Bascos—ran their herds at Los Vaqueros, built adobe structures for themselves or their hired hands, and touched the land in permanent ways, including its name; even now the area is known as the Vasco. The stockraising

enterprise of the Suñol brothers was centered at the Suñol, or Upper, Adobe and that of Basque settlers centered at the Vasco, or Lower, Adobe.

Another important figure entered the picture in June 1860, when local merchant and real-estate speculator Simon Blum purchased interests in the grant. And in late 1863, Pedro Altube and Louis Peres obtained the Bascos' half-interest and were catapulted onto center stage. Peres, a Frenchman who was eventually to gain—and lose—nearly the entire land grant, had been in partnership with Altube on a number of ventures beginning in the early 1860s. Peres and Altube gradually purchased additional interests until they believed they owned almost the entire grant. After Lorenzo Suñol died in 1866, Peres and Altube brought their claim to court, asserting that the Suñol chain of title was invalid. In 1870 Juan Suñol lost his claim to the rancho.

CALIFORNIA'S CHANGING RANGE LAND

While title to Los Vaqueros was being disputed over the years, and the cast of characters were playing out their roles in the long saga, major changes had occurred to California's stock industry. The first major shift came soon after the United States acquired California. The discovery of gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in 1848 brought people from all over the world to California. The once sparsely populated land was now teeming with people who needed to be fed, and ranchers found that meat commanded a much higher price than the hides and tallow of the Mexican period. The new emphasis on meat demanded fundamental changes in the way the livestock were raised. The free-ranging herds that roamed the ranchos could not satisfy the new demand in either quantity or quality of beef. Improved cross-bred stock began to replace the original Spanish breeds that had become lank and tough through neglect. Ranchers who failed to improve their herds could not remain competitive, and many ranchos were lost to new immigrants who were not set in the old ways. Stock and range improvements meant more intensive labor requirements, which translated to more settled ranching families and year-round ranch hands. In addition, dairy products, which were a minor element of the Spanish and Mexican diet, came into high demand in American California, and dairy cows—an extremely labor-intensive investment—were introduced. Sheep also entered the picture to meet new demands for both mutton and wool, much of which went to supply the demand engendered by the Civil War.[5]

Although the Gold Rush only lasted a few years, at best, it permanently changed the demographics of California. Most immigrants stayed in the West after they abandoned the goldfields; many of them sought to reestablish themselves as the farmers they were before they caught the gold fever. But in the realms of land acquisition and land use, farmers and ranchers were incompatible and frequently found themselves in conflict with one another. One of the biggest land issues to emerge from this conflict was fencing.

The free-range system was never compatible with farming because roaming livestock threatened vulnerable crops. For 20 years, the conflict was played out in the legislature with the passage of fence laws that switched from favoring ranchers throughout the 1850s to those that favored farmers in the 1870s. But by then it was hardly an issue, since fencing of range lands had become advantageous to the rancher as well. It was easier to maintain the quality of imported herds by keeping them isolated from roaming native stock. Also, fencing allowed for the rotation of pastures and so prevented overgrazing. Climatic conditions also prompted fencing, in addition

to other range improvements. Lack of feed and water caused massive cattle deaths in the harsh winter of 1861-1862 and the drought of 1863-1864; between 1860 and 1870, the state's cattle population fell from three million to 630,000 head.[6] Improvements such as fencing, planting of forage crops, storage of hay, and construction of barns for shelter helped to reestablish herds.

The Demise of the Ranchos

In the ongoing conflict between ranchers and farmers in fledgling California, the herds held sway throughout the 1850s and 1860s, although their numbers dwindled. Increased competition demanded higher quality livestock, weeding out all but the largest, most successful ranches capable of making the required improvements. The natural disasters of the 1860s contributed to the decline of the livestock industry as well.

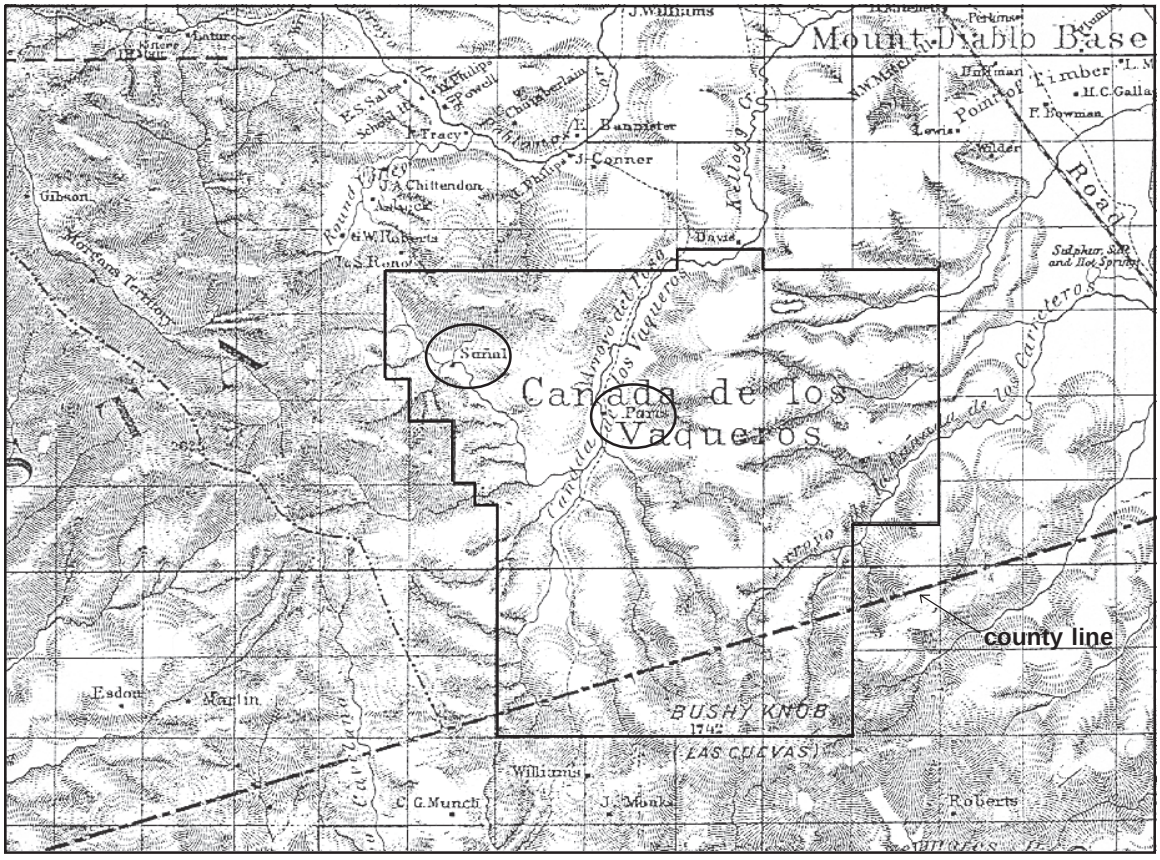
Demographic changes also helped effect the shift from ranching to farming. During the 1860s and 1870s, an extensive network of railroads was being built in California. Granted millions of acres by the federal government, the railroads were particularly interested in selling to small-scale settlers, thereby encouraging the growth of towns that the railroad could serve. Many of these settlers chose farming instead of ranching because the initial capital investment was not as great. The railroads also abetted farming by providing for widespread transportation of agricultural products. The curtailment of the free use of public domain for grazing and the increased number of settlers practicing more intensive forms of agriculture contributed to the decline of large-scale stockraising. Although ranching continued to play an important role in California's economy, it was clear by the first half of the 1870s that the farmers held sway.

LOS VAQUEROS CHANGES TOO

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, the land of Los Vaqueros was devoted to cattle raising. During this period, the rancho was divided between the Suñol brothers and the Basque ranchers, both of whom supplied their own butcher shops with meat they raised at Los Vaqueros. The free-range system was problematic for the Suñol brothers and the Bascos, who feuded over grazing rights. The open range of Los Vaqueros was finally closed in 1862 when Louis Peres—who, with Pedro Altube, would acquire the Bascos' interest in the rancho in 1864—reportedly fenced their holdings. This was a full decade before local law required that he do so to be free from liability, and also before inexpensive barbed-wire fencing was available; but open range was quickly becoming an economic liability, and Los Vaqueros was changing along with the rest of the state.

The late 1860s were a turbulent time on the land grant. Lorenzo Suñol died in 1866, and his brother Juan inherited his interest in the grant and all the problems that went with it. In 1866 and again in 1868, complaints were filed against Juan Suñol, whose claim to one-half of the land grant was being declared invalid.[7] The Bascos initiated the first suit, indicating that whatever cooperative agreements the neighbors may have had in the past were finished. The Bascos may have resided elsewhere at the time; in 1869 Louis Peres had a residence in San Francisco and may have been there some years earlier. Juan Suñol, himself, was apparently living elsewhere, as he advertised a ranch to let in 1867.

That the Bascos and Suñol maintained some presence at Los Vaqueros during the late 1860s is indicated by the depiction of their residences on the California Geological Survey Map of 1873,



California Geological Survey Map, 1873. The "Suñal" and "Paris" places are circled. Note the Spanish place names within the land grant's boundaries.

which had probably been surveyed a few years earlier. The Suñol Adobe is labeled "Suñal," while the Vasco Adobe is shown as "Paris," presumably a corruption of Peres's name. The arrested development of the rancho lands is suggested on this map by the retention of Spanish names throughout the land-grant boundaries: the main watercourse through the grant is labeled "Arroyo del Poso," but is called "Kellogg Creek" once it enters public land, while the valley itself is labeled "Cañada de los Vaqueros." To the southeast, also largely within the land grant, what later became Brushy Creek is depicted as "Arroyo de la Cañada de los Carreteros," translating roughly to "Highway Creek."

The general confusion regarding title, and the lengthy proceedings of the *Blum v. Suñol* hearings may have kept the grant unoccupied at certain times. In the years between 1867 and 1871, more than 50 individuals testified at the hearings; the witnesses were recruited through an exhaustive search across the country, which likely spread the word about the grant's tenuous title. During the same period, the various claimants to Los Vaqueros continued to mortgage, sell, and otherwise dispose of their interests in the rancho. Aside from expenses in purchasing interests and fighting legal suits, owners had tax problems as well. In 1867 and 1870, suits were brought against the grant owners for overdue taxes. Even the assessor could not ascribe ownership, listing defendants as follows: "John Doe Brown, Henry Doe Brown, James Doe Brown, whose real

names are unknown, L. Perez, Pedro Altuba, Juan Suñol, Simon Blum, and John Doe Patterson, whose given name is unknown."[8]

The threat of encroachment was also becoming a reality. The public land surrounding Los Vaqueros was surveyed between 1862 and 1874 and settlers began filing land claims. The area was also quickly becoming connected to the population centers on the coast. The future site of the town of Livermore was developed as a station when the tracks of the Central Pacific Railroad reached the area in 1869. The Southern Pacific and Tulare Line ran to the east of the Vasco a few years later, and the towns of Brentwood and Byron were likewise connected by rail to the outside world. The Altube brothers, and eventually the Arambide and Garat families, "feeling crowded" by the changes in California, moved their cattle enterprises to Nevada. In 1871 Bernardo and Pedro Altube sold most of their California holdings, purchased 3,000 head of cattle in Mexico, and drove them to eastern Nevada where they settled. The Altubes created a thriving "cattle kingdom" on their Spanish Ranch near Elko.[9] Pedro Altube continued in partnership with Louis Peres; in addition to the Vasco grant, they owned a wholesale cattle-butchering business in San Francisco.

After Juan Suñol lost his claim to Los Vaqueros in 1870, Louis Peres oversaw operations at the rancho despite active lawsuits challenging their exclusive ownership. It was during Peres's tenure that the grant began its fundamental shift from large-scale ranching to family farms. During the second half of the 1870s, Peres gradually subdivided the grant into smaller ranch complexes that he leased for a share of the crops. By 1880 there were five such ranches ranging in size from 200 to 1,000 acres: almost two-thirds of the total acreage held by tenants was "improved," or tilled. As a measure of change, Peres himself had 600 acres of improved land at Los Vaqueros in 1880—a significant rise from the 5 acres of improved land the Bascos reported in 1860.[10]

The Vasco

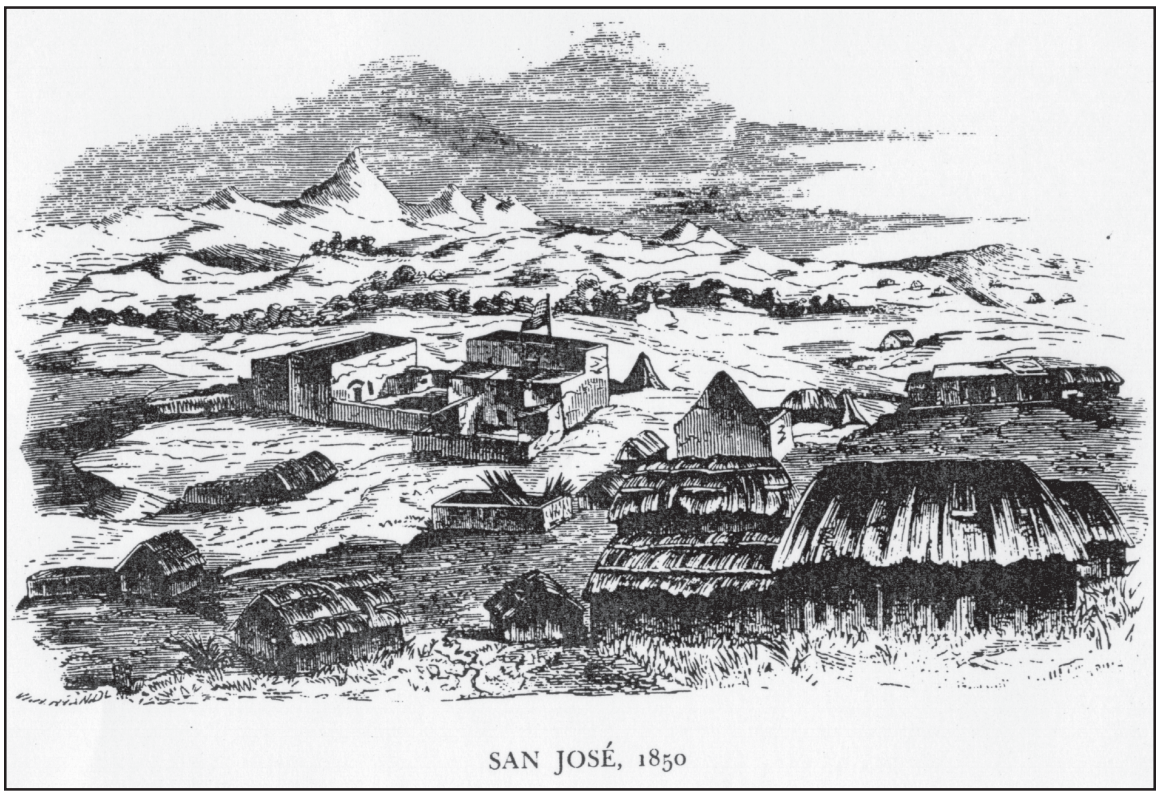
The changing land use at Los Vaqueros was more profound than it might seem at first. As plows and harvesting crews replaced the huge herds of cattle, and small farms divided the once-vast landscape, the real changes came with the growing population. Not only the grant, but surrounding public lands were becoming fully settled, and Los Vaqueros was losing its identity as a cattle frontier. The isolated, feuding land claimants were replaced by fully integrated families who interacted with one another and relied on shared skills and resources. Los Vaqueros was becoming a community of farm families, as it had never been before. In truth, it was transformed into "the Vasco" of 20th-century collective memory.

THE HAPLESS RANCHEROS

While the story of Los Vaqueros's historic settlement begins in the final years of the Mexican regime, the primary actors in the opening scene were born as Spanish subjects, and the social setting was that of a frontier. Since the province "lay at the farthest reaches of New Spain, itself a Spanish colony, California's colonial status was twice removed."[11] The church was still the authority in all secular as well as clerical matters, and all land was held by the missions. In 1782 building lots and garden plots had been formally allotted around the plaza of the pueblo of San Jose, which was for decades the only real town in the northern half of the province. The land to become the Los Vaqueros land grant was even more remote—a part of the vast grazing lands of Mission San Jose. Spanish and, later, Mexican citizens could purchase land in the pueblo, but no ranchos could be granted until the breakdown of the mission system, beginning in 1834. Thus the three grantees of the Cañada de los Vaqueros land grant, all born before Mexican independence and all second- or third-generation Californians, would have as likely spent their early childhood years on the dusty plaza of the pueblo than in the open fields of the range land.

We Are All of the Same Family

The three grantees were a somewhat disparate lot, all related by marriage. The youngest, Francisco Alviso, was just 18 years old when he married Manuel Miranda's sister, Isabella, at Mission San Jose in 1838.[12] Manuel, born in 1816, had married Francisco's sister Maria del Carmen, or Carmela, the year before. Antonino Higuera, born in 1795, was considerably older than the rest. Both he and his wife, Francisco's sister Josefa, had been mar-



San Jose, 1850. Even by the middle of the 19th century, San Jose was still just a small settlement as depicted here by Ryan in his *Personal Adventures in Upper California, 1850. (Reproduced from Pennoyer 1938, p. 19.)*

ried before. Between them, Josefa and Antonino had eight children before they started their own family in 1842. The Higuera family was an important one: Antonino's uncle was a second-generation Californian and in 1839 became the grantee of the Tularcitos Rancho, while Fulgencio Higuera was the grantee of the Agua Caliente Rancho near Mission San Jose.

Even a brief listing of the complex relationships between these families demonstrates how tightly knit the setting was. Francisco, Carmela, and Josefa were related to José Maria Amador of nearby Rancho San Ramon, who was their mother's brother. Don José was active in the military, then served as mayordomo at Mission San Jose from 1827 to the mid-1830s; he is further distinguished for being one of the first manufacturers in the East Bay. He may also have given his name to Amador County in the Sierra foothills when he undertook placer mining there in 1848, assisted by a team of Indian laborers. Although respectfully treated in some early histories, Amador was by his own accounts a ruthless Indian hunter, having made many forays into the San Joaquin Valley to brutally punish horseraiders. Don José's father—Pedro Amador—had come to California with Portolá in 1769, and was thus a pioneer in the Spanish settlement of the area. Their father, Francisco Solano Alviso, was part of a large and well-situated family. Manuel and Isabel Miranda's California-born father had been a soldier at San Francisco, but there must have been East Bay connections as well: Valentine Amador, when asked in court how long he had known Miranda and Higuera, said: "since I have known anything, we are all of the same family."[13]

With the area too sparsely populated to exclude foreigners, the notion of family of course extended to non-Mexicans who had married in. Thus Antonino Higuera was related to Robert Livermore, who arrived in 1829—a popular and handy British sailor—and was to own part of Los Vaqueros and the neighboring Las Positas ranchos. Livermore had married Antonino's cousin, Maria Josefa Higuera Molina, while her sister married Livermore's partner, Spaniard José Noriega. Weaving the relationships even more tightly, Livermore had helped José Maria Amador in the construction of his adobe years earlier; during the unsettled sometimes violent years before the American takeover, the Livermores' children lived with the Amadors at the more populated Rancho San Ramon.

Despite his youth, Francisco Alviso appears to have acted as head of household for the group—perhaps serving as something of a protector for his two married sisters. By one account, the three families came to be commonly known as the Alvisos. The 1841 San Jose District *padron* supports this notion: all five children listed for Antonino Higuera and his wife, Josefa Alviso, were listed under the surname Alviso. Francisco Alviso handled all business transactions for the group, including acquisition of the land grant and, later, transfer of ownership. Perhaps he did so as the most outgoing, clever, or businesslike member of the group; he seems also to have been the only one of the three men to hold down a responsible job or to own land in the more desirable area near the mission and pueblo. Like the others, however, he was not conversant in English, recognizing only "one word here and there" as late as 1867.[14]

The lifestyle that went with ranching—based on "the tendency of Latin Americans to make pleasure the chief end of work"—was especially strong in Mexican California, finding expression in formalized and communal holidays as well as almost daily, spontaneous outbursts of guitar playing, cockfights, dancing, and horse racing.[15] Accustomed to this stimulation—first in the pueblo and then on the family ranches—the Alvisos must have found Los Vaqueros to be an empty, quiet land.

A Short Tenure

The grantees were, it seems, unprepared for rancho life. They did try at first. Together they went to look about the ranch and select a place for a house. After that, it may have been only Alviso and Higuera who built the large corral in 1841, which they stocked with cattle, and a smaller corral in 1844, the year the land was granted. Francisco claimed during land confirmation hearings that there were several grass houses or huts built that same year by "eight or ten of the Indians who were intended to be employed by me on the Ranch."[16] There is some suggestion that the grantees remained there that sum-

mer, but their wives and children almost certainly stayed elsewhere in the more comfortable, familial west.

The grantees had claimed their land at a dreadful time—the height of the Indian horseraids on coast range ranchos, which had begun in the late 1830s, and the time of the slow advance of the Americans into Mexican affairs in California and the Southwest, which would lead to the U.S. takeover of the province. Before they had even laid their first claim, the Alvisos would certainly have heard of the murder of Mexican cattleman and land grant owner Felipe Briones, who was killed by Indian horseraiders somewhere in the hills around Mount Diablo in January 1840—perhaps in the Los Vaqueros drainage itself. Briones was killed while trying to help neighbor Ygnacio Martinez recover livestock taken from *Rancho Pinole*.[17]

Years later, Manuel Miranda gave a diverse set of reasons for not settling the land grant.[18] He said that he did not pasture at Los Vaqueros "because I was afraid of the Indians, and I had no horses to gather the cattle. The Indians stole them all." When the Indians were no longer troublesome, he did not go because he broke his leg and it was sore. He later said he did not return "because after the Americans came in they commenced to squat around; so as to have no difficulty with them I did not go there." But before there were squatters, Miranda said he did not go because there was no one there: "I was afraid of going there myself alone. I was alone and had nobody to accompany me, and my family were also afraid to go there." "At that time," he added, "there were a good many grizzly bears there and we were afraid of those animals." He was alone, he said, "because Antonino got sick and Francisco already had a place and didn't want to move." While he had once owned 200 cattle and 100 sheep, he had at the time of the trial only one cow and no sheep—"The dogs eat up all I had."

The Mexican province, of course, was poised on the edge of destruction in the mid-1840s, and this event may have been a major factor in the grantees' departure. According to Alviso during the land hearings, his intended Indian employees left Los Vaqueros because "they were intimidated in consequence of the revolution and went away; I also left and went away." After a call to arms in response to the revolution against Micheltorena in 1844, according to one historian, the Alvisos "repaired to San Jose in obedience to the above order"[19] and did not return to the rancho. By mid-1846 the United States military government was in charge of Mexican California and all its residents.

The year 1846 was also a difficult one for the Alvisos. That is the year that Francisco Alviso contends that the Mirandas and Higueras transferred to him their rights in the land grant, in exchange for some tame milch cows and a couple of horses. It was also the year that Antonino Higuera lay fatally ill at Mission San Jose, dying toward the end of the year—the exact date of his death was not recorded, as the padre had been out of town. The following year, Francisco transferred all his rights to the rancho to Robert Livermore and José Noriega for 100 calves worth about $200.00. The validity of these deeds was questioned almost 20 years later, when the competing claims to the land grant were disputed in court. The state was scoured for persons with knowledge of the matter. Ultimately, the testimony of more than 50 witnesses was taken in a series of depositions from about 1867 to 1871. Thus much is known about the Los Vaqueros grantees, despite the apparently simple lives they led.

They Were Not Stable Anywhere

While holding more than 17,000 acres of their own for at least five years, the three families remained together in the more populated lands to the west. They resided on a variety of ranchos, the pattern seeming to be that Miranda and Higuera went where Francisco Alviso lived: in 1843 on Pacheco's Rancho Santa Rita, where Francisco was majordomo; on the Rancho San Ramon of the Alvisos' uncle, José Amador; at Francisco's holdings at the Alisal; and at the Suñol and Bernal Rancho (Rancho el Valle de San José), where Francisco was mayordomo in 1845 or 1846. This pattern had begun some years before they claimed the grant, according to Miranda, who testified that all of the grantees lived near each other for about 9 to 10 years until Higuera died in late 1846. As Valentine Amador summarized it: "They went from one place to another, they were not stable anywhere." Higuera

may have worked occasionally for his family's livelihood, but Valentine Amador claimed: "Higuera and his family got their support from my rancho, because they had absolutely nothing. Manuel Miranda had some cows not quite twenty in number, four or five horses, this was the condition in life they were; every time they wished to eat beef, they took one of my cattle or my father's."[20]

Years later, Josefa Alviso de Higuera testified that, "I have resided the greater part of my life in the ranch of my brother, Francisco Alviso, and two or three years in one place and two or three years in another." After her husband Antonino's death, the Alvisos' lives may have become more settled. Eventually they moved to Rancho Santa Rita, where Francisco "lived on this side of the lake, along the public road, and I lived on the other, which is called the Alisal. I think the houses were about two miles apart." It is unclear how much land Francisco held when he described himself as a farmer residing at the Rancho of Santa Rita, but certainly nothing on the scale of what he had let go 20 years before. To his sister Josefa, he had loaned the piece of land for her house. She may have had all the land she ever wanted right there; along with the house she had "a little orchard behind, to plant chiles and vegetables and to sow wheat also."[21]

BATTLE ROYALE: FORTY YEARS OF FIGHTING IN THE COURTS AND ON THE RANGE

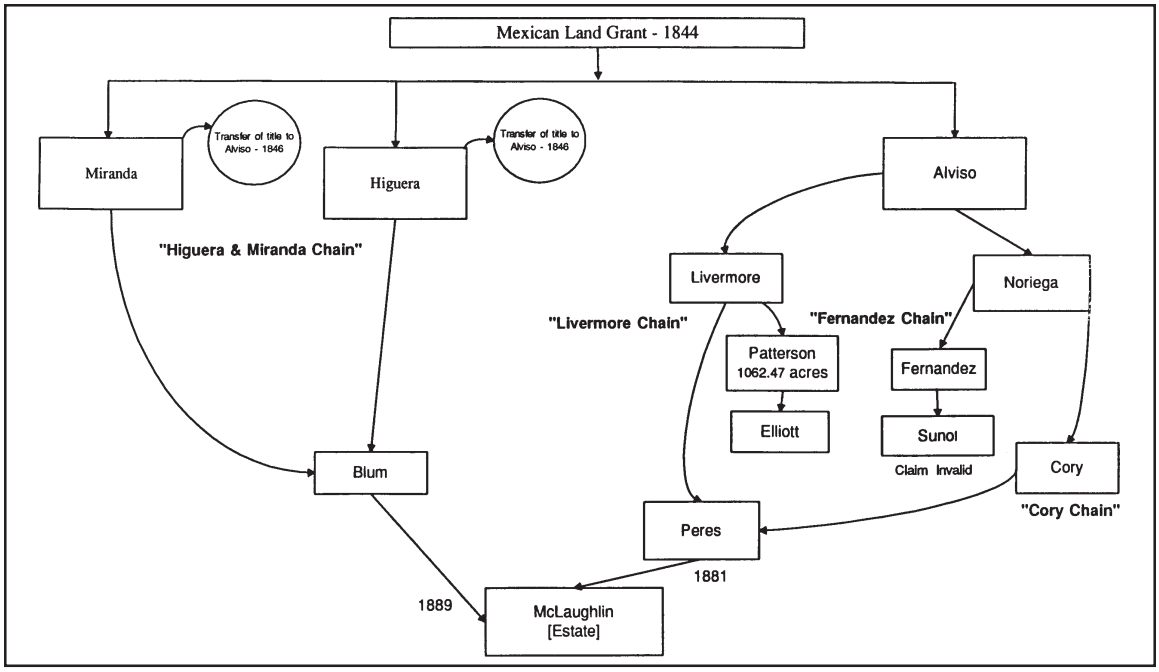
Perhaps not since the legendary case of Jarndyce versus Jarndyce in Dickens's *Bleak House* has a property been the subject of such legal maneuvering as Rancho Cañada de los Vaqueros. From California statehood in 1850 until the present, few years have passed when this land was not encumbered by one lawsuit or another.[22] The most interesting period of litigation, however, was from the 1850s to the 1890s, when the range was wild and so were the courts. It was a period of ambition and risk. It was a period when litigants took their feuds seriously—livestock would be maimed, timber reserves robbed, allies betrayed, and lives threatened. It was a period when some would risk all to fight to the bitter end.

Interests Divided

The battle was simply about who had legal title to the rancho. But the chain of title was anything *but* simple—it was chaos. Conflict over Los Vaqueros was largely due to the practice of conveying portions of the property in "undivided interests" rather than specifying a particular portion. These "undivided interests" proliferated until more than 215 percent of the rancho was claimed through three competing chains of title.

Title to Rancho Cañada de los Vaqueros started out simply enough, with the 1844 grant by the Mexican government to the three brothers-in-law, Alviso, Higuera, and Miranda. Actual possession of the land was a different matter. Miranda testified that Indians from the Central Valley stole horses and cattle whenever the opportunity arose, while conditions for settling the land were daunting. Within two years of gaining title to the rancho, the grantees decided to sell it. Miranda and Higuera allegedly sold their shares to Alviso, who subsequently sold all interest to Robert Livermore and Jose Noriega.

Although Livermore and Noriega were partners in several land transactions, Livermore does not appear to have been particularly trustworthy in his dealings with Noriega. When Livermore went be-



Partial Title Chain. This flow chart illustrates the general outline of how the Los Vaqueros land grant was eventually transferred to Charles McLaughlin. Each "box" could be expanded for a more detailed flow chart, but the resulting graphic would occupy many pages. *(Drafted by Elaine-Maryse Solari.)*

fore the Board of Land Claims to get title to the rancho confirmed, he made no mention of the fact that Noriega owned 50 percent of the property. Noriega was later added as a claimant and the board confirmed that Noriega and Livermore each had a 50 percent undivided interest in the rancho. In 1853 Noriega exchanged his share in another rancho for Livermore's share in Los Vaqueros. Livermore neglected to inform Noriega, however, that he had *already* transferred all his interest in Los Vaqueros to Mrs. Livermore and their children the year before. When Noriega discovered what his "partner" had done he was understandably upset and demanded compensation, which Livermore eventually paid. Unfortunately, Noriega had not discovered Livermore's duplicity until after he had already transferred two half-interests in the rancho in the belief that he owned the entire property. This situation caused much confusion and was the beginning of a series of interrelated lawsuits that spanned four decades.

Juan Suñol purchased title derived through one of Noriega's half-interests. About two years later, four Basque settlers, known collectively as "the Bascos," purchased that interest in the rancho. On the very same day, Juan's brother, Lorenzo, purchased the other half-interest that had once belonged to Noriega. The Suñol brothers and the Bascos might have started out as allies but they quickly became enemies when disputes over the range arose. Juan Suñol accused Carlos Garat of cutting the manes and tails of horses he and his brother had grazing on the rancho. When Suñol confronted Garat, the two almost came to blows.[23]

The situation deteriorated even further when land speculators entered the picture. In 1860 Simon Blum purchased Miranda's one-third interest in the rancho and later purchased various interests from Higuera's heirs. These were shares that had allegedly been *already sold* more than a decade earlier. Meanwhile, Louis Peres and his partner Pedro Altube purchased the half-interest formerly owned by the Bascos, in addition to shares still held by the Livermore family.

Litigating the Land

The confusion over title led to a series of lawsuits, the two most important being *Louis Peres et al. v. Juan Suñol* and *Simon Blum v. Lorenzo Suñol et al*. In *Peres v. Suñol* the central issue was whether Juan Suñol's interest in the rancho (the interest that had originally belonged to his deceased brother, Lorenzo) was valid. If Noriega only owned half of the rancho when he began transferring title, were his 50-percent transfers half of the rancho or half of his half-interest in it? If the former, then his second transfer of 50 percent would have been worthless. If the latter, then each transfer would equal just 25 percent of the land. In 1870 the court decided Noriega had conveyed his entire interest in the first transfer. Thus Suñol's deed, which was derived from the second transfer, was ruled invalid, and Suñol had no claim to the land.

In *Blum v. Suñol*, Simon Blum contended that the deeds from Miranda and Higuera to Alviso were forgeries, and hence Alviso could have only transferred a one-third interest in the property to Livermore and Noriega. Blum, who had purchased Miranda's one-third interest and most of Higuera's interest through his heirs, claimed over half of the rancho. Three issues were central to the allegations of forgery: Was Valentine Amador (who allegedly wrote the deeds on behalf of the illiterate Miranda and Higuera) even in the county when he supposedly wrote the deeds? Was Amador, who had a reputation as a liar, to be believed? And, most importantly, was Higuera in fact dead when he supposedly signed the deed?

This case began in 1862, was litigated for more than 25 years, and went to the California Supreme Court three times. Witnesses were rounded up from all over California to testify. The case was a nightmare: new allegations arose after laws changed, documents mysteriously reappeared decades later, and witnesses contradicted each other, and sometimes even themselves.

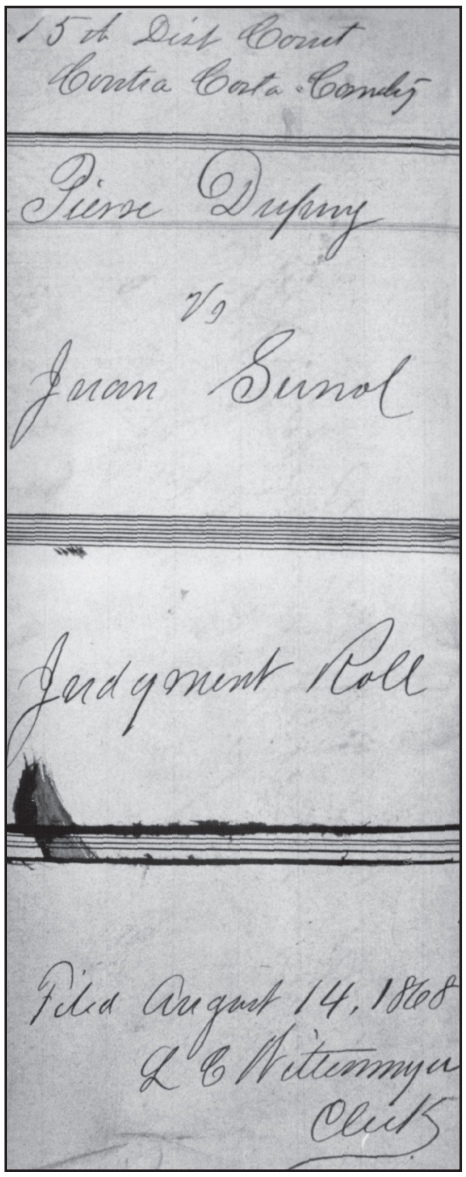
While the attorneys were arguing in court, the litigants continued to battle it out on the rancho. Simon Blum's strategy in his fight for control of the range land was devious: to establish his claim, Blum encouraged local ranchers to use "his range" at Los Vaqueros when the need arose. His arch rival Peres discouraged this practice. Peres's reputation was such that at least one local stockraiser would not use the grant for fear of getting lynched or having his stock killed.

In 1869 Louis Peres, and others claiming title through the Livermore deeds, sued eight Alameda County residents for removing $3,000 worth of timber from the grant, destroying $1,000 worth of other trees, and removing 100 cords of wood worth $1,000. Although not named in the complaint, Simon Blum, who had a lumber business in San Francisco, might have orchestrated the theft. Alleging that the defendants had continued to take timber from the property, the plaintiffs asked for treble damages, or $15,000, and that the defendants be restrained from reentering the grant. The plaintiffs won their case, but since the defendants were said to have no assets, it is unknown whether compensation was ever made.

Questionable Maneuverings

Blum v. Suñol was finally brought to a hearing in 1872, 10 years after the complaint had been filed. This was not surprising given the number of witnesses that had to be deposed. Other procedural aspects of the case are intriguing. Judge Dwinelle, apparently without an explanation, waited more than seven years to render a decision and did it on the very last day of his term. He decided the case on behalf of the plaintiff (Blum), which was a surprise to some. The defendants petitioned for a new trial. A petition for a new trial is supposed to be heard in front of the same judge who rendered the original decision. But since Judge Dwinelle had already left the court, a new judge, Judge Hunt, heard the petition. Believing that the case had been wrongly decided, Judge Hunt innovatively applied a legal concept to grant a new trial.[24] Blum knew his case was doomed if Judge Hunt presided over the new trial, and he fought bitterly to have the case transferred to another court. Both sides alleged that they could not get a fair trial in the other's territory because of their opponent's misuse of power. Blum's motion to have the case transferred was denied. As predicted, Judge Hunt ruled on the defendants' behalf in the second trial. Blum quickly appealed, but while the appeal was still pending, he settled the case for $8,500.

This settlement did not end the litigation over title to the rancho. As part of his litigation strategy, Blum had put pressure on his opponent, Peres, by contracting with Pierre Dupuy—a holder of a large mortgage on the rancho—to foreclose on Peres. Peres was devastated by what he perceived as betrayal by Dupuy, a former employee and ally. In desperation, Peres approached Charles McLaughlin, a wealthy San Franciscan, for a loan. When faced with foreclosure, Peres sold—or, as he later claimed, offered as security on a loan—the



Court Case. Researchers used records like this manuscript judgment as well as published court records to track the legal history of Los Vaqueros. *(Courtesy Contra Costa History Center, Pleasant Hill.)*

entire grant to McLaughlin. According to Peres, they had agreed that McLaughlin would pursue the legal case against Blum, and that Peres might redeem the property if McLaughlin won. After McLaughlin's estate settled with Blum, Peres sued McLaughlin's heirs in *Louis Peres v. Mary Crocker et al*. to redeem the property. Peres faced an uphill battle because the deed was absolute on its face, and McLaughlin could not be questioned because he had been murdered years earlier by an irate litigant in another lawsuit. Peres was also faced with the testimony of his former attorney, who claimed that he had given him no indication that the transfer was a mortgage rather than an absolute deed. Devastating as this testimony was, it was no surprise: far from being disinterested council, Peres's former attorney had become McLaughlin's attorney and had been paid with an interest in the rancho. Ethical?—perhaps not; effective?—certainly. In 1897, after another seven years of trials and appeals, Peres lost the case and any claim to the rancho.

Winners and Losers

Were there any true winners in the battle for the rancho? Louis Peres, who refused to settle with Blum for $10,000 when he had the chance, was clearly the big loser. After three decades in litigation and thousands of dollars, he lost all claim to the land. To make matters even worse, Peres, in another lawsuit,[25] was stuck paying for part of the purchase price of the rancho even though he no longer owned it. Simon Blum fared better, but undoubtedly lost money in his gamble to take over the rancho. Although he had received $8,500 in settlement, he had spent close to $6,000 in buying up shares of the rancho, and his litigation expenses were probably considerable. Was McLaughlin's estate a real winner? True, it ended up with title to the rancho, but it had also spent $43,500 in litigation. Perhaps the only big winners in this battle royale were the attorneys, who got nearly half of McLaughlin's $43,500. This, combined with all the money Peres and Blum undoubtedly paid their attorneys, would have amounted to a tidy fortune.

FENCING THE LAND

What could be more unprepossessing than a low wooden fence?; today a piece of property *without* a fence is more notable. Nary a city or suburban lot is unmarked by a fenceline, and even the rolling hills of the California countryside are strung with miles and miles of barbed wire. As commonplace as fencing is today, it was nearly nonexistent in mid-19th-century rural California. Barbed wire was not introduced until the 1870s, and a fence of any length was an enormous investment. And until the Americans flooded into California in the late 1840s and 1850s, population pressures were minimal and the hide-and-tallow trade demanded little control over the quality of cattle herds. The range was wide open.

Fence-No Fence

With the Americans came profound changes that put new pressure on the California landscape, ultimately leading to widespread fencing. Burgeoning population, competition for land, unclear titles, stock improvements, and widespread farming conspired to engender a new territoriality. Fencing was a prominent issue in the legislature as soon as California gained statehood, and it became an embodiment of the ongoing battle between ranchers and farmers.

Since 1850, legislation had been framed to favor ranchers: board fences at least 4 feet high were required of farmers to relieve them from the liability for any injuries the animals might receive while trespassing, or before filing suit for damaged crops caused by trespassing livestock. This legal bias continued through the 1850s, when seven fence laws were passed, all of which were in the best interest of the ranchers. The tide changed between 1860 and 1874, when 40 fence laws were passed, 28 of which favored the farmer. A "no fence law" (i.e., one that shifted the liability from the farmers to the ranchers) was finally passed in Contra Costa and Alameda counties in 1872, and by 1874 most California counties followed suit.[26]

A Magnificent Plank Fence

In 1862 Louis Peres took it upon himself to finance the construction of a plank fence around the Los Vaqueros land grant. His reasons for doing this must have been compelling, because it was two years before he himself owned any interest in the land and at least a decade before a "no fence" law made him liable for damages that might occur on his unfenced land. Peres's investment was a substantial one since he built his fence of wood planks; barbed

Fences at Los Vaqueros. Today, the hills and bottomlands of Los Vaqueros are criss-crossed with barbed-wire fences that divide the land into pastures and holding pens.

wire, which eventually minimized the expense of fencing, was not to be introduced for another 10 years or more.

Peres apparently did nothing by halves. The fence he erected was described as "magnificent" by a witness in Peres's 1895 lawsuit against the Crocker estate. As Peres himself testified, "they were good boards. . . thicker and broader than the ordinary fence boards, . . . about 8 inches by 1-1/4."[27] But Peres's plank fence probably did not enclose the entire land grant; the rancho had a perimeter in excess of 25 miles, and it is more likely that Peres provided spot-fencing to fill open areas between natural barriers such as steep landforms or dense chaparral.

Why would Peres make such an investment in land he didn't even own? First of all, he must have already laid plans to acquire title to the land with his wholesale-butcher partner, Pedro Altube. Fencing the grant would almost certainly increase the value of Los Vaqueros by putting an end to communal grazing. New improved stock could be prevented from interbreeding with less desirable free-ranging cattle, and pasturage could be protected from overgrazing.

Perhaps even more pressing, however, were impending issues of property ownership. The year that the fence was built, a complaint had been filed against both the Bascos and Suñol by Simon Blum—the wealthy land speculator who had purchased an interest in the grant in 1860. Blum's suit alleged that he was entitled to a half-interest in Los Vaqueros, and to establish his claim, Blum encouraged local ranchers to take advantage of his range at Los Vaqueros should their stock be in need. Another event in 1862 may also have motivated Peres's actions: the survey of public lands adjacent to the rancho had begun in that year, making them imminently available for settlement. A fence would have delineated the boundaries of the rancho and prevented encroachment by squatters and prospective homesteaders.

Whatever his motivation or the extent of the structure, Peres's "magnificent" fence was an enormous capital investment that signalled his intentions to own the land. Ultimately, it improved the Los Vaqueros range lands at a time when such measures were becoming necessary to retain a competitive edge over other ranchers.

THE SUÑOLS AND THEIR ADOBE

Lorenzo Suñol must have been a bold young man because, in 1852, five years before he owned any part of Los Vaqueros, he built the first permanent dwelling there. Remarkably, its remains are still visible in the fenced barnyard of an abandoned ranch in a small side valley high above Kellogg Creek. All that is left is a grass-covered mound of earth resulting from the cumulative effects of more than a century of rain and wind on the unfired adobe bricks that formed the walls of the building.

The Adobe first came to the attention of historians, just before World War II, when G.W. Hendry and J.N. Bowman toured the Bay Area to record all of the adobes that still stood or that people remembered. They learned by way of second-hand information that the building had two rooms with an adobe partition, beaten-mud floors, and was once one-and-a-half stories high, with an overhanging roof and a door that faced the valley.[28]

Layers of History on the Ground

Today the site looks like any of a number of modern ranches scattered throughout the hills and valleys of northern California's range land. Built in the 1950s, the abandoned complex includes a small house, a hay barn, small sheds, clusters of poplars, unpaved drives, and a labyrinth of wood and barbed-wire fences. But the pedestrian appearance of the site belies the historical depth and cultural complexity that exist in this small valley. The two seasonal creeks that converge below the modern compound make the site ideal for human settlement, and remnants of occupation are scattered across the surface of the land. Indeed, the adobe mound is just one component of an archaeological site that covers several acres and includes evidence of Native American occupation in addition to other pieces of the 19th-century ranch.

Up the hill from the adobe mound, in the next corral, the bare earth is noticeably darker than the surrounding soil, a rich "midden" that results from many years of human habitation. Careful examination of the ground reveals scattered small pieces of worked obsidian and chert—tools and waste flakes—that are the signature of a Native American living site or workshop. Along the shaded banks of the seasonal creeks flanking the midden are boulders with smooth, deep conical holes fashioned in the stone and then further worn from years of grinding acorns with stone pestles.

To the south of the adobe mound, outside of the barnyard and between the two creekbeds, are alignments of rough fieldstones, rock walls, and a concentration of bricks that together suggest a building foundation, landscaping, and perhaps an oven or a chimney. Small fragments of ceramics and glass typical of tableware manufactured in the 19th century—evidence of the age of the structures—are scattered on the ground nearby.

The recorded history of this complex site begins in the middle of the 19th century with the arrival of the Spanish, while the secrets of its earlier inhabitants are buried in the midden they left behind. Tantalizing but unsubstantiated reports of an Indian rancheria at the site were recorded by Hendry and Bowman from two informants: "[both] stated that an Indian rancheria once stood about 1000 feet up the hill and almost due west of the house." No record of the "Indian rancheria" has been found in historical documents, although several grass houses or huts were built at Los Vaqueros in 1844 at an undisclosed location to accommodate the "eight or ten" Indians that Francisco Alviso, one of the original grantees, intended to employ. These could have been located at the later site of Suñol's adobe.

The Brothers Suñol

When Lorenzo Suñol built the adobe in about 1852, he was in his early 20s and apparently squatting on the land, a not uncommon practice for settlers waiting out the results of land claims cases. Then again, his brother Juan claimed they did not live there until 1856, but since he was testifying in his defense of two ejectment suits, he might have been reluctant to admit being on the property several years before having any claim of title to it.[29]

The brothers grazed livestock and cultivated grain. Their Los Vaqueros spread was just one part of an extensive cattle- and horse-ranching network stretching from southern California to Calaveras

County. The network included adobe dwellings, corrals, slaughterhouses, and butcher shops operated by various partnerships. Juan and Lorenzo lived intermittently at the Los Vaqueros adobe for more than 10 years, dividing their time between various ranches in their network. For several of those years, they were tended to by Juan's common-law wife, Maria Angulo. She did the housework and cooked for the men, serving the Suñols and ranch hands alike at the same table.

The fraternal partnership was not without tension: Lorenzo complained to a number of individuals that Juan wasted money and that, "if he had never gone into business with his brother, he would have been worth $100,000." In 1856 he told a business contact that he was mad at Juan and was going to dissolve the partnership. He finally detached himself from his brother a year later when Juan took over a butcher shop in Calaveritas, in the gold country of the Sierra foothills. Lorenzo remained on the ranch and, with his vaqueros, drove cattle for butchering to the shop every few weeks. Maria seems to have taken the brothers' discord to heart: loyal to her love, Juan, she hated Lorenzo. Then, when Juan spurned her she turned her fury on both Suñols, suing for $960 in back wages.[30]

For the next 13 years, Lorenzo Suñol continued to ranch at Los Vaqueros, although he was intermittently beseige by financial and legal problems. In 1859 he was assessed for 989 acres at the "Rancho Poso del los Baqueros." A certain "Bartola Vallestrue, Buckero of said Senole and neighbors generally," reported that Lorenzo owned 300 cattle, 30 mules, and 30 horses with a total value of $6,900.[31] Despite his substantial assets, he must have needed cash because that same year he mortgaged his share of Los Vaqueros. Lorenzo was living at the adobe at the time of the 1860 census, on which he is described as a 31-year-old stockraiser from Spain. He shared his household with two laborers of like age, one from Spain and one from Mexico. The makeup of his livestock holdings had changed somewhat since the previous year, as he now claimed 70 horses, 300 head of cattle, 40 hogs, and 3 milk cows worth more than $9,000. Of the 7,750 acres he reportedly owned, only 2 were improved[32]—Suñol's orientation was decidedly towards ranching.

During his years at Los Vaqueros, Lorenzo was embroiled in several lawsuits that undoubtedly taxed his resources. On top of Maria's suit, Lorenzo was involved in legal difficulties and land feuds with both Simon Blum and his neighbors the Bascos. His untimely death in Calaveritas in mid-1866 prevented him from seeing these problems through. Instead, he left everything—including his position within the active lawsuits—to Juan. Within three months, and again in March 1868, suits of ejectment were filed against Juan Suñol by claimants to the land, including the Bascos. While the plaintiffs demanded that Suñol release his possession of the land because his chain of title was invalid, Suñol claimed to be a tenant in common with them; he testified that he used the land for grazing cattle, horses, sheep, and other livestock and for a supply of fuel and of fencing timber.

Juan, who was apparently not much of a horseman, tried to lease the ranch following Lorenzo's death. His June 22, 1867, advertisement in the *Contra Costa Gazette* read "two leagues of land, with house thereon, garden under fence, good pasturage and plenty of water." In 1870 Juan lost all his interest in Los Vaqueros, and the Suñol adobe became part of the holdings of Louis Peres and Pedro Altube. Juan Suñol's tax assessment for 1870—before he lost Los Vaqueros—reflects his diminished circumstances: in addition to the land he had just one wagon, two horses, and two mules, worth a total of $100.

The End of the Adobe

With the Suñols gone, the ranch headquarters with its adobe dwelling became one of several tenant farms at Los Vaqueros. In 1880 and probably for some years before, Frenchman Frank Viala lived and farmed there. In that year, he owned five horses and five mules, worth a total of $500; he had 200 improved acres in grain. Louis Peres, as landowner, received one-fifth of the harvest. According to the 1880 census, Viala's household contained an interesting group of people: a 20-year-old school teacher born in California; a 30-year-old "person of leisure" with a general disability named "Vista Snow"; and a 19-year-old Mexican farm laborer. They probably occupied the old adobe dwelling, which stood through at least the first decade of the 20th century.

What is certain is that by the early 20th century, the Dario family—who lived at the ranch from at least 1899—occupied not the adobe but an "old-fashioned country house, nothing fancy" nearby.[33]

Over the years the lives of the 19th-century inhabitants of the Suñol site have gradually receded from view. The traces of their material world have been obscured by 20th-century construction, buried by natural soil accumulation, or blended into the landscape by erosion and neglect. The adobe bricks fashioned from local clay have returned to earth; an outbuilding or perhaps the simple country home of the Darios has been reduced to its stone foundation, and all that remains visible to the untrained eye of the countless years of Native American occupation are pitted boulders and a patch of black earth.

Vaquero and Horse at Dario Place. A vaquero posed with the "Pride of the Dario Family" in front of the old Suñol Adobe for this photograph taken around 1910. The Adobe is just visible in the background. *(Courtesy Franklyn Silva.)*

DOMESTICATING THE GRANT: WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON THE RANCHING FRONTIER

Throughout the time that Los Vaqueros was ranching territory—when it was an open range and after it was fenced—it remained a largely male frontier. In the hide-and-tallow period, before 1850, labor requirements were minimal and only Indian and Mexican vaqueros lived on the ranch. In the three years that the Alvisos owned the property, between 1844 and 1847, the men rarely ventured out to Los Vaqueros on account of many perceived dangers, from marauding Indians to troublesome squatters to wild grizzlies.[34] The Alviso women undoubtedly remained safely housed in their more civilized dwellings.

As the emphasis of cattle ranching changed from hides and tallow to meat, and as stock improvements became necessary to remain competitive with other ranchers, the range was tamed and property owners began to live at Los Vaqueros. The first permanent residents were the Suñols, followed by the Bascos, who visited the ranch on a regular basis. But even with permanent and semi-permanent residence, the Vasco remained a place primarily for men. Between 1855 and 1860, only two women and two children are known to have lived at Los Vaqueros. Maria Angulo lived at the Suñol place between 1855 and 1858; and Marie Altube, her infant child, and Catherine Ohaco (age 11) lived at the Vasco Adobe for a short time in 1860.

The decade of the 1870s brought profound changes to the demography of Los Vaqueros as Louis Peres began to divide the land and lease out portions of it to farmers and ranchers. The Vasco was becoming less and less of a cattle frontier as families moved in and took up farming. By 1880 the grant had been fully domesticated with women and children living at the tenant ranches. Even Peres the landowner had seen fit to bring his wealthy French wife, Palmyre, and their two children to the Vasco in that year.

Maria Angulo and Marie Altube were both of European descent, from highly stratified societies where women usually remained subordinate to men. The ancient Spanish tradition, into which Maria was born and Marie married, promulgated a highly restrictive view of a woman's place in society. Women were wives, and wives were to be virtuous homebodies dedicated to the care of their husbands and children.[35] But the West, of course, offered new opportunities for women, and Maria and Marie experienced life as adults on the Vasco in very different ways.

Maria

Maria Angulo was caught between the economic constraints of Hispanic women in California and the new roles for American women that were emerging in the West. Like many Hispanic women of her day, she was beginning to work outside the family, gradually assuming more responsibility for her own welfare. But Maria's work options were limited, and it was only in the domestic sphere that she had any marketable skills. So, for at least five years, she lived with Juan Suñol as his common-law wife, and when he no longer had a use for her, she moved in with another man she had met while working in Juan's shop. Maria was stuck between worlds: she had none of the security or status of a married woman, but neither did she have the clout to demand wages owed her for years of domestic labor.

The difficulty of Maria's situation lay in the ambiguity of her role in the household. Was she wife, or was she servant? Maria was living with Juan as early as 1854 when they visited another rancher's home. According to their host, who overheard the conversation, Lorenzo (Juan's brother) offered Maria a job "for life" when he heard she might be going away. The security of Lorenzo's offer must have lured Maria in, because by 1856 she was living at the Los Vaqueros ranch, doing all the housework. A business associate "saw her cooking, saw her put meals on the table, saw her sweeping. Saw her doing other housework. She was doing this each time I was there."[36]

When Juan and Lorenzo severed their partnership and Juan moved to Calaveritas, Maria went with him. There she became a shop clerk in addition to doing the household sewing. Maria fully ex-

pected to accompany Juan to Spain, but he left without her. A regular shop customer reported that, "She said one day that she and Juan had settled their affairs all up and were going to Spain. She said they had their trunks packed ready to move them." Maria had also told a fellow shopworker that she loved Juan, so his betrayal of her must have been more than just financially difficult. After spending five years of her life with Juan, Maria had nothing to show for it but a packed trunk. Scorned and undoubtedly hurt, she decided to sue the brothers for $960 of back wages.

Marie

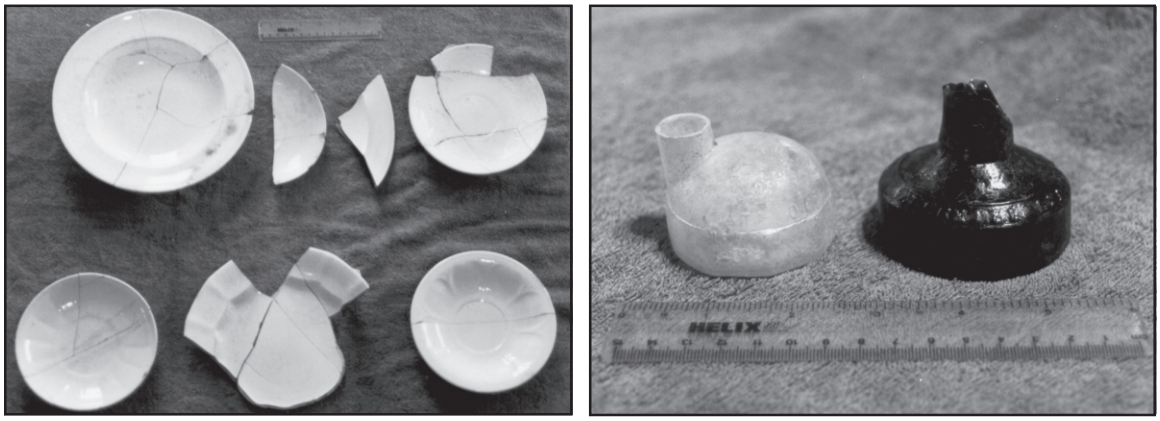
Marie Altube must have experienced life a little differently. Her father owned a French laundry in San Francisco where she met her husband, Bernardo Altube. Hers was undoubtedly a more pampered upbringing than Maria's; she was probably accustomed to being looked after, even if she knew the value of a hard day's work in her father's laundry. She married Bernardo on New Year's Day 1859 and soon thereafter moved with him to the Vasco, where they lived in the Adobe with their infant child and a house full of men. Life at the Adobe must have had its rough edges, and Marie undoubtedly had a lot of hard work keeping the household in order. In addition to her own baby, Marie looked after Catherine Ohaco, an 11-year-old girl who was also living at the ranch in 1860. One luxury Marie had was a French cook.

During the 1860s the Vasco Adobe was equipped with unexpected elements of civility, such as fine white china from England (none of which quite matched), bottled spices and olive oil from the city, and ink from France.[37] Perhaps Marie introduced these niceties when she lived at the Adobe, to try and make the place seem more like the home she had left in San Francisco. But the realities of ranch life were inescapable, and despite Marie's advantages in life she lost her infant in the fall of 1860. Unlike Maria, though, Marie had an escape; there was her family in the city, with whom she spent increasing amounts of time. When she became pregnant again, she stayed in San Francisco with her sister. After that, the Bascos' ranch was a male domain once again.

The Taming of the Vasco

As the Vasco moved from cattle frontier to farming community, profound changes in women's roles were occurring in California and the rest of the West. Americans were bringing to the frontier their notions of the proper roles of women, grounded in the Victorian ideology that was sweeping the East. Middle-class social reformers who promoted the "cult of true womanhood" firmly believed that the sanctity of women in the domestic sphere would serve the goal of uplifting moral behavior for the larger society. Women and the family were regarded as necessary ingredients for order and "civilization."

The civilizing influence of agricultural development was also a core tenet of this domestic phi-



Artifacts from the Vasco Adobe. These artifacts might reflect the influence of Marie Altube on the Vasco Adobe household of 1860. White plates with molded designs *(left)* adorned the table; inkwells *(right)* indicate that at least some of the residents were literate.

losophy, and the state's leading agriculturists envisioned more permanent settlement of the state by farmers that would "make their farms their homes."[38] Throughout the middle and late 19th century, the family farm remained the national ideal: a uniform agrarian base that would support a growing world industrial power. In 1862 the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in its Annual Report, went so far as to formulate the ideal of the husband-wife partnership in the family farm that was forged in the bonds of romantic love.

In 1880 at Los Vaqueros the civilizing influences of women and children were present as never before. Six households were recorded within the grant on the U.S. population census for that year: Peres, Dickhoff, Cummings, Bordes, Viala, and Righter. In these six households were 9 women and 10 children. Of course by this time some of the public land adjoining the grant had also been settled as farms: the census recorded seven households with 9 women and 18 children on public lands within the watershed boundaries.

Heavy Labor

On the farms and ranches of Los Vaqueros, as in other western rural communities, labor was at a premium. For the Californio, immigrant, and Anglo-American families alike, the work of running the farm and managing the household was demanding and required all able-bodied individuals—be they fathers, mothers, or children. Men often found it necessary to do day labor for their neighbors or leave home for extended periods on business, leaving the women to manage the new farms. Women needed to know how to run the farm, make clothing, process food and cook it, provide health care and midwifery skills, and because schools were not often established nearby, how to educate children.[39]

Even the benefits of new technology that boomed following the Civil War did not make women's work easier, but in fact usually made it worse. With the new agricultural machinery that increased the amount of land a farmer could profitably cultivate, more laborers often had to be hired on to help. And who but women had to slave over a hot stove to prepare meals for all those hungry hired hands?

Aids to women's work did exist: sewing machines, water pumps, lightweight cookware and cutlery, kitchen ranges, new types of washing machines, butter churns, and a variety of small gadgets that were available in the post-Civil War period. Although these tools undoubtedly saved work, farm women's tasks still involved substantial manual labor. Wood had to be hauled and fires carefully tended for the new-fangled cook stoves. Gallons of water had to be heated for laundering, and foods had to be processed from their rawest state. Nineteenth-century women usually milked cows and churned butter by hand. Their dairy chores may also have included cheesemaking—a strenuous and exacting task. Women normally had to bake bread daily, keep a kitchen garden, and butcher animals, in addition to canning and preserving fruits and vegetables. Most of the family's clothing was handsewn. And, in spite of the fact that reapers and other machines reduced men's work by half, floors still had to be swept "with the same weeds tied to the end of a stick, and by the same persistent swing of the arms, as when our mothers were young."[40]

Information from the 1880 census suggests that most of the farm wives on the grant had help. As the landowner's wife, Palmyre Peres had the benefit of a Chinese cook in addition to a governess for her children. Hattie Righter, who had a 7-year-old at school and a 4-year-old at home, had a female servant "doing housework." Although she had only an infant boy in 1880, Minnie Bordes was assisted by her 15-year-old sister and an 18-year-old servant (but then again, at the time of the census, her husband's sister Ernestine Orlet was visiting with eight children in tow!). Kate Dickhoff probably worked the hardest of the lot: she had three children ranging in age from 2 to 5, but had no household help. All of these families had hired hands to work the farms.

Raising Children

To add to the already increasing specialization of women's housework were the demands of 19th-century middle-class childrearing practices. The philosophy of the new "cult of domesticity" saw childrearing as a task to which women were particularly well suited. Whereas paternal authority was

associated with force and fear, the maternal influence was connected with love and affection. Views of childhood also changed in the 19th century. In earlier times, children were important economic assets for the family income. They worked alongside their mothers and fathers in the fields or were hired out to work for other families. By the middle of the 19th-century, the role of children changed from producer to consumer. In middle-class urban and suburban homes, children now needed educating and nurturing in the bosom of their families, remaining for longer periods at home. Childhood was seen as a distinct stage of growth and development in which the young person was prepared for adulthood. Childrearing, rather than childbearing, became the most time-consuming task in a middle-class woman's life.[41]

We may never know the extent to which these new childrearing practices were adopted and incorporated into domestic life in Los Vaqueros. We do know that, unlike their pampered suburban middle-class counterparts, most children on the Vasco worked on the farm in addition to receiving whatever schooling was available. On the Andrews farm, six children lived at home in 1880, ranging in ages from 2 to 18. The fact the James Andrews hired no farm laborers suggests that all family members played a role in farm operations. The value of children's work on the Valenzuela homestead was officially noted on the 1880 census, which lists the occupations of the two eldest sons as "farmers." The two younger sons and a daughter also gave their "occupation" as laborers who were unemployed from 2 to 5 months of the year. Two of the Valenzuela children aged 6 and 14 years attended school, while an 8-year old was "at home."

Sadly, life for children in the 19th-century West could be tragically short. Epidemics of whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, typhoid, cholera, and influenza swept through rural communities from time to time, claiming hundreds of young lives. Without the benefits of modern vaccines, and with home doctoring being the major source of medical attention, child mortality could be fairly high.

Perseverance

The family farms that were being established on the grant and the public lands around it continued to grow and prosper as California cashed in on the country's booming wheat industry. By the end of the 19th century, the Vasco grant had been pretty much domesticated, supporting tenant-farming families and a school. Farm work was demanding, and the environmental conditions and isolation may have, at times, been difficult to bear. Los Vaqueros women and the children who grew up on the grant persevered and, in their own way, brought civilization and community to this wild corner of the West.

THE ENTERPRISING BASCOS

Pedro Altube—among the most famous of the early Basque settlers in California—did not buy a share in the Los Vaqueros grant until 1864. While his brother and friends began developing the Vasco in the late 1850s, Pedro was in Santa Barbara, gathering more resources and building up herds. Because he gave employment to many Basques on his Spanish Ranch, which he later operated in Nevada, Pedro is known as "the father of Basques in America." Recently—perhaps based as much on his colorful personality as on his role as a Basque benefactor—Nevadans made Pedro their representative to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Pedro had lived nearly half his life when he bought his interests in the grant: the first half had been adventurous; the second half would be even more so.

Pedro Altube. Portrait of "the father of Basques in America," as Pedro Altube is known in Nevada where he founded one of the largest cattle ranches in the northeast part of the state.

Altube Home, Oñate, Spain. This is the farmhouse in which Pedro and Bernardo were raised in Spain. *(Courtesy Carol Hovey.)*

Two Boys in Search of Their Fortune

Pedro Altube was born in 1827 in Oñate, Guipuzcoa, Spain, a village "legendary for producing the most Basque of the Basques."[42] Bernardo was born four years later in 1831, the year the boys' father died. They were the youngest sons in a large Basque household. As was the custom, all but the eldest son immigrated to foreign lands upon reaching maturity. Thus, in 1845 at age 18—financed by a mortgage on the family home—Pedro sailed from the port of Bilbao on the Bay of Biscay for Argentina, to join three of his older brothers. Having arrived at the height of the cattle boom, the older brothers were now well established and would eventually become influential members of Argentina's upper class. Pedro worked in the hide-and-tallow trade and also as a dairyman—one of several Basque-dominated pursuits in the Buenos Aires region. When Bernardo joined him in 1848, he probably also worked in these traditional Basque occupations. Soon the brothers mastered the skills of the gauchos and became excellent horsemen.

Pedro and Bernardo Altube arrived in Argentina too late to acquire large landholdings of their own. So, when news of the California Gold Rush reached Buenos Aires in 1848, Pedro seized the opportunity to seek his fortune. With 35 other Basques, Pedro set out by horseback for Valparaiso, Chile, where they caught the first boat for San Fran-

cisco. The details of Pedro Altube's adventures in the goldfields have not survived. It is probable that he was among the large number of Basques mining around Sonora in Tuolumne County in 1849. Pedro, realizing the opportunities to be had, sent for Bernardo as soon as he could raise money for the passage. The brothers reunited in San Francisco in the spring of 1851. Altube descendants speculate that while Pedro probably did well at mining, he may have had more luck in gambling "since that was ever a passion." Pedro was also quickly honing his business skills: it was not long before he saw that supplying cattle to the miners and to the exploding population in San Francisco would pay far better than digging for gold.

The cattle business that the Altube brothers knew in Argentina was the relatively low-profit hide-and-tallow trade. In Gold Rush California, however, the sudden huge demand for meat sent profits soaring. The ever-savvy Altubes left the mines and became businessmen, joining forces with other Basque cattlemen. They bought cattle in southern California and drove them north—a trip lasting one month. In Merced County near the northern end of the San Joaquin Valley, they pastured the stock at modern-day Santa Nella (originally Centinela), the site of an Indian spring near the intersection of two major travel routes (today a major truck stop on Interstate 5 just east of Pacheco Pass). There the cattle were fattened before they were taken east to the mining camps or northwest to San Jose, where they commanded nearly double their original price. As a safeguard against Joaquin Murieta's gang of robbers, the partners would divide the proceeds after the sale and return to Centinela by separate routes. The land was not in use when they found it, and the Basques simply claimed it by possession. With plenty of water from the spring and creek, they built an adobe and planted an orchard.

But the Altubes were too young and ambitious to settle down. In 1853 Pedro married Marie Ihitzaque, a French Basque, and moved north with her to Palo Alto; as usual, Bernardo followed. There, in the rapidly developing San Francisco Bay Area, the brothers met with success running a dairy, while they made plans for the future. Their other partners, including Marie's brother, Salvador, remained at Centinela.

The Basques Buy Los Vaqueros

The Basques must have been familiar with the Los Vaqueros land grant from their cattle drives in the early 1850s; the range was open to public use, and they may well have pastured their herds there after scaling the Altamont Pass enroute to the Bay Area. As the grant made its slow progress through the U.S. Land Commission, however, both neighbors and speculators began buying interests in the land. Ownership would soon become a prerequisite for use.

Thus on 14 November 1857, just a month before the land was confirmed, a group of Basque ranchers headed by Bernardo Altube bought a half-interest in the rancho. On the same day, another half-interest was bought by the Suñols—Spanish brothers who had been grazing cattle there for half a decade. The two groups may have been allies at first, but they quickly came to blows: even 4 leagues of land was not enough to feed their huge herds.

Soon known as the Bascos, the four partners at Los Vaqueros—Arambide, Ohaco, Garat, and Bernardo Altube—were all young men when they purchased the property. At age 26, Bernardo Altube was already successful in his partnership with the Basques at Centinela and in the dairy and other ventures with brother Pedro. He would also soon start a family: on the first day of 1859, Bernardo married Marie Recarte, a French Basque, and together they moved to the adobe house at Los Vaqueros. They had met at her family's French laundry on Leavenworth Street in San Francisco, a far cry from the rustic adobe the Bascos built on Kellogg Creek.

A year older than Bernardo, Juan Bautista Arambide was a French Basque who had joined Bernardo on the voyage from Buenos Aires and in numerous business ventures since that trip. Carlos Garat, eldest son of French Basques Jean and Grace Garat, was the youngest of the group. Marrying just three days after Bernardo, he soon tired of the rancho and sold his interest to his partners in November 1860. Even so, the Altube and Garat families remained closely knit. In 1866 Juan Bautista Arambide married Grace Garat, Carlos' sister, drawing this circle of friends ever closer. Little is known about the fourth partner, Bernardo Ohaco, perhaps because the spelling of his name is obscured

in various documents and could be read Obaco, Ohaco, or Chaco. Bernardo Ohaco was French, presumably Basque, and 30 years old at the time of the purchase in 1857.

When the census taker rode up the Kellogg Creek valley in June 1860, the Bascos were living at the Adobe. Bernardo Altube's household included his wife and infant daughter; Arambide; three members of the Ohaco family; and four adult males—including three laborers and one cook—of French, Spanish, and Native American descent.

A Spreading Domain

Meanwhile, the Bascos continued to purchase grazing land elsewhere, returning east to the Gold Country for some of their investments. In March 1860 Bernardo Altube and Juan Bautista Arambide bought a ranch in Calaveras County—where their Los Vaqueros neighbors, the Suñols, had a butcher shop, and their old friend and former partner Juan Indart had a ranch. Arambide and partners went into the butcher business in Calaveras County in April 1861 in the lively village of Vallecito,[43] a short ride from the more cosmopolitan town of Murphys, known as the "Queen of the Mother Lode." Living there would have been quite different from the life at Centinela and Los Vaqueros, and different too from the growing city of San Francisco. By moving between these worlds, the partners carved themselves not only an enviable economic position but also a lifestyle of broad contrasts and diversions.

Responding to the disasters of flood and drought that marked the early 1860s, the Bascos began buying up land in the Central Valley from beleaguered ranchers (who had lost all their possessions). Soon the Altube and Garat families had two new ranches in the San Joaquin Valley; at the same time Pedro Altube and his new partner, Louis Peres, had purchased property in Merced County—perhaps investing in the Rancho Centinela, where they had staged their cattle-driving forays in the 1850s. Basque sheep ranchers are said to have built a second adobe at Centinela at this time—this one a two-story affair suggestive of a family home. Arambide meanwhile continued to purchase butcher shops in Calaveras County, buying up a two-thirds interest in a successful establishment in the adjacent towns of Angels and Altaville, which he sold to his partner in less than one year.

This was a time of great change on the land grant and in the Central Valley—another place that they called home—and the Bascos were already seeking alternatives. With Simon Blum beginning his courtroom campaign to wrest the land grant from rival claimants, it became clear that holding on to the grant would require tremendous effort. Perhaps lacking the reserves or resolve to fight Blum, Arambide, Bernardo Altube, and Ohaco sold their interests to a San Franciscan in October 1863, who, just six months later, sold them to Pedro Altube and Louis Peres, doing business as Louis Peres & Co. Just what prompted the circuitous route of that transaction is not known.

The Bascos Regroup as Louis Peres & Co.

Pedro Altube's stay in Santa Barbara County had been particularly devastating, tragically marked by the death of two of his young daughters. A sequence of flood and drought and plagues of grasshoppers and smallpox caused Altube to lose his livestock and property. By 1864 Pedro was back in San Francisco in partnership with Louis Peres. It could be that Pedro's wife, Marie wished to be in a more urban setting and near family while the children were young.

In fact, by the time of the census in 1870, none of the principals was living at Los Vaqueros. Instead, nearly all were living in the increasingly urban and sophisticated city of San Francisco—a marked contrast to the plains and hills of Contra Costa. The census was taken in August that year, an unpleasant time to be on the Vasco. The Bascos did spend part of that year on the ranch, when they moved stock from their ranches in Fresno County to Los Vaqueros for fattening and then to San Francisco for slaughter.[44]

A Cattle Kingdom in Nevada

The Bascos' move to the San Joaquin Valley had put them in competition with Henry Miller. Miller was the famous cattle baron of the Miller & Lux Ranching and Meat Packing Company—the archetypal poor immigrant who made his fortune in California. For a poor boy from Germany, who had

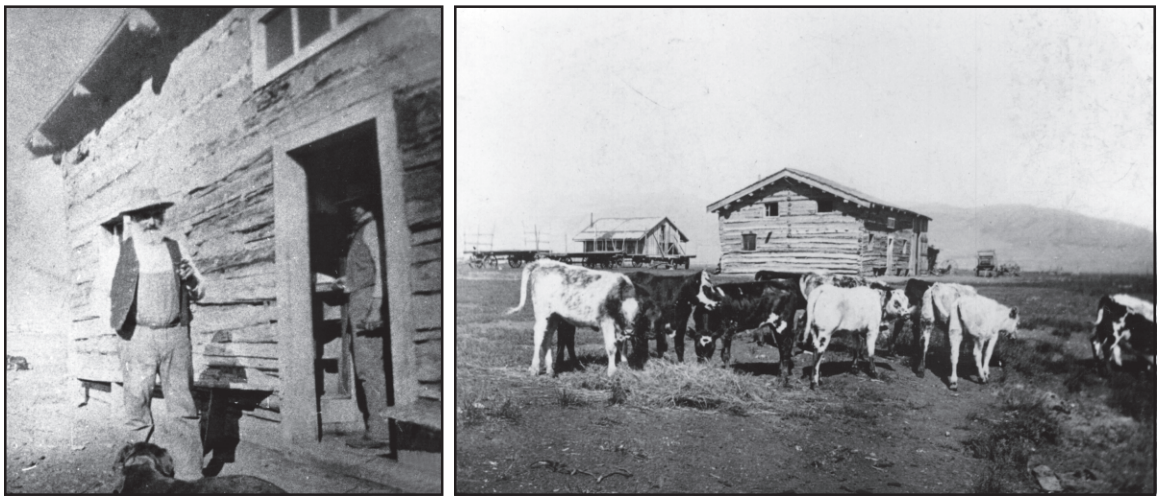
"aspired to handle a butcher knife," Henry had succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. By the 1880s he owned a vast portion of the state and beyond; in fact, "it was commonly stated that Henry Miller could travel from Idaho to Mexico by horse and sleep on his own land every night."[45] Included in his vast domain were the former ranches of Indart at Centinela, Bernardo Altube at Mendota, and Jean Garat at White's Bridge.

Feeling crowded by the changes in California, the Altube brothers, and eventually the Arambide and Garat families, moved their cattle enterprises to Nevada where the landlocked, more arid conditions discouraged the kind of growth that was occurring along the coast. In 1871 Bernardo and Pedro Altube sold most of their California holdings, purchased 3,000 head of cattle in Mexico, and drove them to eastern Nevada where they settled. The Altubes created a thriving "cattle kingdom" on their Spanish Ranch in Independence Valley above Elko.[46] Pedro continued in partnership with Louis Peres, owning the Vasco grant as well as a wholesale cattle-butchering business in San Francisco.

The Nevada property was conveniently located near the newly completed railroad, so that cattle could be shipped by train to San Francisco for slaughter at Peres's shop. The settlement nearest the ranch was Tuscarora, in 1871 a small town with a four-room adobe fort for protection. Within a year, Tuscarora had become a major boom town, as the news of the discovery of gold and silver spread. The Altubes bought lots in town as well and built butcher shops featuring the meat from stock raised at the Spanish Ranch. Once again, the unbeatable combination of cattle and gold strikes worked for the Altube brothers.

The Altubes continued to purchase grazing land, in partnership with Louis Peres, in the vicinity. When a drought in 1874 forced many small ranchers out of business, the Altubes followed the example of their California nemesis, Henry Miller, and purchased these properties "for a song." They made their headquarters at a distressed ranch they bought out and hired Shoshone Indians to build their bunkhouse and corrals, meanwhile adding to their cattle herds. Never missing an opportunity, the Altubes even had their workers gather sagebrush to sell to the miners as fuel to run their machinery.

With the $70,000 mortgage that Peres & Co. took out on Los Vaqueros in 1877, the Bascos continued expanding the Spanish Ranch, until it covered about one-third of Independence Valley. Peres provided much of the capital to buy land. The Altubes also followed standard ranching practices



Spanish Ranch, Nevada. Bernardo Altube is standing in front of the bunkhouse at Spanish Ranch *(left)*; cattle roam the wide-open spaces afforded by the Nevada landscape in front of the buildings at Spanish Ranch *(right). (Photographs donated to the Basque Studies Program, University of Nevada, Reno, by Alba Altube; reproduced courtesy Edna Patterson.)*

and had friends and family acquire small parcels of public land from the General Land Office as homesteads or cash entries, and then sign the title over to them.

Louis Peres and Pedro Altube dissolved their partnership in April 1880. Peres received Los Vaqueros and responsibility for its $70,000 mortgage in exchange for 18,000 acres that Peres owned in Nevada and the P-Bench brand, which became the principal iron of the Altube operation. When the mortgage fell due shortly thereafter, Peres must have realized that he had made a mistake. By the time of Pedro Altube's death in 1905, the family owned 73,656.01 acres of land; their property covered an average of 5 to 10 miles in width and approximately 35 miles in length—a substantial spread even in Nevada. When Peres died in 1898, he owned a modest house in Oakland.

Two Men Find Success

Historical documents tell us little about the everyday lives of the Altubes and their partners and employees while at the Vasco Adobe; some aspects of their lifestyle, however, were likely similar to the life they later led in Nevada. From the late spring through the first snow in the fall, the men in the Altube family stayed near the Spanish Ranch. Unlike at the Vasco, there was no ranch house on the property because, until 1898, no family members lived there year round. When the brothers came to town, they rented a room in Tuscarora and rode out to the ranch when they wanted. Both men brought their families out for a few weeks each year.

Both Altube families believed in the importance of a good education. When they moved to San Francisco in the 1860s, Pedro hired a tutor so that his wife, Maria, could become fluent in English, both spoken and written. Pedro learned to speak English, but never to read or write. To compensate, he hired a man to read to him every evening from books ranging from history and the classics to current events. The Altube daughters attended the French School in San Francisco and became both accomplished musicians and well-educated young ladies. The children of Bernardo Altube also attended institutions noted for their academic excellence and became renowned musicians.

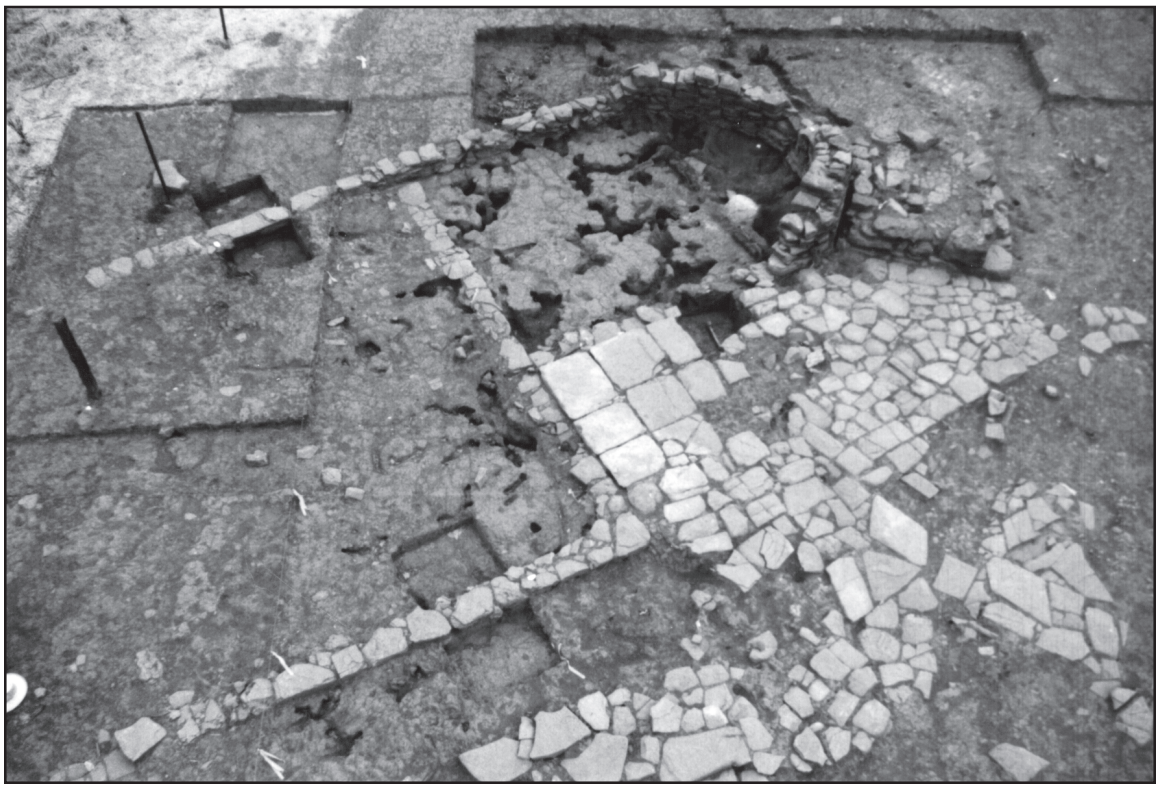
These civil traits are all the more engaging when upheld by a man as raw cut as the elder Altube. Pedro was an imposing figure at six feet eight inches tall. He had a reputation for a quick temper as well as a fine sense of camaraderie. With a bottle of whiskey in his pocket, few could refuse his standard greeting, "Hey, son-of-a-bitch, my friend, take a drink with me."[47] The Altube daughters rode as well as the best vaqueros, and the entire family participated in the yearly round-up. Evening poker games at the ranch attracted all comers; one daughter eventually opened a gambling casino and won back the ranch hands' earnings.

The family of Pedro Altube moved into a mansion in San Francisco's Pacific Heights at 2821 Jackson Street in 1901; the house had four stories and 21 rooms. By 1894 Bernardo had accomplished one of his dreams and owned a Basque hotel at 344 Jones Street in San Francisco, the Hotel Bernard. His family had recently moved to an imposing two-story residence at 813 Van Ness. The enterprising brothers had been tremendously successful.

A LIFE-HISTORY OF THE VASCO ADOBE

It seems that the Bascos chose the perfect place to build their ranch headquarters, the mud-brick building that would become known as the Vasco Adobe. Nestled in a deep meander of Kellogg Creek, midway along the broad valley floor, the house is at the foot of a low hill that is easy to climb but that affords a magnificent view of the Los Vaqueros land grant. Close at hand was a plentiful supply of water, modest protection from the wind, a broad view of the valley (and anyone who might be approaching), and hours and hours of warming sunlight every day.

The simple adobe that the Bascos built in the Kellogg Creek Valley survived for half a century and served many households in its lifetime. When the four partners—Arambide, Ohaco, Garat, and Bernardo Altube—built the house in 1857 or so, they probably never intended to occupy it year-round. It had to serve double duty as housing for the rancho's vaqueros as well as a decent home for the partners and their families when they were at the ranch overseeing business. Later, when the Bascos packed up and left California for the wide-open spaces of Nevada, the Adobe became, at least temporarily, a full-time home for an erstwhile city-dweller (Louis Peres) and his family. Later still, the Adobe was used as a headquarters for tenant farmers, and when the farmers moved into a modern wood-frame house, the Adobe was relegated to farm laborers once again. Finally, when it became hopelessly out-dated and thoroughly unfit for human habitation, the Adobe was abandoned and left to melt back into the unformed clay from which it came.[48]



Archaeological Remains of the Vasco Adobe. This is what was left of the Vasco Adobe in 1994, when it was excavated by archaeologists. Note the two rooms defined by narrow stone foundations, the semi-circular fireplace and attached bread oven at the right, and the formal sandstone pavement in the foreground.

Tradition and Innovation: The Bascos Build a Spanish Adobe

Bernardo Altube and his partners hailed from a venerable tradition of Basque building in the Pyrenees, while at least some of them had also spent several years in Argentina where they lived among the Spanish colonists and their distinctive New World architecture. The adobe that the Bascos built at Los Vaqueros was an amalgam of their experiences and the traditions their families passed on to them. When they were planning and constructing their ranch headquarters at Los Vaqueros, mud-brick (or adobe) construction was already a thing of the past for most Californians. Building with adobe was a Spanish tradition, and by the late 1850s, most new houses were built of wood harvested from the redwood and fir groves lining the California coast, in styles brought from New England by the new American immigrants.[49] But the Basques chose adobe as their building material, probably because they identified more with California's Spanish settlers than the new crop of Americans. Moreover, they incorporated into their building elements unknown to the Spanish that were probably influenced by ancient traditions rooted in their Basque heritage but could also have been innovations inspired by a fresh landscape.

In the best Spanish adobe tradition, the Vasco Adobe was a long, low building. It had just two rooms; the main room measured 18 feet wide and was twice as long, while the smaller room—probably a kitchen—was about 10 feet square. Unlike most Spanish adobes, though, a huge fireplace with a semi-circular chimney formed one whole side of the kitchen.[50] The chimney, which was 10 feet in diameter, was skillfully constructed of interlaced slabs of stone and rose an impressive two stories to end somewhat above the gable roof end. Inside, the fireplace had no hearth, and was therefore more akin to a firepit; a small stone hearth for cooking was, instead, set into the kitchen's dirt floor adjacent to the firepit. In traditional Basque style, the pit provided a perfect nest for hot coals used in cooking. In addition, there was ample room for large, smokey fires that could be used to cure meat hung in the enormous chimney.

Just outside the kitchen, attached to the back of the fireplace, the Bascos built a large bread oven. This again followed the Spanish tradition, but the Bascos chose materials they could obtain close at hand. For the hearth and dome of the oven, they used oversized fired adobe-style bricks made from the clayey soil underfoot. (Perhaps Bernardo had learned the skill from his brother, Felix, who had been a successful brickmaker in Argentina.) The sandstone blocks used for the oven's foundation came from outcrops in the nearby hills, and the porous soil used to fill the foundation came from the banks of Kellogg Creek.

The Adobe house was set on a minimal stone foundation and stood one-and-a-half stories high, with a peaked roof and a deep overhanging eave supported by posts. The Bascos were resourceful about using local building materials for their house too: the clay for the adobe bricks was mined from a deep hole just steps away from the house site, and the stones they used in the foundation and for the fireplace also came from the hillsides near the building site. The Bascos were likewise clever about seeing to their water needs. They had no well, but instead they dug a ditch that routed water from the creek to the vicinity of the house, where it was probably collected in a tank or trough.

Renovation and Remodeling: Peres Stakes his Claim

Throughout the 1870s, the function of the Vasco Adobe probably didn't change much, even though the Basques had moved on. Louis Peres, still in partnership with Pedro Altube, continued the tradition of intermittent occupation for a few years while his primary residence was in the Bay Area. He took an active role in running the farm and visited the property frequently. In June 1878 he even brought his whole family out for the harvest. All of this changed in 1880, when Peres seems to have uprooted his family from the city and moved them wholesale to the Vasco.[51] Why he did this is a matter of speculation, but he had only just acquired Altube's interest in the grant. With tens of thousands of dollars at stake, Peres found that his title was immediately in question because of the unfavorable verdict in the

Blum v. Suñol case.[52] He was probably trying to secure his claim to the land by moving his family there.

Peres's household was not only large, but rather varied, and certain changes were prerequisite to moving into the Adobe. In addition to Peres and his wealthy French wife, there were their two- and five-year-old daughters, a governess, Peres's invalid brother, a Chinese cook, and three farmhands. The bread oven, which had probably already fallen into disuse, was finally dismantled (at least partially), and Peres had the ashy, muddy yard outside the Adobe's kitchen paved with flat slabs of local sandstone. The antiquated open hearth in the kitchen was also abandoned, and a fender was added across the front of the enormous fireplace. The fender not only formally separated the fireplace from the rest of the room, it also helped keep the toddler from falling into the hot coals. Peres used bricks from the abandoned bread oven to construct the fender—they were not only readily available, but were soft red and suitably rustic. The kitchen was further improved upon around this time with the addition of a newly laid packed earth floor that was eventually covered with wooden planks.

Peres's efforts were for naught because in May 1881, within a year of acquiring full title to the land, he lost his property to Charles McLaughlin. For several years he must have held out hope of regaining control of the land, because he continued to live on the grant on a rental basis. By the mid-1880s, however, Peres was back in Oakland, and the Vasco Adobe became the headquarters of a tenant ranch. As such, its function as a family home did not change much, except that it was not owner-occupied. McLaughlin or his estate did invest in some capital improvements to the Adobe, however, probably in the hope of avoiding the greater expense of building an entirely new house.

The focus of improvement was on water-procurement facilities. The new landowners bored a well, erected a windmill, and built a platform on which to elevate a tank of water. The windmill supplied the elevated tank with a reservoir of water,

Vasco Adobe, ca. 1908. The Adobe was photographed from the west in the first decade of the 20th century. Note the tall stone chimney, which corresponds to the semi-circular fireplace feature identified by archaeologists at the west end of the building. *(Courtesy Franklyn Silva.)*

from which cast-iron pipe was laid to the kitchen of the Adobe, providing a gravity-fed flow aided by a hand pump at the kitchen sink.[53] Improvement continued into the 1890s, when a formal stone-and-brick platform was added under the water tank, shortly before the Adobe was abandoned.

Obsolescence: The Adobe is Retired

Despite improvements to the Adobe building and yard, the addition of a reliable water source, and the plumbing of the kitchen, the Vasco Adobe was finally abandoned as the farm headquarters in the 1890s. The more than 30-year-old building must have seemed inadequate for family living; its dank interior could hardly have improved with age, and the enormous fireplace that heated the building undoubtedly consumed large amounts of wood, a resource that had become more and more scare as the 19th century came to a close. At the same time, the status of Los Vaqueros land as rental property had become solidified under the ownership of McLaughlin's heirs. Improvements to housing facilities were probably necessary to attract and maintain tenants, and to maximize returns on the property. And so, the Adobe was replaced by a wood-frame farmhouse in the field to the east, although the occupants of the new farmhouse continued to use the old water tank on its new platform adjacent to the well.

In the meantime, the function of the Adobe changed yet again. It continued to stand for a number of years; a photograph was taken of it around 1908. It was probably used to house farm laborers, even though the water pipe to the kitchen had been capped. But by 1910 or so, when its adobe walls began to disintegrate and its tall stone chimney started to crumble, the abandoned house became a sporting-ground for hunters and recreational drinkers. At least twice after the Adobe was abandoned, it was inundated with flood waters from Kellogg Creek. At one point someone salvaged some of its fired adobe brick fragments and the stones of its fireside hearth and built an informal wall (a hunting blind, perhaps). Livestock was allowed to roam through its remains, stomping stray artifacts into the muddy floors and yard. Posts were added here and there, aligned with fences for which few traces remain. The last fence—which still exists—isolated the east end of the structure in a field that was put under plow, and all evidence of the Adobe's foundation was obliterated there. This last event probably did not happen until Oscar Starr owned the property in the 1930s and the wood-frame farmhouse was abandoned as well.

By the 1940s the Vasco Adobe was no more than a distant memory and a barely discernible mound of earth:

> The ruins are now a grass covered mound the highest point of which is about 30 inches above the surrounding ground. . . . The highest part of the ruins shows a wall made of mud with stones imbedded; no adobe brick as such were found. Nothing is known as to the use of the building; it is assumed to have been a dwelling used by vaqueros.[54]

A GOOD LOAF OF BREAD

When the Bascos built their adobe house along the banks of Kellogg Creek, they equipped it with an outdoor oven for baking bread. Times were flush, they were successful entrepreneurs in the cattle business, and they could afford to buy the wheat from which they would make their bread. This they chose over the humble, corn-based *talo* and *arto* of their homeland, neither of which required a free-standing oven. Perhaps their years in Argentina among the Spanish colonists and their ever-present *hornos* (ovens) had accustomed them to the luxury of wheat bread.[55] Besides, the nine adults and two children that lived at the Adobe in 1860 had to be provided for, and their French cook was probably well acquainted with the use of a bread oven.

The oven the Bascos built was large and D-shaped, spanning the breadth of a man's outstretched arms. They built it onto the back of their new adobe house, just a few steps outside the kitchen door. For the oven's foundation, the Basques quarried and shaped sandstone from natural outcrops in the surrounding hills. They laid the stones directly on the native ground, stacked them a foot-and-a-half high, and filled the enclosed space with shale and soil they mined from the nearby banks of Kellogg Creek. On top of this dirt they laid fired adobe bricks for a hearth and covered the whole thing with a dome constructed from the same material. These bricks were molded by hand from clay dug out of a pit a few steps away from the oven and mixed with straw from the grasses on the valley floor. They were made large—almost three-quarters of a foot wide and twice again as long—and were pressed into wooden molds to dry in the sun before being fired.

At the Vasco Adobe the preparation of bread may have been a weekly event. In Basque country today, farm-wives use a hearty recipe low in water and leavening that makes for a long-lasting bread. During the weekly bread-baking sessions, the oven would have been filled with wood that was allowed to burn until the brick hearth and dome had absorbed the heat of the fire and become uniformly white. One test for oven readiness was see how long you could hold your fist inside; each person knew what their limit was when the oven was ready. When the

Bread Ovens. The archaeological remains of the Vasco Adobe's oven *(left)* are missing the dome, but retain evidence of the fired-adobe brick hearth that once formed the baking surface. When active, the oven may have resembled the one shown here *(right)*; note the large stone foundation, the domed roof, and the wooden shed protecting the oven from weather. *(Active oven reproduced from Boily and Blanchette 1979, p. 77.)*

proper temperature had been achieved, the fire was scraped out, and the prepared loaves were inserted. Baking time was about an hour-and-a-half.

The luxury of fresh wheat bread lasted at the Basque adobe for only a few years. By the late 1860s, the brick dome had been dismantled and discarded in the open pit from which the adobe clay had been mined just a decade before. After the death of one of the Basco's infant daughters at the ranch, the landowners and their wives spent more and more time in the city, eventually abandoning the ranch to their vaqueros. Perhaps there was no one left who knew how to use the oven, or no one who cared to. Soon, the yard in front of the oven was paved over, and the last ashy remains of the oven's fires were covered over for good.

ELEGANT DINING ON CALIFORNIA'S CATTLE FRONTIER

The decade of the 1860s was somewhat of a financial and emotional roller-coaster ride for the Basque partners who invested in Los Vaqueros, but mealtimes, at least, were sumptuous and elegant when the ranchers were in residence at the Vasco Adobe. It probably started when Bernardo Altube moved the woman he had fallen in love with in San Francisco, the woman he married in 1859, to the Adobe. Marie could hardly be expected to let go of all the trappings of civility she had grown accustomed to, even if she didn't live at the Adobe year-round. And after all, the Adobe was the first home base that Bernardo had officially owned in California, and he probably wanted to recreate something of the homeyness the Bascos had established at their Merced ranch, Rancho Centinela.

Besides, the Altubes were a family of some standing, at least in Argentina where three of the brothers had become part of the elite upper class. Bernardo and Pedro, who left Argentina for California during the Gold Rush, understood the gentlemanly tradition of the Californios who lived lives of elegance on the rough-and-tumble cattle frontier. At census time in 1860, the Vasco Adobe was overwhelmingly a household of men. Marie was the only adult female living there among eight grown males, but—either in deference to her or on account of her—meals were served in style. The household included a young cook from France, probably hired to prepare the kinds of food the Bascos knew best.[56]

Veal Piccata

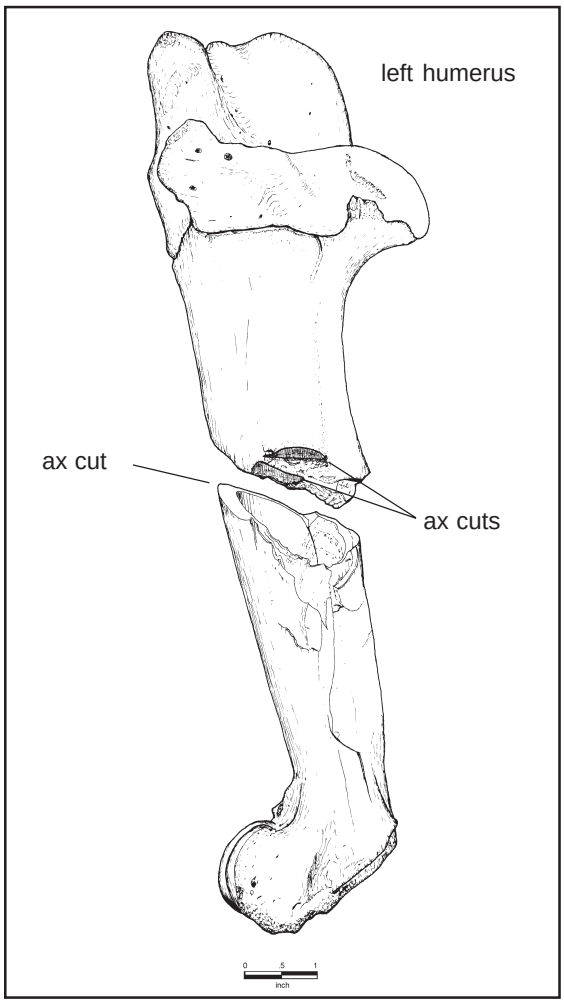
The remote location of Los Vaqueros on the edge of civilized California did not stop the Adobe's residents from enjoying the luxuries of city fare.[57] Imported foodstuffs included fresh oysters and codfish (probably salted) from the California coast; commercially butchered pork; bottled water; condiments such as mustard, pickled vegetables, and capers; spices; olive oil; and wine, champagne, and some hard liquor. As varied as their diet apparently was, they were forced by their remoteness to rely heavily on preserved foods. They kept their larder well stocked with foods in tin cans and wooden barrels, the copious remains of which survived in their trash pits. Fresh fruits and vegetables were probably harder to come by, even though there may have been a small kitchen garden. A single peach pit and a few grape seeds in the trash pit could have come from cultivated plants, but they could also have been brought in.

Although locally produced food was more limited in its variety—meat and bread, mostly—it was certainly plentiful. Most of the meat eaten at the Adobe was raised, harvested, and butchered—or hunted—on site. In addition to the ubiquitous beef,

Bottles from the Vasco Adobe Excavations. Food and medicine containers *(left)* and liquor bottles *(right)* from refuse pits at the Vasco Adobe. From left to right, the bottles probably contained mineral water, medicine, ground spices, capers, ground spices, olive oil (two bottles on the right), cordial, ale or porter, champagne, and wine.

residents were treated to mutton, pork, chicken, rabbit, and fish. Of these, it appears that only the fish and pork were brought in from elsewhere.

The evidence of the cow bones reveals some interesting details about how beef was served at the Adobe.[58] The animals were slaughtered at a very young age—more than half were less than two years old—which made for meat that was very tender, but not necessarily very tasty. But where the meat might have been bland, spices and condiments provided the flavor (veal piccata, perhaps?). The carcasses were crudely butchered with axes or cleavers, and were subdivided so that the meat could be removed from the bone. Numerous knife scores on the bones suggested that they were scoured for meat, perhaps to be used in sausages. The sausages and boneless cuts of meat were probably smoked in the huge fireplace in the Adobe's kitchen. Overall, this style of butchering was much more common among the Hispanic Californios than the Yankee newcomers.



Butchered Cow Bone. Also from the refuse pits at the Vasco Adobe, this cow front leg bone was cut with an axe or cleaver. There are also knife marks that indicate the meat was stripped from the bone, probably to make sausages. *(Drawing by A. Richard Wolter.)*

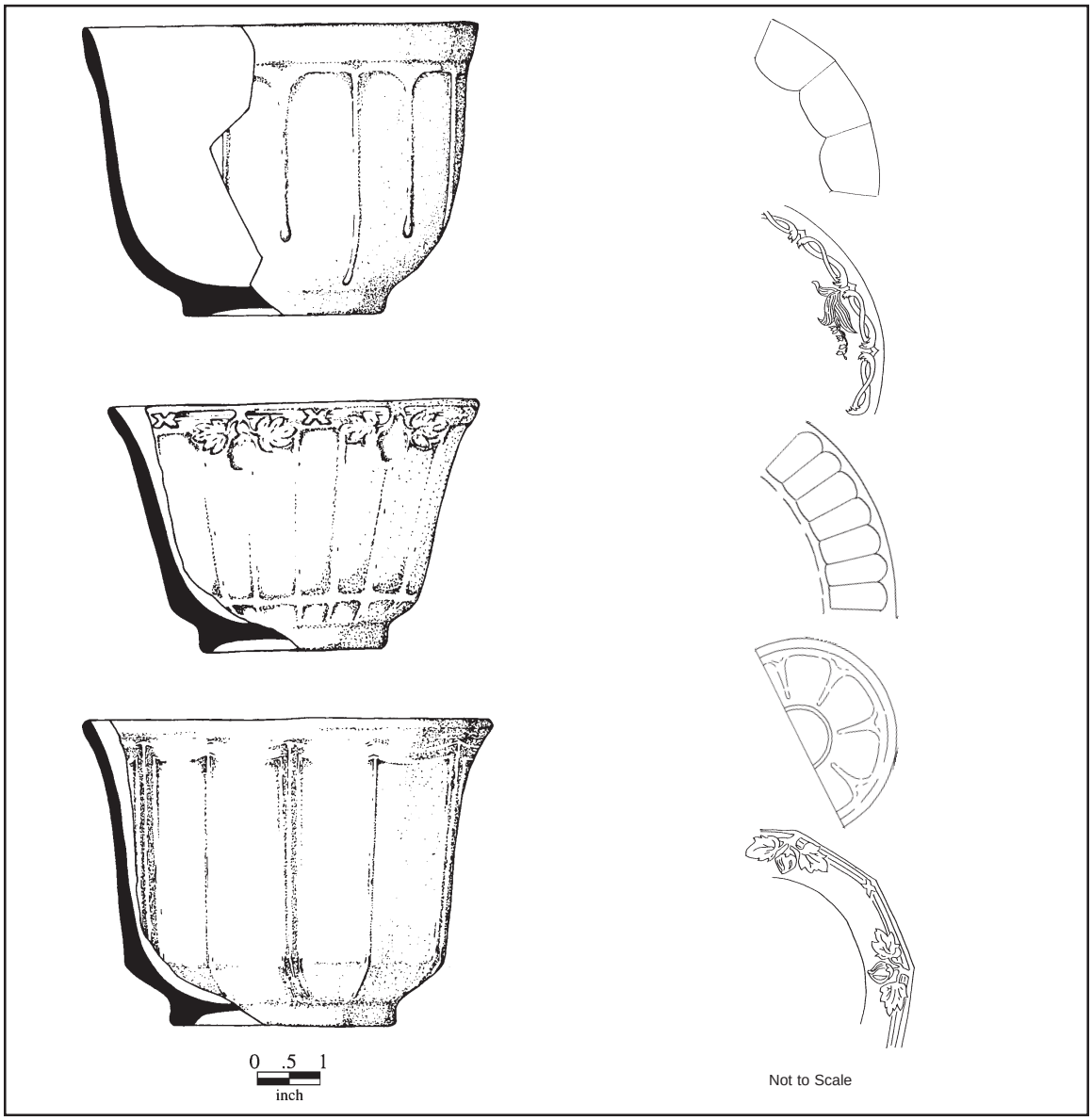
Not Quite a Matched Set

No miners' tinware or Old World pottery and wineskins for this crowd: the Vasco Adobe table was set with china at the height of style, most of which had been manufactured in far-away England. New tableware was brought to the ranch throughout the 1860s. Almost all of it was plain white earthenware molded with subtle designs popular at the time. Patterns ranged from simple, straight-line rim ridges, to full-plate scalloping, the lily-of-the-valley motif, and even a three-dimensional cameo. Few of the pieces matched precisely, but they were all similar enough that they would have looked sophisticated on any table.

The Adobe cupboard was stocked with a wide variety of vessel forms, including dinner plates, soup plates, saucers, cups, tureens, and platters. Not to mention the glass tumblers and wood-handled cutlery. The household had at least three ceramic slop bowls, which raises some interesting questions. These vessels are tall and straight-sided; too large to be cups and too narrow to be regular bowls, they served the rather narrow function of containing used tea leaves. Slop bowls were commonly included in large, matched sets of china, but the styles at the Vasco Adobe are all different and do not particularly match any of the other dishes. They were probably unwanted odds and ends from sets of china the Basco partners and their families maintained at their city homes. In fact, most of the china at the Vasco Adobe was probably cast off or remaindered from sets maintained elsewhere. That would explain all the different designs.

Dinnertime, May 29, 1860: A Fantasy

With all the information that has been gathered from historical documents and archaeological ex-



Molded Ceramic Patterns. Slop bowls (*left*) and plates (*right*) excavated from refuse pits at the Vasco Adobe were decorated in various molded designs, few of which matched. *(Plate rims reproduced from Wetherbee 1980; slop bowls drawn by Nina Ilic.)*

cavation, it is possible to imagine a particular midday dinner at the Adobe, say, in the late spring of 1860. The long trestle table is set up in the main room of the house; nine place-settings of white china have been carefully arranged on it. The bright, cheerful china offsets the dingy, smoke-stained walls, and from the other side of the room the place settings appear to match, making the table look elegant. The normally chilly room is warm from the glowing coals in the kitchen's huge fireplace and the sun that is high in the sky and beating down on the exposed roof.

The men have all gathered after their morning chores, anticipating a nice meal followed by their afternoon siesta. Marie Altube and young Catherine Ohaco have spent the morning watering their kitchen

garden and sweeping up around the bread oven after yesterday's firing. While Catherine helped Mariano, the French cook, with the big meal, Marie sewed buttons back on shirt cuffs and watched baby Gracieuse to make sure she did not venture too near the huge firepit. Catherine took special pleasure in setting the table with the pretty white china Marie had culled from the fancy sets she kept in San Francisco. The house still smelled sweet from the fresh-baked loaves of bread made yesterday.

Mariano had been busy all morning preparing the meal. It was a special day because Bernardo's brother Pedro had come from his home near Palo Alto the night before for a short visit. He brought with him a barrel of succulent oysters, and a fresh supply of olive oil and wine. His wife had sent along another one of those useless bowls; Mariano would give it to Catherine to fill with the pebbles she loved to collect.

The menu today included, as always, beef; Mariano wanted to use up some fresh cuts he had saved out from last week's butchering and smoking. Since the meat was getting a little ripe he decided to smother it with capers and lots of that hot pepper that came in the pretty little bottles. Then, of course, there were the oysters Pedro brought, canned vegetables that he would fix up with olive oil, fresh bread from yesterday, and tinned fruit for later. As always, there would be lots of wine. Too bad they were out of pickled cucumbers, but Pedro would be coming back again soon, and Mariano would be sure to put in an order.

With Pedro in residence, talk that spring day inevitably turned to business; the partners had a lot to discuss. Bernardo had recently purchased a ranch in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada with his housemate Juan Baptiste Arambide. They had heard about the land from their old friend and former partner Juan Indart, and decided it would be a good investment. The year before, their herds had gotten too big—4,500 head at Los Vaqueros. They had needed more range land, particularly since the rancho wasn't fenced and they had to share the range with Lorenzo Suñol, with whom tensions were mounting. When they decided to buy the Calaveras property they were flush, with assets at Los Vaqueros alone worth more than $50,000. Now they were keeping just 1,300 head of cattle here, and they had to decide how to maximize their profits. One idea was to get into the butchering business so they could have more control over their market; the Suñols were doing it in Calaveritas, so why shouldn't the Bascos? Juan Arambide agreed to talk to Indart to see if something suitable might be found in the foothills.

Pedro brought unsettling news: Simon Blum, a savvy entrepreneur with successful investments all around the San Francisco Bay, was beginning to purchase interests in Los Vaqueros. This could only mean trouble for the Bascos since, between themselves and the Suñols, they considered that all of the rancho was already owned. Speculation abounded, but they all finally decided that there was nothing they could do; at least they had other irons in the fire and friends all over the state who might help them out.

Dinner over and business settled, the men lit up their clay pipes, sipped the remainder of the wine, and eventually wandered off to their bunks. Marie, Catherine, and Mariano began to clear the table and wash the dishes. Catherine was already tired, but today was wash day, so her work wasn't done yet. She longed to run down to the creek and look for pretty pebbles. Oh well, at least she could gossip with Marie in their native Basque while they leaned over the hot pot; maybe Marie would tell her again about how Uncle Carlos Garat had cut off the tails of all those horses and threatened that mean Señor Suñol with his facon. . . .

THE RIVALS, PART I: LOUIS PERES, A FIGHTER TO THE END

Louis Peres once claimed almost 95 percent of Rancho Cañada de los Vaqueros. After fighting for more than 30 years to keep it and dissipating most of his resources in litigation, he lost all claim to the Vasco. Why? Was it due to ignorance and greed? Or was it his refusal to settle with his long-term rival when it would have made economic sense to do so? Or perhaps he was betrayed by those he trusted most and was an innocent victim of an unscrupulous land speculator? Or did he get what he deserved? Was he a crafty businessman who could not be trusted? Was he a bigamist who tried to cheat his first wife by transferring property to another?

Some of the intriguing questions about this colorful pioneer will probably never be answered. But old records, oral history, and archaeological remains provide a glimpse into his eventful life and some clues as to his character.

Peres & Company

Louis Peres was born in France and came to San Francisco around 1860 when he was 35 years old.[59] He set himself up as a pawnbroker and shortly thereafter married Maria Antonia, a 33-year-old Mexican Californian. Peres was a shrewd businessman, and within a couple years he had joined Pedro Altube, a Basque, in the wholesale cattle-butchering business. Peres probably supplied the capital and Altube the knowledge of cattle ranching. They had a slaughterhouse in San Francisco and ran cattle on land that they purchased together in California and Nevada. By 1870 Peres's San Francisco household had expanded to include his wife, Antonia; their young daughter, Louisa; a 23-year-old woman from Mexico; and a 14-year-old Chinese servant.

Over the years, acting as "L. Peres & Co.," Peres and Altube gradually bought up various interests in the Vasco. Peres and Altube knew that title to the grant was in dispute because Simon Blum, who would become Peres's arch rival, had already filed a lawsuit claiming much of the rancho. The partners knew the risk—one of the deeds had the purchase price of the property contingent upon the outcome of the lawsuit—yet they continued to invest.

Not only did Peres and his partner have to fight Blum's claim, they had to fight the Suñol brothers who also claimed part of the rancho and had been there since the 1850s. When one brother died, Peres & Co. went to court to get the surviving brother removed from the property.[60] Peres and his partner only spent part of the year on the Vasco. They moved stock from their ranches in the San Jose valley to the Vasco for fattening before taking them to San Francisco to be slaughtered.

Peres had to be vigilant to protect his property. To establish his claim, Blum had encouraged local ranchers to take advantage of "his" range on the Vasco should their stock be in need. Peres was not one to be crossed. According to one local stockraiser: "Knowing the circumstances, those vaqueros, you know, I never meddled with Mr. Peres' grant, as I didn't want to run my neck into a noose and have my stock killed."[61]

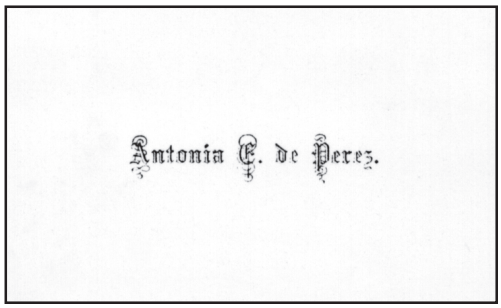
During this period, the partners' San Francisco business was not without its problems. Peres & Co.'s slaughterhouse, which was located in "Butchertown" within the city limits, was forced to move outside the city to a new Butcher's Grant. Unfortunately, the new location was actually underwater, and butchers had to spend considerable sums to make the area serviceable.[62]

Private Life

In the early 1870s, Peres made several changes to both his personal and professional life. He seems to have married Palmyre Levy, a wealthy French woman. She is listed as his wife on a deed in 1875 that gave her property at Market and Fourteenth streets in Oakland, as well as on the 1880 census. Peres was very likely a bigamist—if, that is, he had married Palmyre before the birth of their first child in 1874. In any event, Maria Antonia Peres was still very much alive in 1874 and presumably upset that her husband was living with a woman 10 years her junior, and giving away real estate. She filed for a divorce, which was still pending in July 1876. She subsequently received an $8,000 settlement, which would have been a substantial amount in those

days. She was comfortable enough to have luxuries such as elegant calling cards.[63]

Peres moved his primary residence to Oakland, where he lived with Palmyre at 914 Fourteenth Street in a large one-story residence with bay windows and a stable at the rear of the large yard. He commuted to the slaughterhouse in San Francisco and frequently visited the Vasco. Peres gradually subdivided the land into smaller ranch complexes that he leased for a share of the crops. It seems his partner, Pedro Altube, was too busy getting started in Nevada to take much interest in the management of the California property. Peres & Co. took out a $70,000 mortgage on the Vasco in 1877 to buy other property and expand their Nevada ranch, the Spanish Ranch.[64]



Maria Peres's Calling Card. Mrs. Peres probably left this calling card with Anne Barnes when she visited her in Oakland in 1878. *(Courtesy Franklyn Silva.)*

By 1880 Louis and Palmyre, their two young daughters, the girls' governess, Louis's invalid brother, three French farm laborers, and a Chinese cook lived in the Adobe on the Vasco. Financially, Peres was quite comfortable. His 600 improved acres on the Vasco were valued at $15,000, his tools and livestock at more than $3,000, and the value of his farm products for one year was $4,000.

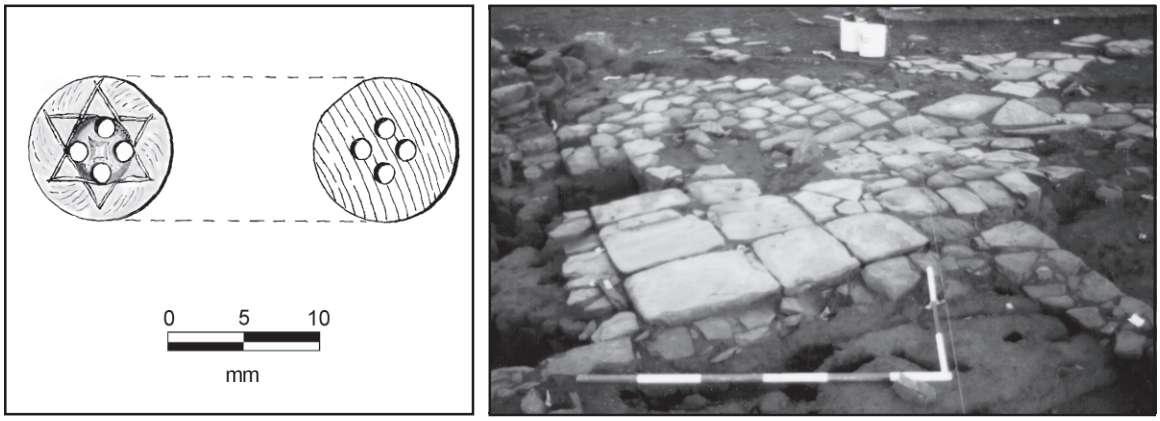
With assets aplenty and a new, young wife to make comfortable, Peres renovated the Adobe house. He paved the muddy yard, partially dismantled the old outdoor bread oven, did away with the old-fashioned cooking hearth, and resurfaced the kitchen floor.[65] By this time, the land grant had been divided into at least five rented parcels, one of which was headed by Sylvain Bordes, who had been working as Peres's ranch foreman since the mid-1870s. In 1880 Peres generously gave the Bordes family a ranch located on the Vasco as a wedding gift, but the deed was never recorded. Peres also undertook a building campaign on the lands he was leasing. He built houses and barns, and dug wells. Inside the enormous barns he had stone floors laid, using the same material he had put in his own yard.[66]

"Money Would Melt"

In 1880 Louis Peres and Pedro Altube dissolved their partnership. Altube took 18,000 acres of the company's land in Nevada, while Peres received the approximately 95 percent interest in the Vasco that the partners claimed, along with responsibility for the mortgages. Why Peres, an apparently savvy businessman, made such a risky and costly exchange with his partner is a mystery. Only the year before, a judge ruled for Simon Blum in the case of *Blum v. Suñol et al.*, a major setback for Peres and Altube, who had underestimated their opponent. They immediately filed a motion for a new trail and prepared for a long fight. Not only was the Vasco tied up in expensive litigation, the $70,000 mortgage had to be paid in full in less than a year after Peres and Altube exchanged property. Peres would also have to pay another $10,000 mortgage on the Vasco; he also promised to pay Altube $5,000 if he won the lawsuit.

So, Peres had placed himself in the situation of having to quickly pay off a large sum of money and fight a mammoth lawsuit. He could not raise money to pursue the legal case because it was already encumbered, so he mortgaged the crops growing on the Vasco.

In the spring of 1881, the $70,000 mortgage fell due. If Peres expected some leniency from mortgager Pierre Dupuy, a former employee, he was disappointed when Dupuy pressed his claim; he was distraught and felt betrayed when Dupuy actually joined forces with Simon Blum. Dupuy did not trust Peres, who had allegedly threatened to settle with Blum himself and leave Dupuy with what was left. So Dupuy began foreclosure proceedings against Peres, and the other mortgage holder filed a cross-complaint to protect her mortgage of $10,000. Peres, in desperate financial straits—"money in my hands would melt and disappear"—approached wealthy San Franciscan Charles McLaughlin for a loan.



Louis Peres at the Vasco Adobe. A button engraved with a Star of David *(left)* was probably left behind by a member of Peres's household, the only Jewish family known to have lived at the Adobe. Peres's improvements to the Adobe included this formal stone pavement *(right)*. *(Button drawing by Nelson S. Thompson.)*

Blum had once reportedly offered to settle the case for as little as $10,000. For whatever reason, Peres had continued to fight even though the years of litigation were both costly and risky. Since Blum and Peres were both Jews, it might have been expected that they, like other individuals associated with the Vasco, would have formed cooperative alliances with members of their own ethnic group. Instead Blum and Peres had become fierce rivals. Although the root of this rivalry will probably never be known with certainty, it may be that this very ethnic link was, in fact, part of the cause. Blum was most likely an Ashkanazi Jew, whose cultural roots were in Eastern Europe, while Peres was a Sephardic, Jew with cultural ties to North Africa. These two groups were as culturally distinct as any other populations of southern and eastern Europeans and, like every culture, each maintained unflattering ethnic stereotypes about the other. So, rather than setting the stage for cooperation, the two men's common religion may have contributed to their mutual dislike.[67]

Because Peres had failed to settle with Blum when he had the chance, disaster loomed. When faced with a threatened foreclosure, Peres transferred the entire grant to Charles McLaughlin in 1881. According to Peres, the agreement was that McLaughlin would pursue the legal case and that Peres might redeem the property from the mortgage if McLaughlin won. But the deed, as written, conveyed the property without restrictions rather than as security for a loan. Peres's former attorney later testified that he believed that Peres had sold the property. It should be noted that after Peres transferred the property to McLaughlin, Peres' attorney became McLaughlin's attorney and received a share of the Vasco when the case was settled with Blum in 1889.

The Old Frenchman

Peres had remained a tenant for a short time after he transferred his interests in the land grant to McLaughlin. In an agreement with McLaughlin, Peres moved off the grant and—in exchange for fencing a piece of land—kept livestock on it. Peres went into a partnership with Charles Peers, a butcher in Byron. The partnership ended in 1884 on a sour note. Peers testified later that Peres "did misrepresent things to me considerable . . . we went in together. I was out in the business about $600 and my whole time's work besides, so that my experience with Mr. Peres was not agreeable financially."[68]

During this period, Peres apparently split his time between the Vasco and various Oakland addresses, including the Hartmann House at 462 Ninth Street and the Windsor House at Ninth and Washington, both within walking distance of Palmyre Peres at 914 Fourteenth Street. After ending his partnership with Peers, Peres became the proprietor of the Bay City Market, and resided with his family at 914 Fourteenth Street.

By 1889 when the *Blum v. Suñol et al.* case was finally settled, Charles McLaughlin had been dead more than five years. Peres had requested of

Mrs. McLaughlin that she acknowledge her late husband's wishes to be generous with him if the case *Blum v. Suñol et al.* ended favorably. Mrs. McLaughlin refused and pointed out that Peres owed the estate $2,100 that she would like to collect. Peres had to transfer property to pay off his debt. Rebuffed by McLaughlin's widow, Peres then filed his complaint against McLaughlin's estate, claiming that he had not sold the rancho, but offered it as collateral for a loan so that McLaughlin could pursue the case of *Blum v. Suñol et al*. Another long lawsuit at great cost to the participants with many witnesses, appeals, and contradictory testimony ensued.

Mr. Peres, now referred to as "the old Frenchman," had not borne up well to his adversity. He was too weak to continue his court testimony in 1890,[69] "I can hardly breath" he said. "Give me a little water, please. Hot like it is, it is very bad on my side. My breath don't come very well." Peres's lack of familiarity with English and American law became apparent during his testimony; he may well have thought that the conveyance to McLaughlin was only a loan. Interrupting the proceedings, the Judge went on record, "it is manifest to us all that he talks broken English. Perhaps his appreciation of the distinction between counsel and attorney might not be as accurate as it ought to be. He may understand as badly as he talks. We might not get the exact facts." Peres was no match for the lawyers of McLaughlin & Company; he lost this case in 1893 and, after a number of petitions for rehearings, Peres's battle to keep his ranch was finally lost in 1897, when the California Supreme Court refused his motion for a new trial.

One year after losing his marathon legal battle, at age 73, Louis Peres died. "At one time Peres was quite wealthy" stated his obituary in the *Oakland Enquirer* on May 25, 1898, "and he leaves considerable property." Although Peres did not die poor, he must have rued the day when he exchanged the property with his former partner. By the time of Pedro Altube's death, his family owned over 73,000 acres; their huge estate was 5 to 10 miles in width and 35 miles long—a substantial property even in Nevada.[70]

Although Peres lost the biggest battle of his life and most of his fortune, he was not forgotten: Palmyre placed a large monument at her husband's grave in the Jewish section of Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery. One can still visit the Peres family plot, where the graves of several of their relatives cluster around the monument that is dedicated in both English and Hebrew to the memory of the family.

Peres Plot, Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland. The focal point of the Peres family burial plot is a tall stone obelisk engraved on three sides. The front is dedicated to Louis himself, while the left side is carved in the memory of his wife Palmyre. The right side is dedicated to Louis's sister-in-law and includes text in both English and Hebrew.

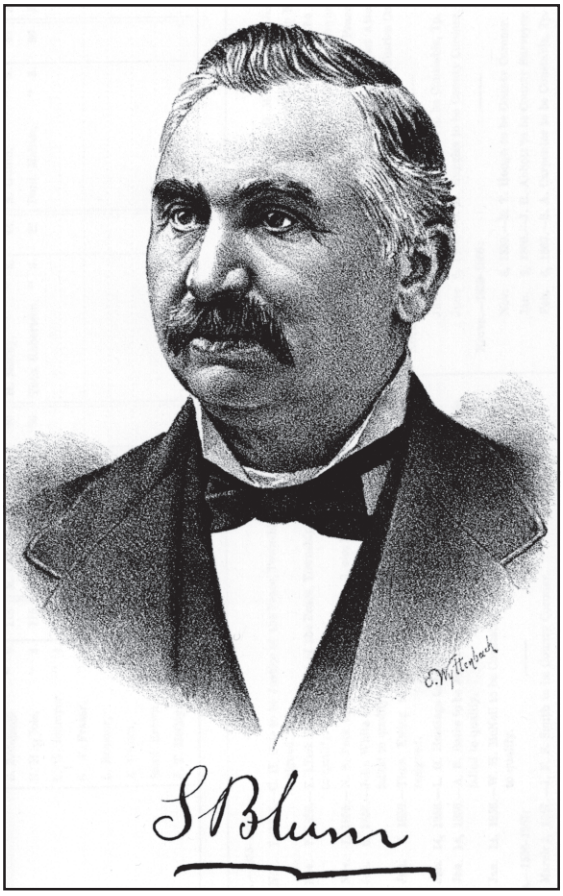
THE RIVALS, PART II: SIMON BLUM, LITIGANT EXTRAODINARE WHO KNEW WHEN TO QUIT

Simon Blum, the nemesis of Louis Peres and before him, the Bascos, never lived on the Vasco. Yet through land speculation and litigation he changed its destiny. Like Peres's bid for the land, Blum's 27-year battle to take over the rancho was unsuccessful and costly. Also like Peres he was a colorful character. Was he the Horatio Alger of his public persona—who went from rags to riches through hard work? Or was he underhanded and conniving—a man who would win at any price and cheat a widow if he had the chance?

Like Peres, Simon Blum was Jewish and born in France. Blum came to New York City in 1850 at age 16 and worked in a store. Within three years he had already reached California and traveled throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties as an itinerant peddler, selling wares from a pack on his back. In 1854 Blum bought a shop in Martinez. Although his store burned to the ground in 1856 and he faced five years of flood and drought, Blum continued to prosper, unlike his rivals the Bascos and Suñols. By 1864 Simon and his brother Elias, doing business as Simon Blum and Co., were assessed for $8,500 stock in trade, solvent debts, silverware and furniture, and owned valuable real estate in Martinez and the surrounding countryside. Simon also had diamonds and jewelry worth $2,000.

In business with his brother and other partners, Blum eventually had interests in stores in Susanville and Buntingville; a grain and lumber business in San Francisco with warehouses in Martinez, San Pablo, Pacheco, Bay Point, Seal Bluff, Brentwood, and Byron; and schooners *Hermine Blum*, *Martinez*, and *Melrose*, which ran regularly from the company's landings to San Francisco. Blum was ambitious and successful. Yet like Peres he had a reversal of fortune; he reportedly lost a large part of his wealth when James Fair and others attempted to corner the wheat market. Unlike Peres, his home life appears to have been uneventful. He and his French wife, Leontine Alexandre, were married for more than 50 years and had five children.[71]

Simon Blum had a passion for real estate and a propensity for lawsuits. He was involved in dozens of real-estate transactions and dozens of lawsuits. He began purchasing interests in Los Vaqueros in 1860. Within two years he claimed a half-interest in the grant and had filed his first complaint against the Bascos and Suñols, among others.



Portrait of Simon Blum. This formal portrait accompanied a biographical sketch of Blum in a history of Contra Costa County published in 1882. Biographies of local residents were included at the expense of the subject, and didn't necessarily reflect the county's most prominent citizens. *(Reproduced from Slocum & Co. 1882.)*

Blum undoubtedly knew the value of good "PR": he paid to have glowing biographical sketches of himself published in county histories. In one, he was grouped with those "heroic pioneers" who, "by their subsequent career, have proven that they were

equal to the great mission assigned them—that of carrying the arts, institutions and real essence of American civilization from their homes in a remote country, and implanting them upon the shores of another hemisphere."[72]

All rhetoric aside, Blum played hardball when it came to litigation. To advance his legal case against the Bascos, he seems to have engaged in witness-tampering and intimidation. Valentine Amador testified that "Señor Blum told me that he would be very much pleased to see me and the others on the island of San Quentin as liars." A key witness for Blum testified that Blum had promised her a piece of land to live on with her children if he won the suit.[73]

Nor was Blum always aboveboard in his real-estate transactions. In 1865 the Contra Costa County Grand Jury indicted him for fraud in connection with the purchase of some town lots in Martinez. It appears that Martina Arilleames de Martinez agreed to sell Blum five town lots in Martinez for $50 but instead Blum prepared a deed that had her conveying all of her interest in the Rancho Pinole.[74]

Undoubtedly on account of his experience with numerous lawsuits, Blum, unlike Peres, knew when to cut his losses. After the judge ruled that the title litigation for the Vasco be tried in San Francisco, Blum settled the case for $8,500. Blum may have wisely decided that McLaughlin & Company was a much more formidable opponent than Peres could have ever been. Blum undoubtedly lost money on the deal, considering what he paid for the various interests and the cost of decades of litigation. But unlike Peres, he recouped something for his efforts.

Blum died in 1913. Like his rival Peres, he was buried in a Jewish cemetery with an expensive monument paid for by his wife. In his will, Blum left all his property to his "beloved wife Leontine" with "full confidence that she will make ample provision out of the estate bequeathed to her by this will for the welfare and benefit of our said beloved children." His assets at the time of his death were surprisingly small, but, in death as in life, Blum may have been trying to manipulate the system. He might have already deeded his real property to his wife. His assets that went to probate consisted of shares in various companies that were originally valued at only $1,000, but a later accounting valued them at nearly ten times that amount.[75]

OUTLAWS IN THE VASCO: THE LEGEND OF JOAQUIN MURIETA

A severed head preserved in one jar of alcohol; a three-fingered hand displayed in another. Although these seem like grisly details from some grade-B Hollywood horror film, they are unfortunately real incidents in the compelling saga of outlaw hero Joaquin Murieta.

It is "common knowledge" that the notorious bandit and his gang hid out in the Vasco Caves and at Brushy Peak. Murieta was said to have left messages for his men in the pockets of the sandstone walls. The Bordes family, local tenant ranchers and always gracious hosts, is said to have fed Murieta at their ranch. Sylvain Bordes reportedly remembered that when he was a teamster at the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines, Joaquin Murieta came by: "He was hell on Anglos but wouldn't bother the Latinos." Black Hills ranchers harbored Murieta, and Joseph Cardoza is said to have seen him in Petaluma ride "up the street on his beautiful black horse."[76]

What is curious is that most of these incidents occurred between 12 and 30 years *after* Joaquin Murieta was supposedly killed in 1853. Why is it that he was consistently reported in the Vasco well into the late 19th century? To answer this question it is necessary to decode the Joaquin Murieta legend—separating fact from literary fantasy—and also to understand the volatile period in California history that followed the discovery of gold in 1848.

The Romantic Bandit

Although Joaquin Murieta survives to this day as California's most romantic bandit, in fact the man and the legend were largely fabricated by a journalist, John Rollin Ridge. Ridge published a 90-page paperback, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, Celebrated Bandit in San Francisco* in 1854. The book was immediately pirated, serialized, republished in Spain, Mexico, South America, and France, and rewritten numerous times over the next 75 years in the form of dime novels, newspaper series, and "biographies." The legend was brought to the silver screen in 1936 with Warner Baxter as the dashing Joaquin. Although a literary work, the story was definitely molded by the American folk ideal of the outlaw hero. Thus Joaquin followed in the well-trodden footsteps of such illustrious outlaws as Robin Hood, Jesse James, and Railroad Bill.

Ridge's well-known story is as follows. Joaquin Murieta was a Sonoran man of excellent character, "gracefully built and active as a tiger," who came north to California in 1850 during the Gold Rush. Murieta turned outlaw, but was "driven to it by oppression and wrong" after American miners tied him to a tree and whipped him, raped his young wife, and hung his brother. Murieta vowed revenge, and with his gang of desperadoes, including the vicious Three-Fingered Jack, proceeded "to rob and kill at a pace any flesh-and-blood bandit would have been hard pressed to maintain."[77] True to the Robin Hood legacy, however, Murieta also protected the virtue

Joaquin Murieta, the Outlaw Hero. A romanticized version of Murieta, wild-eyed, vengeful, and astride his proud mount. Probably inspired more by the legend than reality, this image was painted by Charles Christian Nahl in the 1860s. *(Reproduced courtesy Greg Martin Collection, Wells Fargo Bank Historical Services.)*

of young women from his lecherous gang members and rewarded humble men who aided and protected him. Ultimately, Joaquin and Three-Fingered Jack were hunted down by Harry Love, who cut off Murieta's head and the hand of his accomplice. These gruesome relics he preserved in alcohol in order to collect the substantial reward.

The legend of Joaquin Murieta is recounted to this day in both the oral tradition and in historical texts. The legend was assured safe passage when the esteemed historian Hubert Howe Bancroft uncritically republished the Joaquin story, with some embellishment, in his *History of California*. Local and regional histories continue to reprint the narrative as fact. The "real" story of Joaquin is, however, rather different.

The Real Joaquin

There was indeed a Joaquin Murieta. In fact there were no less than five "Joaquins."

The 1850s were a period of turmoil as the pastoral economy of pre-Gold Rush California gave way to the industrial worldview of the invading American miners. The Foreign Miner's Tax Law of 1850 was discriminately applied towards Latino and Chinese argonauts, and violence towards Mexicanos (whether native-born Californios or newly arrived Mexicans) was inordinately high. The whipping of Mexican miners was a common occurrence, and Ridge probably borrowed this element of his Murieta saga from an actual anecdote published in the Dame Shirley letters.[78]

Hispanics began to fight back. The Spanish-language press, in particular the hard-hitting *E Clamor Publico* (1855-1859), demanded justice, and bands of outlaws began to terrorize California. Several of the most notorious of these bandidos went by the name of "Joaquin." In 1853 the California Legislature passed an act that authorized a $5,000 reward for the capture, "dead or alive," of the five Joaquins: Joaquin Carrillo, Valenzuela, Ocomorenia, Botellier, and Murieta. It is unclear whether these were separate individuals, pseudonyms for one man, or co-leaders of one large gang. Nevertheless, the money was allotted, and Harry Love was asked to raise a company of up to 20 mounted rangers.

The company chased up and down California for two months. Finally in July, as their three-month contract was about to expire, they chanced upon a group of Mexicans in the region of the Panoche Pass, west of Tulare Lake. It is not known whether Love was even with his group when the encounter occurred. Words were exchanged and then gunfire. Four Mexicans were killed, including the unidentified leader of the group and a man later identified as Manuel Garcia, or "Three-Fingered Jack." The decapitated head of the leader and the hand of Garcia were preserved in alcohol and later put on display in several museums.

There is no reliable evidence to prove that these trophies indeed represented "Joaquin Murieta" or even an outlaw band. On August 23, 1853, the editor of the *San Francisco Alta* suggested that shenanigans were afoot and that the four outlaws killed were actually innocent Californios and Sonorans who had "started for the Tulare Valley for the expressed and avowed purpose of running mustangs." The leader of the party who was killed as he attempted to escape was a Joaquin Valenzuela. The *Alta* article concluded by stating that "'Joaquin' is a fabulous character only, and this is widely known."[79] A year later, however, John Rollin Ridge wrote his book, and the romanticized Murieta was forever fixed in California folklore and history.

Vasco Bandidos

What do we make of the confident first-person sightings of Murieta in the 1860s through the 1880s at Los Vaqueros? Rumors abounded that the real Murieta survived and returned to Mexico. Did he perhaps hide out for years in the Vasco? Probably not. It is more likely that the Joaquin legend had such power that the fictionalized character easily overwhelmed and displaced other flesh-and-blood outlaws.

Bandidos continued to plague California up through the 1870s. Several of these were descendants of early California landowners who had been displaced and humiliated in the land grab of the 1850s and 1860s. These outlaws operated in the San Joaquin Valley and up and down the Coast Range, close enough to the Vasco to presumably pass through on occasion. For example, a Chileno

horse thief, Narrato Ponce, was chased to Livermore and killed in Pinole Canyon; Alejandro Morales drove off 600 sheep from a ranch near San Leandro; and the much feared Indian badman Juan Soto was tracked to his hideout in the Panoche mountains after killing a clerk in Suñol.

But the outlaw who most resembled the legendary Joaquin Murieta was the infamous Tiburcio Vasquez. The Monterey-born Vasquez worked as a professional gambler at New Almaden in 1863—just three years before Sylvain Bordes arrived at the mines. Vasquez had quite a reputation with the ladies. In one story he was tracked to Livermore after he absconded with the daughter of a Mount Diablo rancher. He and his gang held up stores, inns, and horsemen from San Jose south to Gilroy, and Vasquez openly socialized with the miners at New Indria, who protected his every move. What was undoubtedly planned as another routine robbery became instead "The Tres Pinos Tragedy," when several bystanders were shot and killed, and the bandit was at last hunted down and captured. In 1875 when Vasquez was to be hanged in San Jose, the sheriff sent out engraved invitations that included the message, "Not Transferable."

In light of all of this activity it seems probable that the Vasco Caves and Brushy Peak area did serve as a temporary hideout for any number of outlaws on the lam. The outcrops, not far from passes linking the coast with the Central Valley, offered a maze of shelters and caves for protection. And it well may be that it is Tuburcio Vasquez rather than Murieta who is memorialized in Vasco community history.[80]

LOS VAQUEROS, THE COWBOYS

Popular images of the Wild West are dominated with the rustic romance of cowboy life, usually featuring shoot-outs between gun-toting villains and brave lawmen. But the real cowboys were the men who managed the herds at places like Los Vaqueros; their lives were undoubtedly more pedestrian than those of their mythical counterparts. Cowboys were a product of the open range, and their job was rooted in practicality. With cattle roaming freely across the landscape, it took highly skilled horsemen to round them up, brand them, and distribute them to their rightful owners.

As American as the symbol has become, the gear, lingo, and customs of the American cowboy were actually derived from the Mexican *vaqueros* of the early 19th century. The term "cowboy" itself was not used to describe ranch hands until after the Civil War. Even after range land throughout the West was fenced, the idea and reputation of the "cowboy" persisted, growing perhaps as much in myth as in reality. Cowboy skills were inevitably commercialized in the Rodeo and Wild West shows of the late 19th century, culminating in their total exploitation by the film industry.

But Los Vaqueros has always been a place for real cowboys. During the mission years, the land was called "Cowboys' Spring" because it was a staging ground for round-ups of Mission San Jose cattle. Mexican and Indian vaqueros converged on the valley to gather the roaming cattle and harvest the herds for the Mission's needs. Then, for almost 20 years after the land was officially granted to private citizens, it was open range on which vaqueros tended herds. The Suñols and the Bascos ran great herds of cattle at Los Vaqueros in the 1850s and 1860s. The Bascos were well versed in vaquero skills and culture, having been trained by none other than the famous gauchos of Argentina. But long after the ranch was fenced and the ranchers took their herds away—even after the grant lands were divided into family farms—the ethos of the "cowboy" persisted at Los Vaqueros. Indeed, the documentary and oral history of Los Vaqueros is rife with cowboy imagery, from the earliest days of the open range to the tenant ranches of the 20th century.

"I Asked for a Rodero"

Modern rodeos display the astounding skills of cowboys and entertain crowds of vicarious thrill-seekers, but they were originally very practical matters. The word itself is derived from the Spanish *rodear*, "to surround," and the function of early rodeos was to round up cattle that grazed the open range.

> [R]iders gathered at a central point, often from great distances. Each large ranch sent a team of riders. Ranchers had to hire extra riders, paid by the day, to work alongside the year-round hands. Once rounded up, cattle had to be sorted by owner for branding and earmarks. . . . Bulls had to be castrated and often dehorned.[81]

According to "An Act to Regulate Rodeos" effective June 1, 1851, stockraisers were required to give a general rodeo at least once a year. In Alameda and Contra Costa counties, this was from March 1 to August 31. The law required four days' notice be given to adjoining property owners and that the cattle be branded within eight days of the rodeo; no branding could occur other than in the prescribed period.

The Bascos participated with their neighbors in the 1857 rodeo. According to George Swain, who lived on the neighboring Marsh Ranch from 1857 to 1859,

> I have [been to rodeo], they were held on three different places on the Marsh ranch, and three also on the Poso de los Vaqueros; at the general rodeo there was present O'Brien, a man by the name of Brown, all of the Bascos, as they call them, some of Bernal's, some of Livermore's, Ygnacio Sibrian, Pacheco, some of Train and McMullen's men, Golden and Leons; there were a great many more there, but I can't recollect them all.[82]

The cattle were taken back to their home ranch from the general rodeo and branded.

Three of the early stockraisers at Los Vaqueros filed distinctive brands with county officials in the 1850s. Juan Suñol filed his brand for cattle and horses, consisting of "JS" and an ear mark of *me-*

Cowboys at Spanish Ranch. These cowboys were employed by the Altubes at Spanish Ranch in Nevada, but are probably not too different from their progenitors at Los Vaqueros. The man standing in the center was known as "Shorty Johnson": he was reportedly 7 feet tall. *(Photograph donated to the Basque Studies Program, University of Nevada, Reno, by Alba Altube; reproduced courtesy Edna Patterson.)*

dia plumas (half feathers?) in June 1854. Two of the Bascos—Juan Bautista Arambide and Charles Garat—filed their brand three years later. It included a cropped ear and a "piece of skin split on the nose." Simon Blum, a rival claimant and enemy of both the Bascos and Suñols, filed his brand, which included a pen (?) in the right ear and a fish hook in the left ear, in February 1859.

When Louis Peres fenced the grant in the early 1860s there was no longer any need for a general rodeo since the neighbor's cattle could not get onto the property. It apparently took some time for word to get around, however:

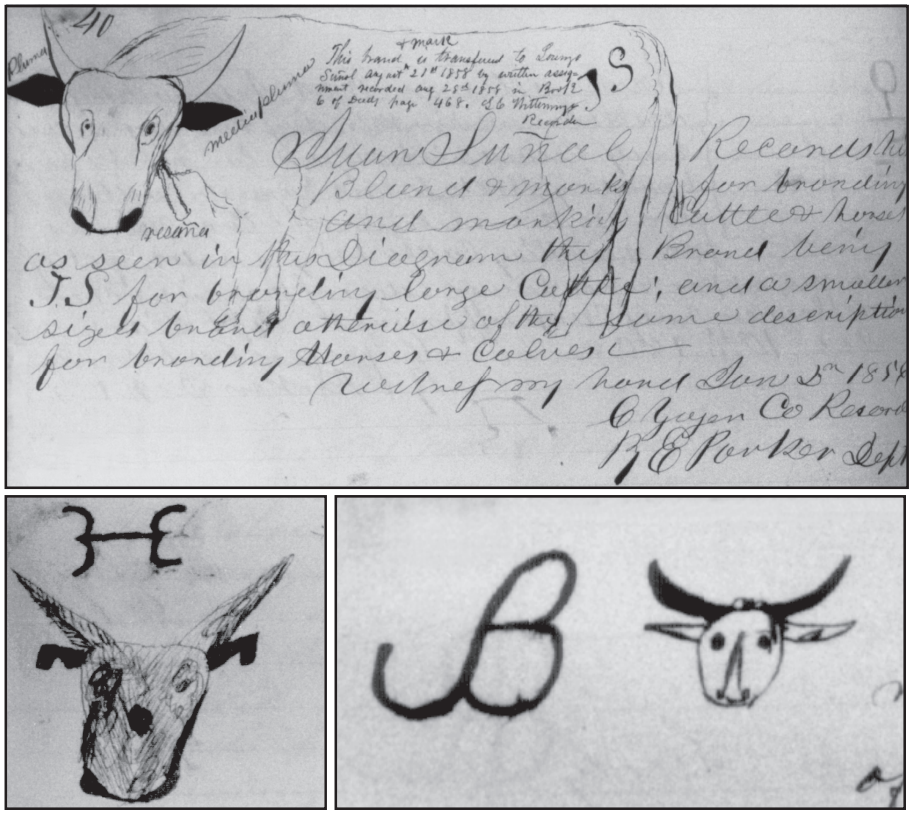
> At the place were these Baseos, who have bought now, I have never been at their rodero [sic]; I went there three or four years ago [1863/1864] when they were fencing, I went to the Rancho of los Baseas, and I asked for a rodero [sic], the Baseas were not there. I slept at the house with the vaqueros I had with me.[83]

Risks and Dangers

Cowboying was not for the faint of heart. Daily, the men had to face the hazards of negotiating the hillsides on horseback. One spring day, Louis Peres was accompanying his foreman, Sylvain Bordes, on an expedition in search of stray horses, when

> they came to a big ravine and went to cross it, but Paris [Peres] let Sylvain go first and when he was going up the other side his saddle turned and it came loose and he could not save himself. The horse hit him with one foot in the breast and with one right on the nose and struck him on the back of one hand and peeled the flesh off. He looked bad today and said he felt sick. He said Mr. Paris was scared almost to death and ran over to him and caught hold of him and was white as death. The horse ran off with the saddle hanging under his belly.[84]

The dangers inherent in chasing cows and wrestling them to the ground were not the only risks the cowboys at Los Vaqueros encountered. Tensions between rival land claimants at Los Vaqueros were often expressed in violence or intimidation in the realm of ranching. Grazing rights became an issue between the Suñols and the Bascos as their herds burgeoned, overtaxing the limited grassland resource. In the spring of 1858, Suñol found that someone had cut the hair from the tails and manes of 20 horses he had grazing on the property. He went to



Brands Registered by Los Vaqueros Ranchers. The position of Juan Suñol's "JS" brand *(top)* on the cow is graphically illustrated in the County Brand book. Arambide and Garat selected connected "E"s, or perhaps "3"s *(bottom left)*, and Blum registered a simple "B" *(bottom right)*. *(Reproduced from Contra Costa Brand Book, Volume 1, pp. 40, 57, 84, courtesy County Recorders Office.)*

the Bascos' adobe, where he found Carlos Garat skewering a beef. Garat asked Suñol when he was going to get his stock off the Bascos' land; Suñol, in turn, demanded why Garat had harmed the horses. "Many hard words passed between them," and Garat "in a threatening manner drew his knife" and said that "what had happened was *boneto* or very bitter but what will happen will be worse."[85]

Ranchers and Farmers

Cowboying did not die on the Vasco when the big-time ranchers departed with their huge herds of cattle. Once Peres and later McLaughlin made the transition to tenant farms and ranches, land use in the Vasco became diversified. The early ranching/vaquero culture, however, survived as an "ethos" of cowboying, and many local residents and former tenants of the Vasco became adept rodeo riders. The families who worked the land at Los Vaqueros were always farmers who ranched and ranchers who farmed. Vasco farmers who also ran cattle and/or horses referred to themselves as "cowboys."

Skill and courage with horses was greatly respected amongst the Vasco tenants, even if the "cowboy" was a girl. Fred Mourterot described one of his neighbors:[86]

> Well, Bertie [Bordes] was a cowgirl and boy she was a good one. . . . She'd break her own horse. I've seen her get bucked off three times off one horse. Get back everytime.

Would-be cowboys were the objects of scorn. Paul Fragulia remembers "city slickers" coming to the ranch and dressing up like cowboys: "They couldn't even sit on a horse. They didn't know how to get on a horse."

The real Vasco cowboys rode round-ups, castrated bulls, and showed off their riding skills. Fred Mourterot described a round-up:

> Well, just about this time of year [January] they'd get the cattle in and brand 'em and castrate them and have a big feed. They used to call it "mountain oysters." The side-hill salmon. And if you ever ate anything as delicious. . . that is delicious! They'd fry them in butter and garlic and boy, it's the nicest dish you ever ate.

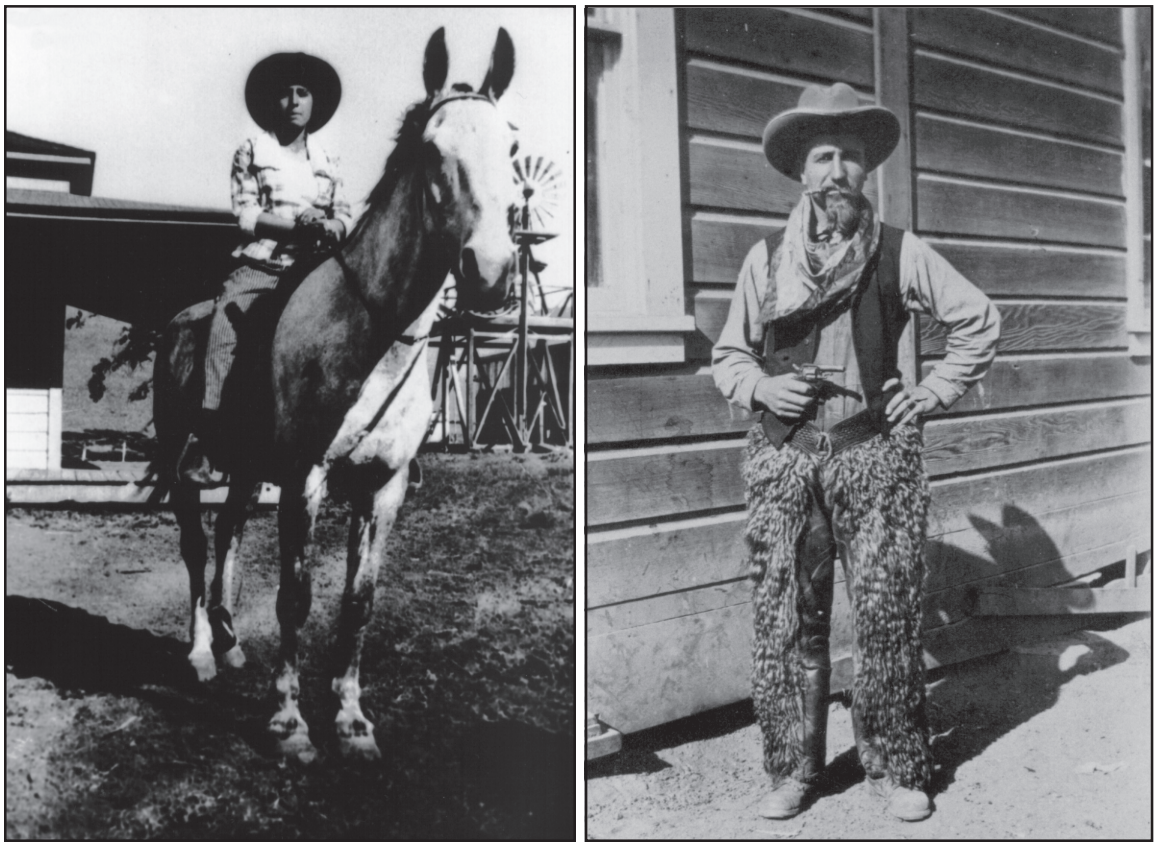
Rodeos weren't an official part of the proceedings, but the opportunity to impress friends and neighbors was irresistible, and, as Fred Mourterot recalled, "sometimes guys would want to ride a steer or something."

Another big part of cowboying was breaking the horses. There were apparently two schools of thought on this, the rougher method being used by the old-timers. Paul Fragulia described how it was done:

> They used to get on them and let them buck and I wouldn't let them buck. I'd raise them as a colt, coming up a colt, always pet them and stay with them you know. Once in a while, they get gentle, then I'd take a couple of sand bags and fill them up a little bit and put them over the horse and walk him around and if he didn't buck, then I'd get on him.

He explained why his way was better:

> When you get on them like that they buck, then all them horses was *mean* horses. And no matter how old they got, when you put that saddle on them, you'd get on 'em and you'd better hang on to that horn for a few minutes.



Twentieth-Century Cowpersons. Bertie Bordes *(left)* was a local hero of cowgirl lore; Paul Fragulia *(right)* dressed the part and posed with his Colt-45. *(Bertie Bordes courtesy of Sylvain Rooney; Paul Fragulia courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

A Man and His Dogs

Los Vaqueros, which began as the stomping ground of the true progenitors of the American cowboy, retained its cowboy association throughout all of its demographic and economic changes. Riding the range and working the cattle at Los Vaqueros began as a necessity of managing herds on the open range, but over the years it acquired a romantic mystique and became a symbol of belonging to the rural community that was the Vasco.

During excavations of the Vasco Adobe in 1994, daily encounters with the property's current leaseholder, a cattle rancher, reminded the Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists of the Vasco's cowboy soul. Mr. Silva had traded his horse for a gasoline-powered four-wheeler, which he ran full-out across the valley floor and up into the hills. Hanging off the sides of the small vehicle were always his two ranch dogs, and on his head was his straw cowboy hat. When the serious business of moving bulls to fresh pasture arose, though, Mr. Silva relinquished his speedmobile for the more responsive horse. Cresting the hill above the site, with the bulls in front of him and the sun behind him, Mr. Silva almost looked like a Wild West cowboy, and it was easy to imagine the Vasco as the cattle frontier it once was.

CHAPTER 3
PARCELING THE LAND: FAMILY FARMS ON PUBLIC LANDS AND TENANTED LEASEHOLDS, 1870-1935

By the last quarter of the 19th century, as the great cattle herds departed and family farmers began to take their place, land use at Los Vaqueros changed dramatically. Beginning in the 1870s, Louis Peres started to divide the rancho into tenant farms. After he mortgaged his interest to railroad baron Charles McLaughlin in 1881, the trend continued, and parts of the grant were rented out to small- and medium-scale agriculturalists, who shifted between grain cultivation and livestock ranching. At the same time, public land surrounding the grant began to be settled by homesteaders, and where before the Los Vaqueros watershed was one vast cattle frontier, different areas with distinct communal identities were beginning to emerge.

The valley and low hills of the original rancho retained the name the "Vasco" and sheltered a community of tenant farmers, many of whom were recent immigrants from Europe. Distinct from the Vasco was the area known as the "Black Hills," which rises above the rolling prairie of the Los Vaqueros grant and was so named because it is covered with dense shrubs and trees that make it appear black from a distance. Historically, the Vasco developed from the Mexican land grant, while the Black Hills were public lands settled by homesteaders. Although there was some congress between the residents of the hills and the valley, each locale developed differently over time, conferring on each a strong sense of place that was the result of the blending of its own unique social, cultural, and geographic landscapes.

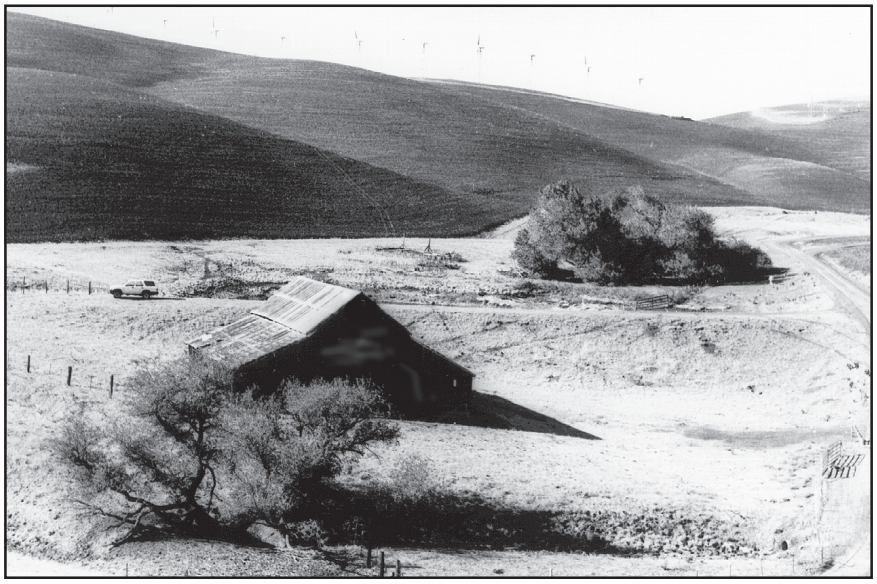
As distinct as these locales were, they contributed equally to the collective identity of the Los Vaqueros watershed: a place that has, remarkably, maintained its rural, parochial character despite population and market pressures from the nearby mega-economy of the San Francisco Bay Area. The tenant farms of the Vasco and the homesteads of the Black Hills are indeed the heart and soul of Los Vaqueros's unique character.

GRAIN FARMING AND HOMESTEADING

The reasons that Los Vaqueros shifted from large-scale ranching to small-scale farming, and in the process became more community-oriented, are complex. The growing economic viability of farming versus ranching in California was certainly an important factor: As a cattle operation, the land grant—despite its vast acreage—could support only one or two ranching enterprises. Under cereal cultivation, a few hundred acres could support a viable operation. Also, public-land policies, with their acreage limitations, assured that landholdings adjoining the historic Los Vaqueros land grant were small-scale. Within the grant itself, the financial realities faced by Peres catalyzed subdivision into small leaseholds, a trend that continued after Peres lost title to the land.

"One Waving Field of Grain"

With the livestock industry in decline in California after the demographic changes engendered by the Gold Rush and the natural disasters of the 1860s, farming began to come into its own. Cereal cultivation dominated the first wave of large-scale farming in California. Grains and hay required minimal initial capital outlay, no irrigation, and relatively little labor. These were important considerations, particularly for settlers cultivating land that might be taken away from them on account of an earlier claimant. Much of California proved well-suited to cereal cultivation: the soil was fertile and easy to plow, and the dry summers ensured a hardy, healthy crop. Contra Costa County reportedly received its first cereal crop in 1837 from John Marsh on the Rancho los Meganos to the north of Los Vaqueros. By 1882 the county was described as having "its every arable space one waving field of grain."[1]



Remains of a Vasco Farm. Headquarters of tenant farms were often nestled in protected valleys off to the side of the windswept Kellogg Creek Valley. The complexes always included a house, a well, and a hay barn (like this example at the Jason Place, probably built in the 1890s), in addition to various outbuildings that might include a granary, sheds, cold-storage cellars, a privy (that is, an outhouse), or a blacksmith shop.

Wheat took the lead, and by the 1870s the wheat industry in California was positively booming, mostly on account of a profitable trade relationship between San Francisco and Liverpool, England. Barley also proved profitable in California soils as it grew under the same conditions as wheat, but was less susceptible to damaging infestations. It had an added advantage of reseeding itself for a second and even a third crop.

Settling of Public Lands

Concurrent with the emerging viability of low-capital agriculture in California, lands that could be farmed were opening up to new settlers. Under the law of preemption, settlers could legally occupy up to 160 acres of government land, which they could later purchase for just $1.25

per acre (roughly equivalent at the time to an average day's wage). Even better, the Homestead Act of 1862 allowed settlers to take up 160 acres of public land, which, after five years' residence and cultivation, would be deeded to them free of charge. Although some choice properties could be found on public land, much of the available land was steep, unwatered, or otherwise undesirable. Unlike land grants, which were carved out to encompass the most advantageous features of the landscape, public land was subdivided on the rectangular system—regular-shaped sections of 640 acres, quarter-sections, and quarter-quarter sections. The system sometimes resulted in valley land that was cut off from its water source, or useful land isolated from all reasonable access.

While the 160-acre maximum was ample for a family farm in the well-watered Midwest and East, much more was needed in California and other areas of the arid West, especially in the early years when cattle and sheep raising were the primary viable forms of agricultural production. Even dry farming, which had become a major enterprise by the time the General Land Office surveys opened up public land, required more than 160 acres, particularly given the rough and rugged lands available. There were legal methods to acquire larger holdings: contiguous quarter sections could be obtained, one through Cash Entry and one through the Homestead Act, but the resulting 320 acres was still minimal. As all adult members of a family could legally file a claim through either process, many families amassed larger holdings through such cooperative efforts. There was also a well-used illegal method: getting others to act as entrymen. After acquiring the property through Cash Entry, the entryman transferred ownership either for profit or as a favor to the new landholder. While such dealings were technically illegal, many people—including government officials—considered them to be largely justifiable responses to the government's failure to develop an appropriate land-distribution policy.[2]

LOS VAQUEROS PARCELED

Survey of the land-grant boundaries determined that the grantees of Los Vaqueros—like many Mexican land-grant claimants—had vastly overrated the extent of their lands. Although the rancho was initially described as being bounded by the four nearest land grants, when its recorded extent was measured outward from the center of the valley, the property was left floating as an island surrounded by unclaimed lands. More than 5,000 acres within the Los Vaqueros watershed are outside the land-grant boundaries. While litigation continued over land-grant ownership, the properties surrounding the grant had finally been opened up to settlement with the completion of the General Land Office surveys between 1862 and 1874. But nearly half the land in this area—most of the odd-numbered sections—was deeded to Charles McLaughlin in 1870, as part of the 100,000-plus-acre compensation he received for his interest in the Southern Pacific Railroad.[3] The remaining acreage, however, was subject to settlement through Cash Entry or Homesteading; through these means, the average citizen could at last share the largesse of the West.

The public land created after the General Land Office survey of the Los Vaqueros watershed was readily spoken for in the 1870s. The claims in this area fell into two general categories: land filed for by actual settlers, either through the Preemption or Homestead acts; and properties acquired through Cash Entry primarily by entrymen acting for another individual.

Some of the earliest public-land transactions at Los Vaqueros involved the gentle and well-watered lands at the northern end of Kellogg Creek Valley, in land remaining after the boundaries

of Los Vaqueros and Los Meganos had been defined. Three parcels in this group were acquired by settlers between 1870 and 1875. They share two characteristics: all were obtained through purchase, rather than homesteading (perhaps seen as the more secure means of acquiring valuable bottomland); and they were purchased by the few non-Southern European families in the Los Vaqueros watershed (the Eversons, Andrews, and Eastons). Another parcel of land just north of Los Vaqueros is an exception to this pattern: Jacob and Henrietta Grueninger homesteaded 80 acres of "rough broken land" in 1883, long after more attractive parcels had been claimed.

A distinctive group settled public lands in the rugged Black Hills to the west. While one of these properties was purchased from the government, the other initial claims were Homestead entries—two for only 80 acres of land. All the properties were acquired by Californios or Mexicans who claimed U.S. citizenship "under the treaty with Mexico." At least one of the homesteaders, Romualdo Valenzuela, was a second-generation Californian; he was one of the earliest settlers, having settled his claim in 1869. The other homesteaders (José Whitfield, Urbano Feliz, and Tomas Robles) were living in the Black Hills by 1875.

The lands of the original rancho were also being parceled through leaseholds during the 1870s, when Peres and Altube owned nearly the entire 17,752-acre rancho. Landholdings on this scale incurred heavy taxes and other costs, such as legal defense against rival claims. Many landowners leased parcels to tenant farmers to help offset these costs. By 1880 Peres had six tenants farming on the old rancho—Sylvain Bordes, Frank Viala (at the old Suñol place), Johnson Righter, Fred Dickhoff, Louis Cumming, and Albert Weymouth.

Farming Los Vaqueros

With the departure of the Bascos and their herds to Nevada, the landscape at Los Vaqueros by 1880 was dominated by cereal cultivation—most of it in wheat. By 1880 even Peres no longer emphasized stock cattle on the Vasco, shifting instead to grain. The 1880 agricultural census shows that he held for his own use 600 improved acres from which his workers harvested 1,200 tons of hay and 7,000 bushels of wheat; his farm also produced 300 pounds of butter and he gathered 300 dozen eggs in that year. Although not listed on the agricultural census as "on hand," portions of the grant were used to graze sheep on a seasonal basis.

Peres's tenants put the land to similar use. Two of these men, Sylvain Bordes and Frank Viala, worked for Peres, probably managing his acreage in his absence. The other tenants were successful independent operators who had most of their acreage in grain and paid Peres with a portion of each year's crop. Two of the landowners at the north end of the valley—Easton and Andrews—were also growing wheat and hay, but their small acreage (160 acres of public land each) made for meager returns. Land use in the Black Hills was more subsistence based. All of the farmers there described a mixed use of their lands in their Homestead Proofs, with relatively extensive vineyards and orchards reported. But even in the Black Hills, most of the farmers also had some of their acreage planted in grain, according to tax assessment records.

The Vasco Changes Hands

Despite leasing parcels to defray the costs of land ownership, Peres began to lose his footing at Los Vaqueros, as he was beset by the legal problems detailed in the preceding chapter. With a

$70,000 mortgage due, Peres was in desperate straits when he approached Charles McLaughlin for a loan. In May 1881 Peres deeded the grant and 880 adjoining acres to McLaughlin.

From May 1881 until well into the 20th century, the Los Vaqueros grant and much of the land surrounding it was owned by Charles McLaughlin or his heirs. McLaughlin's acquisition of Los Vaqueros in 1881 added to his already enormous land empire, which included railroad lands unavailable to the settler. He continued Peres's lease agreements with tenants, probably for the same reason Peres had established them, but perhaps also in anticipation of rising land values.

There is no knowing how Charles McLaughlin might have disposed of the land; he was shot and killed by a former business associate in 1883, just two years after acquiring Los Vaqueros from Peres. Kate McLaughlin outlived her husband by five years and left the large estate to her niece, Kate Dillon, and Mary Crocker. Kate Dillon later married into the Winship family, and the heirs' holdings became known as the Crocker-Winship Estate. Oral history of the area, however, primarily associates the Los Vaqueros grant with Mary Crocker.

A PATTERN OF PERSISTENCE

By the time Charles McLaughlin died, the Vasco and the Black Hills were well established as communities of farming families, each with its own identity. That the Los Vaqueros land grant and the public lands surrounding it had been settled as small-scale farms and ranches was not at all remarkable—the same thing was happening all over California in the 1870s. What *is* remarkable is how long the small farmers maintained their hold on the land at Los Vaqueros. Well into the 20th century, the Los Vaqueros watershed was home to small- and medium-scale mixed farmers when much of the rest of the state had turned to intensive forms of agriculture or consolidated smaller holdings into vast tracts of land controlled by agribusiness. Despite the example set by neighboring farmland that was developed into intensively cultivated vineyards and orchards, as well as the constant urging of the editors of the *Byron Times*, the agricultural potential of the Vasco remained largely unrealized.[4] The land was never irrigated on a large scale, land use was conservative, and dry-land mixed agriculture prevailed.

Several factors—physical and social—contributed to this trend. Certainly, the rugged Black Hills area was never well suited to intensive or mechanized agriculture, and even the tamer hills surrounding the Kellogg Creek Valley were difficult to negotiate with gasoline-powered tractors. In fact, farmers at Los Vaqueros continued to rely on animal power well into the 20th century. Then there were the legal encumbrances on the lands of McLaughlin, which prevented subdivision or sale of the original rancho for decades, thereby fostering continued tenancy and conservative land use.

The Vasco Tenants

Following McLaughlin's death at the end of 1883, his estate and his heirs built additional tenant ranches, each with a house and barn. The McLaughlin estate made some improvements to keep tenants on the grant; in 1885 they petitioned the county to form the Vasco Grant School District and built a schoolhouse for the tenants.[5] But the tenants themselves shaped the social identity of the Vasco, and even left their mark on the land. Each tenant built an enclosure around his leasehold and made other improvements.

In particular, it was recent immigrants who were attracted to the economic opportunities of farming and ranching that tenancy offered at Los Vaqueros. By the turn of the century, families from the Azores, Italy, Ireland, and Germany had joined Anglo American and Mexican American farmers at Los Vaqueros. Ethnicity probably contributed to the pattern of long-term tenancy at Los Vaqueros. Some of the families continued their lease agreements on the property for more than 50 years, passing them from parent to son along with livestock and personal property. Other leases were sold, usually to members of the same ethnic group.

Vasco School Class Picture. Children of Los Vaqueros farmers attended their own one-room schoolhouse. This class was photographed around 1904. *(Courtesy Brentwood Museum.)*

Ethnicity alone cannot explain the tenacity of the land-lease system at Los Vaqueros. Tenant stability on the Vasco may be partially attributable to successful management. The McLaughlin and later Crocker-Winship interests were managed by Captain Lewis Lamberton from 1881 until his retirement in 1912. When Lamberton died at age 99 in 1923, he was fondly remembered for his "many deeds of kindness." Although he collected thousands of dollars in rentals, it was said of him "that he never once foreclosed on a tenant, but waited till another year, when sufficient rainfall brought bountiful crops." His keen judgment of human nature and his confidence were reportedly seldom betrayed.[6] Tenants on the Vasco seem to have been relatively satisfied with their arrangements, which may account for the long tenure of many families. Albert Weymouth testified in court that "I had heard a good deal," when McLaughlin came to renegotiate his 300-acre lease and offered the same terms as Peres. The Fragulia family reportedly paid for the lease of only 600 acres while being allowed to use 1,000; the Bordes family likewise were not charged for use of hundreds of acres of land that the owners felt had no value.[7]

LIFE AT LOS VAQUEROS, INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

Most of the farmers at Los Vaqueros practiced mixed agriculture. Los Vaqueros agriculturalists combined the running of sheep, cattle, and horses with the raising of hay and grain for sale.

They referred to themselves as cowboys, rounded up and branded cattle, enjoyed barbecues of "Hangtown oysters," and attended rodeos and picnics at neighboring ranches. A Vasco cowboy might also be a superlative teamster—the lines between farming and ranching on the grant were blurred and shifting.

As with other 19th- and early 20th-century rural communities, these households were as self-sufficient as possible, buying only flour, sugar, coffee, and other staples in town. The adobe soil made gardening a challenge, however, and many women had to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to can and store. Most ranches included a smokehouse; many had a blacksmith shop.[8]

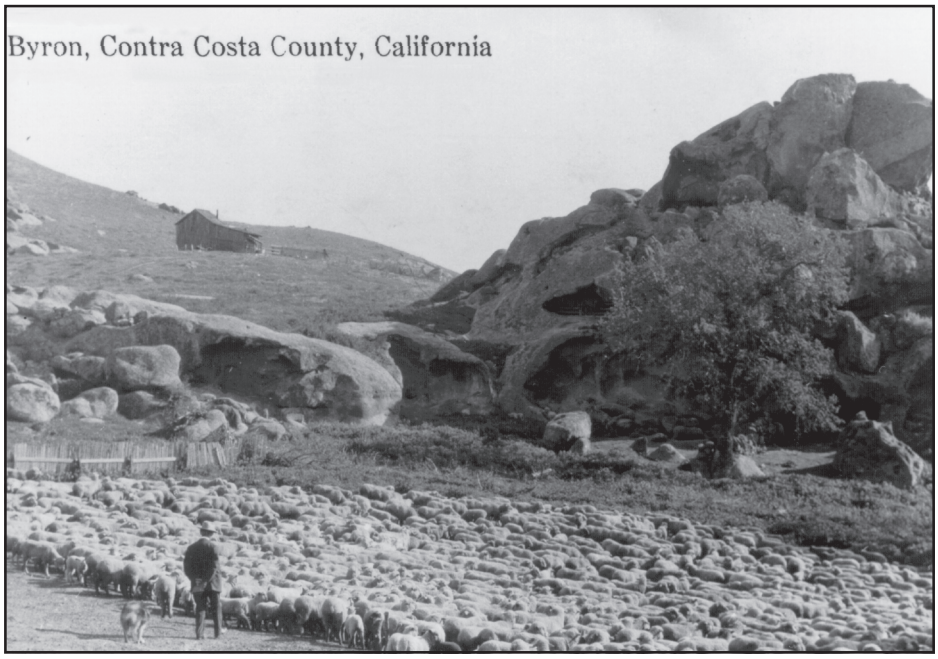
Los Vaqueros reached its maximum population around 1900, with at least 17 households. The 1903-1905 autograph book of Emelia Grueninger contains inscriptions by 22 girls who attended Vasco Grant School at that time. The school photo for 1904 shows 21 children from eight families. Some ranches were occupied at that time by families whose children had already completed their education, or by families who lived there on a seasonal basis. The only long-term family of Mexican descent, the Robles, had children "at school" on the 1900 census; they may have attended school at the Highland District school on Morgan Territory Road, only a few miles northwest of their Black Hills farm.

Back to Grazing

Changes in land use did occur on the Vasco during the 20th century, but they never included a shift to intensive agriculture. As early as 1916, local rumor had it that the holding would be subdivided into residential lots.[9] Nonetheless, it never was subdivided in this way, possibly for "sentimental reasons" as proclaimed by the *Byron Times*, but more probably because the land still had value for other purposes. In addition to the tenant farmers engaged in mixed agriculture, the Vasco was home to another kind of tenant: those who leased the land, primarily for grazing purposes, but who lived in nearby towns. By the beginning of the 20th century, large tracts of land in the rolling foothills of the Vasco were profitably leased as pasturage. During Mary Crocker's tenure, the Vasco was immodestly proclaimed by the *Byron Times* as "one of the most beautiful pastoral spots of the Golden State." Commercial ranchers leased the land to graze their large herds of sheep; by the early 1920s, the Vasco was described as "being devoted more to grazing . . . than to farming."

The sheep industry was well established in the Byron area, which claimed to be a "sheep and wool center." A revitalization of this industry occurred in the late 1920s, when a change in American tastes made lamb an important item on the table. Now wool, not meat, became the by-product of sheep ranching. Around this time, sheep ranchers such as Frank N. Cabral and Manuel J. Pimentel began consolidating tenant ranches on the Vasco to form larger units on which to graze sheep. Plummeting attendance at the Vasco School reflects this trend. Grazing again became the dominant land use.

Tenancy arrangements on the Vasco persisted into the 1930s, after Mary Crocker was killed in a tragic car accident. In October 1929 there were 13 rentals at Los Vaqueros, divided into three categories depending upon the nature of the land use (grazing, agricultural, and agricultural/grazing). Only one of the properties was classified as agricultural while five were let exclusively as grazing land.



Sheep Country at Los Vaqueros. Bands of sheep grazed the rolling hills of Los Vaqueros in the early 20th century. This group has been herded into the Santana sheep camp in the Black Hills. Ranchers have fenced natural caves in the rock outcrops to shelter birthing ewes. *(Courtesy Josephine Souza [née Pimentel].)*

Property in the Black Hills was also reverting to more open land at this time. By the beginning of the 20th century many of the original homesteaders has lost their land—only the Robles family held onto their land after 1900. As they became available, small parcels were bought up and consolidated for stockraising. And so, in both the Black Hills and the Vasco, the stage was set for the transition of Los Vaqueros from dry land to reservoir.

"FARMERS WHO RANCHED, RANCHERS WHO FARMED": AGRICULTURAL WORK IN LOS VAQUEROS

The economic history of California, and for that matter all of the Far West, was characterized by periodic economic spasms—or "boom" cycles—of agricultural productivity. These agricultural booms were initiated as a "supply response" to consumers' fickle preferences, changing dietary habits, and demands that seemed to escalate with improvements in marketing and transportation during the 19th century. A fortune awaited anyone who could solve the problems of distance and drought that were associated with Western ranching and farming.[10] The major agricultural products that "boomed" in California between 1850 and 1940 were livestock, grain, wool, dairy products, and specialty crops, the last of which required extensive irrigation. All of these booms touched the Vasco to some degree, but most of the tenants on the Vasco practiced mixed agriculture; they were "farmers who ranched" and "ranchers who farmed." These diversified enterprises combined running sheep, cattle, and horses with the raising of hay and grain for sale.

Harvesting the Vasco

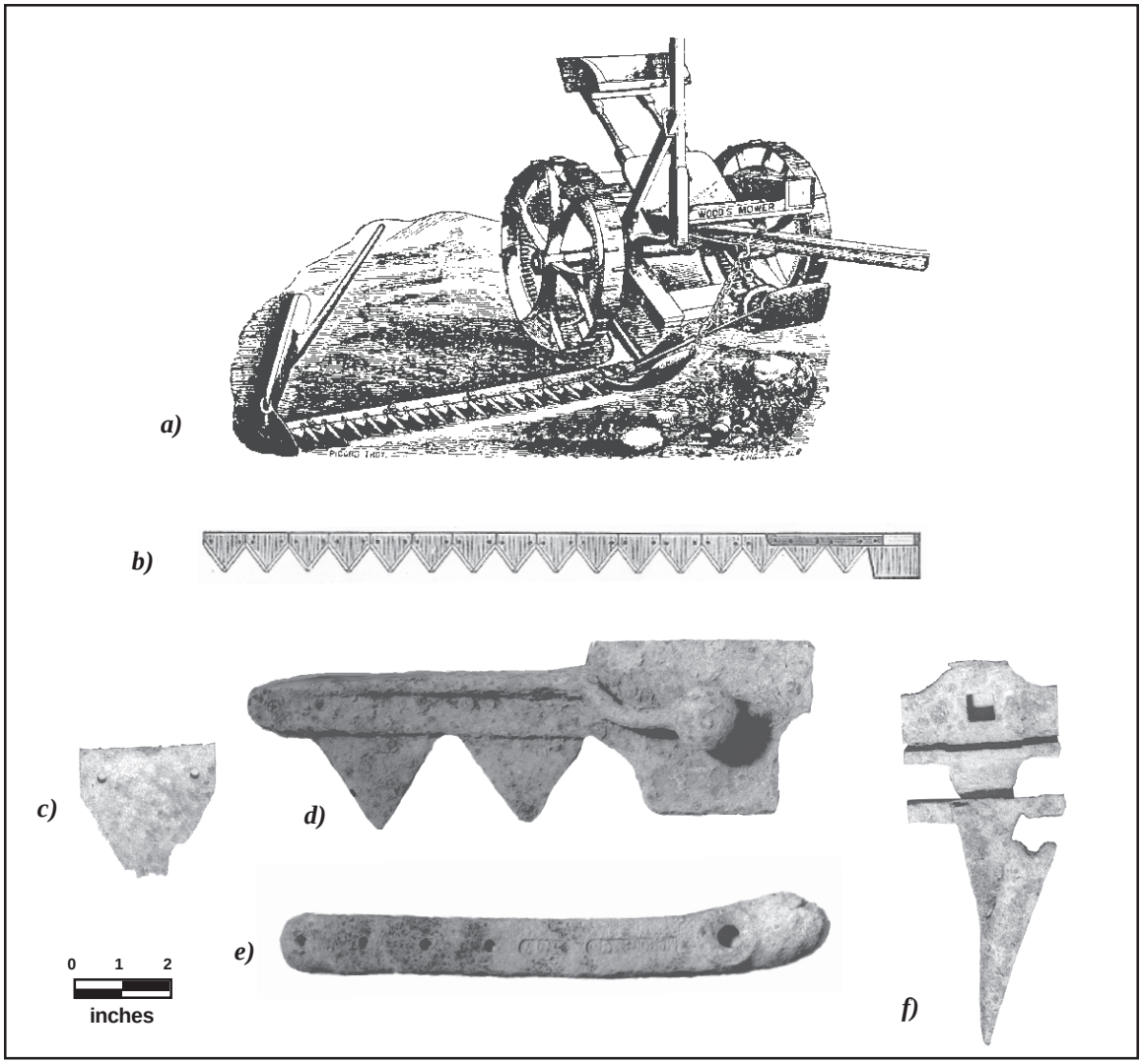
During California's "bonanza wheat years," which began in the 1870s, Vasco farmers grew wheat. They also raised barley, oats, and hay. Shortage of labor continually plagued California's agricultural economy in the 19th century. This led to the development of and dependence upon mechanized farming to maintain the state's position as one of the nation's leading agricultural producers.[11] Mechanization became increasingly sophisticated with larger gang plows, broadcast seeders, mowers, and improved combine harvesters, all of which were used on the Vasco in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But unlike other agricultural regions in the state that eventually turned to motorized farm machinery, farmers on the Vasco continued to use horse-drawn equipment well into the 1940s.

Harvesting the Vasco was a cooperative venture. It was customary for neighbors to pitch in and help each other during this important season of work. Some families, such as the Bordeses, Cabrals, and Grueningers, had their own harvesting machines. Crews were rounded up from the pool of local men that followed the harvesters from farm to farm, wherever there was a crop to harvest. Harvesting crews worked for room and board and a daily wage, around five dollars a day. Most of the ranches had bunkhouses that accommodated six to eight men. The Vasco women were also needed to help during this time by cooking for the crews. Women's work during harvest time was as exhausting as men's since work crews consumed five meals a day!

Vasco-born and raised, Paul Fragulia remembered details of the hay harvest.[12] The harvest season began in May, when the hay was cut. After it was cut, an animal-powered rake—called a "Jackson haybuck"—picked up the hay and bunched it into piles. The big stacks were left in the field where a hay-baling machine, or hay press, would be used to press the harvest into bales. During haying season, the work day began at 3 o'clock in the morning so that the crop could be hauled to town. Unlike the harvest crews who were paid by the day, the hay-press gangs were paid by the ton, receiving 15 to 20 cents each.

Wheat and barley were harvested over the summer months. Grain harvesting could not begin before about 10 a.m. because of the morning dew. A crew consisted of the *teamster* who drove the horses, a *headertender* who made sure the thresher caught the heads of grain, a *separator* man who separated the grain from the chaff, a *jigger* who shook the grain sacks to make them full, and the *sack sewer* who sewed up the grain sacks. Grain was stored in a granary building until it was sold.

Some harvesters used 16 horses, but the giant harvesters needed 32 horses to pull them. The driver of this team was called a "long-line" teamster. The last long-line teamster, who worked for the Bordes family, was Fred Mourterot, who began driving when he was only 17 years old. He was considered to be one of the best in his field during the heyday of horse-powered harvesting on the Vasco. Fred loved the teamster life. "You had the world. Nobody dictated to you," he said. The harvester was on three wheels, and the teamster sat up on the "high



Mechanized Mower Parts. Cyrus McCormick is credited with developing the mowing machine *(a)* in the 1850s. A "knife" *(b)*, fitted with a series of triangular "sections" *(c)*, is attached to a "knife head" *(d)*, which pivots on a "Pitman socket" *(e)*. The knife is mounted on an arm fitted with "guards" *(f)*; the whole apparatus is attached to the side of a horse-drawn or motorized tractor. The grain is forced between the sections and the guards, and as the sections move side-to-side, they cut the grain. *(Mower reproduced from Johnson 1976; knife from Thompson-Diggs Co. 1906; section, knife head, Pitman socket, and guard are from Los Vaqueros archaeological sites.)*

seat." Mr. Mourterot recalled, "You had six horses under and the rest of them are ahead of you. Two in the lead." A good teamster knew how to use a whip effectively. "If you was good with a whip, you could cut a buttonhole in the [horse's] backside. You could really make them come alive."

Early motorized farm machinery that was introduced into the region could only negotiate flat terrain. Evelyn Sod recalled that the first time someone tried using a tractor to harvest grain on the Vasco, it turned over in the soft dirt, sending the thresher up a hill, much to the alarm of nearby onlookers.

"Head 'Em Up, Move 'Em Out!"

The Vasco's long tradition of stockraising spanned nearly a century, and the 20th-century Vasco cowboys were every bit as skillful and rug-

Long-Line Harvester. This sixteen-horse harvester probably used draft horses, which were best suited for pulling the heavy harvesters up and down the steep hills of the Vasco. The Bordes used Belgiums. *(Courtesy Brentwood Museum.)*

ged as their 19th-century counterparts. Ranchers maintained a good stock of working horses—at least 25—for rounding up stock and pulling wagons in the days before adequate roads and motorized vehicles were introduced into the area. On the Vasco, two different philosophies developed on how to properly train horses. "Training," as opposed to "breaking," a horse involved gradually getting the horse used to a saddle, and then a rider, and above all, never allowing the horse to buck. "Breaking" horses, on the other hand, was part of the rough-tough, throw-the-saddle-on-and-ride school of horse management, where the rider was inevitably bucked off the first time. Breaking horses in the old-fashioned way definitely could be a "pain." As Jack Gleese expressed it, "I've ploughed up a lot of land with my body. And it hurts, it really does hurt."

Cattle that grazed the hills were rounded up in the time-honored tradition of cowboys, and herded into corrals, where they would be branded, castrated, and undergo other medical procedures. During the seasonal round of cattle-ranching activities, a cowboy worked for various ranchers, earning about 30 dollars a month, plus room and board. Certain workers were known for skills in specific areas of ranching work. George Davis, for example, was an itinerant harness maker who drove around to all the ranches with his cart full of tools and leather, repairing harnesses, saddles, and other tack equipment. Another worker named Henry Hughes was particularly skillful at making strong and flexible leather lariats, which were a requirement of cattle work.

One of Los Vaqueros's quintessential cowboys was John Gleese, who ranched in and around the Black Hills during the first decades of the 20th century. Gleese was a "true cattleman," identifying himself as a rancher, and "no damned farmer!" Known as the "two hardest riding cowboys in the area," John Gleese and his son Jack trained their own horses, rode on long trail drives together, and managed a successful ranch for many years, running about 300 head of Angus cattle and 300 head of sheep. Jack respected his father's riding skill, stating that "when I went out to ride with him, you had to *ride*. And if an animal broke loose going down . . . one of those big hills, you were expected to do down *full* gallop." His father understood horses and "He'd go straight down those hills, he didn't mind putting a lariat on a bull or steer or cow or anything, going straight down a hill." John Gleese, somewhat of a John Wayne type, was a tall, dashing man with twinkling blue eyes and a terrific sense of humor. It was not surprising that his fiancée, Ethel Hardiman, fell head-over-heels in love with him. An accomplished horsewoman herself, she rode side-saddle because

it was not considered ladylike to straddle a horse in those days. John decided to make a cowgirl of her, and once they were married he announced that this prissy, side-saddle business was ". . . out the window, we ride cowboy!" And they rode astride together into the Vasco sunset from then on.

John Gleese was also an astute rancher who kept up with the latest scientific breakthroughs in stockraising and veterinary care that were part of the world of modern livestock ranching. Veterinarians were often too expensive or simply unavailable, and ranchers had to master a certain amount of medical skill themselves. Gleese's experience was renowned throughout the territory, and many ranchers brought their sick stock to him for treatment.

Vasco ranchers also followed the ecologically beneficial practice of grazing both cattle and sheep on the same range. In contrast to the earlier days, when western cattlemen fought with sheep ranchers over grazing lands, Vasco ranchers logically reasoned that, since the cattle bore no personal animosity toward their fellow-four-hoofers, the sheep, far be it from their human caretakers to squabble with each other. The efficiency of this system went like this: The cattle would start out eating the tall, heavy grass, threshing the seeds as they tromped along, seeding the range for the following season. After the cows had munched their way through the taller grasses, the sheep came along to eat up the stubble, which they relished and fattened on. Careful not to overgraze, ranchers would hurry their livestock along until the entire range was efficiently consumed and reseeded. Hay for local use was also raised on livestock ranches. It was cut and brought into the barns to feed the horses or to supplement cattle or sheep feed during the lean winter months. The economic benefits to ranchers who ran both cattle and sheep was that if beef prices fell, one could make up for it with a wool crop, or by selling lambs in the spring. As Jack Gleese pointed out, ranchers could be assured of an annual income by working both types of livestock.

Sheep Country

Sheep raising was a particularly long-cherished ranching tradition on the Vasco, and it was carried on with great skill by Spanish, Mexican, Basque, Portuguese, and American ranchers over the decades. Many ranchers, like John Gleese and Sylvain Bordes, tended their bands themselves or with members of their families. Sometimes they would hire an itinerant sheepherder to help out on some of the more rocky terrain. Wool buyers would bring wagons to the home ranch, where sheep were sheared. The wool crop was packed into giant wool sacks that required up to four men to lift into the wagon.

Wool Sacks. Josephine Pimentel at age 3 standing in front of a stack of wool sacks ready for the wool buyers. *(Courtesy Josephine Souza [née Pimentel].)*

Some of the Vasco's most successful and well-known sheep ranchers were Portuguese immigrants, mainly from the Azores. Among these were Frank Cabral, Manuel Pimentel, and the Souza family. Members of the Vasco's Portuguese community, along with their neighbors, worked together during the seasonal round of sheep-ranching activities that included gathering, herding, lambing, shearing, dipping, and tagging.

Sheep required a lot of land to roam. Sheep camps and shelters were established in Los Vaqueros that served as gathering spots on the range during the herding seasons. Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists found one small stone shelter along the banks of Kellogg Creek that was probably used for this purpose. A more complex gathering place was the Cabral sheep camp, where Cabral and his associates would stay during the winter. Approximately 10 sheepherders and the sheep dogs occupied the camp, watching over a band of about 1,000-1,500 sheep. A couple of temporary buildings were erected at the camp, but there were no corrals.[13] Mr. Cabral was always on hand to supervise during lambing season, staying up all night with the ewes during difficult deliveries, and bottle-feeding the orphaned lambs. So successful and well-respected was Frank N. Cabral for his sheep business that the *Byron Times Booster Edition* of 1908 noted, "he does an extensive business, and his lambs, wool and other marketable products always bring the highest market prices, adding to the credit of Byron as a sheep and wool center."

Other types of agricultural activities were practiced in the Vasco during the early 20th century on a smaller scale. Vineyards were planted in the hills above the grant, where ranchers made wine for their own consumption or to bootleg during Prohibition. People sold eggs, fresh vegetables, and fruit grown in small orchards to local buyers. Small-scale dairying was also carried out, often by the Vasco women, who milked a few dairy cows, selling the fresh milk to a local creamery. Sometimes the children of the family were responsible for the dairy operation, tasks that required more patience than muscle.

THE BLACK HILLS

The Black Hills is a rugged unforgiving land of sandstone bluffs, outcroppings, oaks, and chaparral that overlooks the southwest corner of the Vasco grant. At the top of the ridge the name changes officially (and in common use) to the "Morgan Territory." The Vasco grant laps up against the eastern edge of the Hills, and from the valley floor the land rises steeply to an elevation of more than 2,000 feet. The physical and social isolation of this country is apparent if one stands at the top and looks back down into the Vasco; the experience is somewhat akin to the view from an eagle's aerie.

Although there was some fraternizing between Black Hills and Vasco ranchers and farmers, for the most part the two areas were distinct. As an example, Vasco rancher Pyron Crosslin seldom ventured into the steep terrain because "the land wasn't worth going into." And at least one 20th-century Black Hills cowboy derisively referred to those "smart flatlanders." It is clear that it took fortitude and hard work to make the land pay. Suitable for large-scale grazing, it was difficult if not impossible to farm small parcels. Stone fences and enclosures divide the land, but rather than having a common source or inspiration, it appears that these structures were built by a variety of former tenants including Native Americans, "Spanish," and later Portuguese-Azoreans.

The area was virtually inaccessible in the winter, except by horseback, and the Morgan Territory Road (formerly called the "Black Hills Road" up to the summit) was not paved until the 1940s. The incline is so steep that when farmers began to purchase automobiles in the 1920s they had to *back* their cars up the Levy Grade, a particularly difficult part of the road, because gravity pulled the gas to the back of the car's tank. The invention of the vacuum tank eradicated the problem, and later residents could navigate the road headed forward.

"Old Spanish" Settlement

Officially, the area began to be settled at the end of the 1860s by mostly Hispanics of Californian and Mexican birth, but the land was probably occupied earlier. Families were both extended and unusually large, and most were related by marriage. Many families were also connected socially to the first Spanish grantees of the Los Vaqueros.

Up through 1900 Henry Burton was one of the few settlers in the immediate area with a northern European surname, although the 1880 census reveals that he too was of Mexican American descent.

The Vasco from the Black Hills. Taken from the hills high above Kellogg Creek Valley, this view from the Black Hills shows how geographically distinct the two areas are.

Although Burton's father was English, both of his mother's parents were born in Mexico. Other families—of a mix of Indian, Spanish, Mexican, French, and Italian descent—settled on small parcels at the foot of the hills.

Some of these early people identified themselves as "Old Spanish," rather than "Mexican." Even as late as 1910, Irish American rancher Jack Gleese felt he needed to learn "Castilian Spanish" because "all around [him] were Spaniards. . . . Almost all of those ranchos that were around the country there were Castilian Spanish, they weren't Mexican. Mexicans were the peons that did the work." Gleese taught himself to speak Spanish with the help of a dictionary and tutoring by a neighbor, Entacia Andrews (née Palomares), who worked as the Gleese's housekeeper.[14]

Many of these early settlers could accurately be labeled "Californio," a term in widespread use from the 1830s to the 1880s meaning "native-born Californian of Spanish-speaking parents."[15] In culture, heritage, and attitude many Black Hills residents—the Valenzuelas as an example—carried on a vaquero lifestyle that had its roots in pre-Gold Rush California.

The public lands of the Black Hills probably in fact served as a refuge of sorts for these families. In the late 1850s California was experiencing a peak of "Hispanophobia." Native-born Hispanics were lumped together with newly arrived miners from Mexico and Latin America and were labeled "interlopers" and "greasers" by territorial Yankees.

Marginalized and segregated into urban "Sonora-towns," Mexicanos were whipped, banished, and hanged, and suffered the humiliation of poverty and disease. The 1860s, although less violent, were equally harsh and included the instability of the American Civil War, Maximilian's invasion of Mexico, and devastating floods in 1861 followed by an "earth-scorching life-killing drought, 1862-3" that claimed a quarter of the state's economy.[16] During this era, Mexican Americans were increasingly dispossessed of their lands. In 1850, for example, 61 percent of Mexican American heads of families owned small parcels of land worth more than $100; by 1860 the figure had dropped dramatically to 29 percent, whereas by 1870 only 21 percent could report that they owned property.[17] These then are the economic and social factors that proceeded the settlement of the Black Hills.

The Valenzuelas

Although squatters, hunters, and outlaws undoubtedly lived in the hills in the 1850s, the first known permanent settler was apparently Romualdo Valenzuela, who claimed possession of a 160-acre parcel in 1869. Valenzuela lived on site with his Mexican-born wife, Dolota (née Castro), and "plenty of children." He purchased the land in March 1874, by which time he had a house, barn, corrals, and well on his property, eight acres in grain, and sheep in the field.

According to the 1870 census, Romualdo (a.k.a. Ramon) was born ca. 1832 in Los Angeles of California-born parents and came to the Vasco area in 1850 at the age of 18. It takes little to imagine why the young vaquero headed north: Los Angeles in the 1850s was far from idyllic for either Hispanics or Indians on account of racial violence, high crime, and nearly annual small pox epidemics. "Valenzuela" was also the surname of three alleged bandits who were killed in Southern California by vigilantes during this volatile period.

In 1874, after receiving title to the 160 acres, the Valenzuelas moved to an adjoining 80 acres. They sold their original parcel to Samuel Levy in 1876. Levy was a Prussian Jew who owned a mercantile store in Livermore. He ultimately built a new house, barn, and bunkhouse immediately off of the Morgan Territory Road at the top of a particularly steep hill that is still called, "the Levy." An article in the 1882 *Livermore Herald* noted that he put in 5,000 grape cuttings in his "mountain ranch."

By 1880 Valenzuela had sunk a well and built a house and a hen house at the new homestead. He planted 25 to 30 acres in wheat, barley, and corn. The family was constantly in debt. The Black Hills is a tough land, usable for grazing if one owns sufficient acreage. But it was harder to make a go on small parcels of 80 or even 160 acres. Upon Romualdo's death in 1892, the property was sold to pay off a variety of debts.

An outstanding account with Shuey and Galloway in Walnut Creek was submitted to the Valenzuela estate during the probate, and the bill

Levy Grade. Ingrained in community memory, this passage of the road leading up into the Black Hills was notoriously difficult to negotiate before it was paved.

sheds light on household spending practices and foodways. As with most ranching families, the Valenzuelas bought mostly in bulk: flour, beans, peas, corn, etc., and sold chickens and eggs for credit. A dollar's worth of chocolate, purchased in late November 1891, was the only "luxury" item. Also of interest is the fact that the family was trading in Walnut Creek, which entailed a trip up and over the Morgan Territory Road, impassable in winter. Perhaps the beleaguered family had used up their credit at the more accessible stores in Livermore.

Samuel Levy purchased the property in 1895. One of the Valenzuelas' sons, Marcus, claimed a possession nearby in 1874. How he used the land or what became of this claim is unclear. Marcus, however, has left a clear trail in local records. The Contra Costa County *Great Registers* for the 1860s through the 1890s describe him as 6 feet, 2-1/2 inches tall. He officially married a neighbor, Ramona Goodfield, in 1894.

Another of the Valenzuelas' sons, Fermin, was a real "cowboy's cowboy." He worked for local Vasco and Black Hills ranchers as a teamster for harvesting crews. As Fred Mourterot recalled, "He could handle a whip and a team of horses, I tell you, the best I ever seen."

Tomas Robles

Another early rancher in the Black Hills was Tomaseno Robles, who filed Homestead entries in 1875 and 1879. Robles testified that he settled his land in the summer of 1874 and built a small house and a stable. He enclosed 1-1/2 acres with a board fence, planted 2 acres in vineyards, and put in several fruit and shade trees. He also reported that he had cultivated 30 acres in grain and hay.

By piecing together information from a variety of primary source materials, including tax assessments and the memories of his youngest daughter, Juanita Hargraves (née Robles), we are able to construct a reasonably accurate biography of the Black Hills pioneer.

Robles was a Yaqui Indian from Sonora, Mexico, who came to California as a child during the Gold Rush of 1849. He accompanied his mother, Manuela, and a sibling who is variously described as a brother or a sister. The Robles were part of a "wave" of emigrants who poured in from both northern Mexico and Latin America, many to the San Joaquin River tributaries and the "southern mines." At precisely what point the Robles came to the Livermore area is uncertain. Juanita Robles Hargraves remembers that her father:

> . . . didn't look like an Indian. He had greyish eyes, white hair and he was a little bit of a man. He had a fairly good personality because he laughed a lot. That's all I could remember about him. He laughed a lot and he drank a lot.[18]

In March 1875, Robles also script-purchased a 160-acre parcel in the Black Hills that he claimed to have located in November 1871. Personal property as enumerated in the Tax Assessment Records for 1872 included 10 Spanish horses, 1 Spanish cow, and 700 sheep. The band of sheep grew to 900 by 1877, when he also had 75 acres under cultivation: 60 in wheat and 15 in barley.

Robles married three times and was considered quite a "Don Juan." His third wife, Elisa Palomares, was a 13-year-old orphan when Tomas married her ca. 1891. Her father, Miguel Garcia de Palomares, was born in Mexico and her mother, Virginia Miranda, was California-born and was either the daughter or granddaughter of one of the first grantees of the Vasco grant, Manuel Miranda. Mrs. Palomares apparently spoke impeccable "Castilian" Spanish.

Elisa Palomares's parents owned 160 acres in the Black Hills and had $40 worth of horses by 1872. The couple raised four daughters, Entacia, Madrona, Tita, and Elisa. By 1886 Virginia

Palomares was dead, so that Miguel, on his deathbed, entrusted the guardianship of his four minor children to his brother-in-law Francisco (Frank) Miranda. The agreement was that Frank would receive any rents or profits from the Palomares holdings, and upon their "majority" each daughter would receive one-fifth of the property. Both Miranda and Palomares signed with their marks, as neither could read or write. The document was witnessed by Valentine Alviso, husband to Josefa Livermore and relative of one of Los Vaqueros's original grantees. The close ties within the Spanish-Mexican community are further suggested when we note that the mother of Miguel Palomares was Michaela Valenzuela. Whether or not she was a blood relation of Black Hills vaquero Romualdo Valenzuela is unknown.

Tita eventually married Mexican-born Basilio Pena and they lived on 40 acres in the Black Hills. Local rancher Jack Gleese recalls that the whole Pena ranch was in grapes. Pena sold wine during Prohibition and made "the most wonderful claret." Entacia married Charles Andrews, a California native of Spanish and Italian descent. The Andrews family had 80 acres. French-born Adolph Grisel was married to Madrona and had 40 acres with a vineyard.

Tomas and Elisa Robles were thus in close contact with several interrelated households who generally described themselves as "old Spanish." Winemaking, for three of the four families at least, was a major avocation.

Tomas Robles owned a hay press and he traveled from farm to farm throughout the area with a crew of Basque, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish workers. Elisa Robles prepared the workers' meals and was considered a "great cook." By 1903 Tomas Robles had moved down to Livermore although he continued to own land in the Black Hills. In the same year, Elisa Robles was listed as the taxpayer on the 20 acres she had inherited from her father. She continued to live in the foothills until about 1920 and worked the land with the help of her oldest boys.

End of an Era

By 1900 many of the early "Spanish" homestead applicants had lost their land and moved out. Small parcels were gradually bought up and consolidated for stockraising. Portuguese-Azorean immigrants moved into the area, and relations between the Portuguese and the "Spanish" who remained were none too cordial, as Juanita Hargraves (née Robles) recalled:

> . . . well the people around us didn't like us. They would stand up on the hill and call us every name under the sun . . . because we were different. They were the Portuguese, all Portuguese.

Undoubtedly a "culture clash" existed between the two groups that was exacerbated by a kind of "outsider" attitude on the part of many of these Hispanic farmers. Many men produced their own wine and *grappa*, a brandy distilled from wine, and drank heavily. One descendent bluntly described the men who lived on the surrounding farms as "all demons," while the women—mothers, aunts, and grandmothers—were remembered as hardworking, if overly stern.

The Robles were the last of the early Californio and Mexican settlers to maintain a presence in the Black Hills. When Elisa Robles died and her land was sold to local rancher T.K. Taylor, this chapter of local history was closed.

COMMUNITY, MEMORY, AND MARGINALITY: FERMIN VALENZUELA AND ANDREW LINDHOLM

Confirmed bachelors often live at the social edges of a community and thus may elude documentation. If deceased they cannot speak for themselves, and, one assumes, they leave no descendants to remember them and tell their stories. And yet if we value a pluralistic and democratic history, then it is essential that we do not selectively forget these solitary characters—the hermits, peddlers, squatters, and ranch hands—who were integral to every farming community. What role did they play? How did they affect the community? And how are they remembered?

Living out at Los Vaqueros in niches between tenant ranches, or perhaps as tenants themselves, were a number of men who were often thought of as eccentric characters. Frank Raffett (a.k.a. "French Frank"), as an example, was dubbed "the Iron Man" after he reportedly refused anesthesia during an operation. It is said that he only cried out when the doctors cut off a piece of his liver. Raffett never married and was known for his homemade wine. His ranch was part of the social network for Italian families in the area, partly because he operated a *bocce* ball club.

Another apparently confirmed bachelor and recluse was a retired San Francisco policeman who spent his last days chopping wood in the Vasco on the old Morchio Place: " . . . and they found him long dead in that little cabin. John Harrington was his name." Squatters, known locally as "chicken and egg men," alone or with their families, made a living the best they could and at the goodwill of their neighbors. Itinerant tradesmen—harness makers, blacksmiths, and peddlers—visited the ranches seasonally and were valued for their skill and perhaps their companionship.

But in community memory no two men were more keenly remembered than Fermin Valenzuela and Andrew "the Swede" Lindholm.[19] Valenzuela and Lindholm had several traits in common. Both were confirmed bachelors who lived during the end of the 19th and up to the middle of the 20th centuries. Both lived, or originally lived, in the rugged Black Hills overlooking the Vasco grant. Both were described as larger-than-life characters, evocative of early American folk heroes. Both reportedly drank heavily, to their detriment. Both were perceived as "ethnic;" Andrew most clearly as "the Swede" and Fermin less clearly as Mexican or Indian, or both.

"Big Man" Fermin Valenzuela

Fermin Valenzuela was described by his Black Hills neighbor Jack Gleese as a "big man," a "great big lean man" about 6 feet, 4 inches tall, with dark hair and a ruddy complexion. "He was a well-kept man. He's not like any of these that you see on television: his hair was cut. In the early days, none of us looked like these people they call 'old-timers' now on television." The Contra Costa County *Great Registers* for the 1860s through the 1890s list Fermin as 6 feet tall.

Valenzuela was both a crack teamster and a vaquero, a real "cowboy's cowboy," "just a damn good horseman." Whether he is described as patient with horses or commanding and even harsh varies with the narrator. Fred Mourterot, who worked as a teamster with Valenzuela at the Bordes Ranch around 1917 remembered that Valenzuela "worked at the Bordes when I was working up there one year and he'd go in the morning to feed the horses and [he'd say] 'Back boys.' And they'd all back up out of their stall. And I'd go to feed mine and [laughing] I couldn't get them out of there!" On another occasion in Livermore Mourterot recalled:

> I seen him down here at the railroad tracks when he was loadin' hay, in the cars, and had a six-horse team. And the train came along and it [the wagon/team] started to jackknife. He never touched the line. He grabbed the whip, whamm! and he hollered [?]. He had a voice that scared a horse. . . . He did. But he could handle a whip and a team of horses, I tell you, the best I ever seen.

Jack Gleese, in contrast, remembered that Valenzuela was patient. "He didn't fly off the handle and he didn't beat the animals. He was a good man."

Fermin Valenzuela was the son of a vaquero, Ramon (or Romualdo) Valenzuela. By the 1870 census Romualdo lived on 160 acres in the Black

Fermin Valenzuela. Posing next to a mower at the Bordes Ranch, Fermin Valenzuela appears to be in his element. *(Courtesy Franklyn Silva.)*

Hills with his Mexican-born wife, Dolota, and their six young children. Although Romualdo's 1892 probate notes that Fermin was 24 at the time, the son was not counted in the 1870 census (unless he is possibly the 3-year-old "female infant"). Likewise, Fermin was not mentioned by name in the 1880 census enumeration. Official records for these Black Hills families are imprecise at best, due undoubtedly to language barriers and an ever-shifting definition of family that was alien to the non-Hispanic workers who trudged through the hills and filled out official forms. The 1920 census lists Fermin's age as 61, thus he was born around 1859. His obituary in the *Livermore Herald* on May 19, 1939, however, notes that Valenzuela, a "ranch worker for many years," was 68 years, 10 months, and 8 days. By this accounting Fermin Valenzuela was born in 1870.

Ethnically Fermin is described by neighbors as "an Indian," or as a Mexican, "with a little black mustache," or as "Indian mixed with Mexican . . . because he was very very red skinned." It is likely that he was both. Fermin's father's family was in California at least by 1800, suggesting that the Valenzuelas were either Californios or missionized Indians. Fermin's mother, Mexican-born, could also be Indian rather than mestizo. It is fair to assume that Spanish was the primary language spoken in the Valenzuela household. Romualdo Valenzuela testified for the Homestead Proof of his neighbor Tomas Robles in 1884. Robles had missed his filing date because, as Fermin explained, he was a poor Mexican and spoke English "indifferently."

The Valenzuelas moved to a neighboring 80 acres in 1874 and sold their 160-acre homestead for $1,000. The family was always in debt, and upon Romualdo's death in 1892 the property was sold to pay off a variety of bills.

Perhaps it was his family's financial problems that led Fermin to a brief career as a cattle rustler. In 1897 he and Adolph Silva were arrested for stealing eight head of cattle from Hans Christensen. The *Livermore Herald* followed the story as it developed and observed, "Vallenzulla [sic] heretofore has borne the reputation of a steady and reliable workman. He is well known among the valley farmers and was universally liked." Valenzuela turned state's evidence and confessed, much to the apparent disgust of his partner in crime. On another occasion, Fermin had to be "bailed out" of some difficulty in

the coal mines at Mount Diablo by "Brother" Bordes.

Fermin Valenzuela had his own little place in the late teens, just south of the county line among some sumac trees, although at that time he worked for local ranchers. By 1920 he apparently had lost this semblance of independence, and was moving from one local tenant ranch to another. In community memory he is normally associated, however, with the Bordes Place, as the teamster for the harvesting crews. Valenzuela worked intermittently at the Vallerga Ranch near the county line, and John Vallerga, a child at the time, remembered Fermin with respect: "Oh skill! He was one of the best teamsters around. Whenever they had to hook up a bunch of horses they always went and got Fermin and never say nothin' to him. Just turn him loose." "He could handle . . . as many horses as you put in front of him. He even drove the first two wheelers . . . with his feet."

That Fermin was a heavy drinker is clear: "You could never depend on him. He'd go to town Saturday night, get drunk, and might not come back on Monday." This aside, Valenzuela must have been a robust man and an extraordinary worker, almost bigger than life. He was described as in his "late 30s or 40s" when, in truth, he was nearing 60. Valenzuela moved into Livermore when the Vasco grant was divided and sold following Mary Crocker's death. He continued to work on occasion for local ranchers he had known on the Vasco. As Vallerga recalled, "When we were in Brentwood, up in Deer Valley . . . he'd come over there and help my dad. Then tinker around and my Dad used to give him a few dollars. . . . he always told me he come over there for a vacation." Valenzuela was taciturn about his early life and family ties: "He was never married; he never did talk too much about his birth." He died in Livermore in 1939. As Jack Gleese recalled, "He was a good man . . . he was a good man."

Andrew "The Swede" Lindholm

In contrast to Fermin Valenzuela, the ethnicity and cultural heritage of Andrew "the Swede" Lindholm is hardly in question. Andrew "Lundholn" was enumerated on the 1910 census as a 55-year-old farmer from Sweden. He reported at the time that he immigrated in 1885. Between the years of 1879 to 1893, more than half a million Swedes left for North America. Although in the 1840s and 1850s immigrant families were the norm, by Andrew's time the trend was reversed. In 1900 two-thirds of all Swedish immigrants were single men or women.[20]

Andrew rented 160 acres at Los Vaqueros from ca. 1910 to 1940 from a Prussian merchant, Louis Grunauer. His nearest neighbors, the Gleeses, were Irish American ranchers who described Lindholm's land as "worthless." His place was close to the Vasco but above the chemise brush and into the oak timberland. Nevertheless, the terrain afforded Andrew a comfortable living. He cut firewood to sell and brought it down through the Vasco by horse and cart or went up over the Black Hills, through the Gleese Ranch, to reach the Morgan Territory Road.

Andrew "the Swede"—only the Gleese family knew his last name—trapped, hunted quail and deer, and raised chickens. He had a small orchard that included a Ponderosa lemon that produced "phenomenal fruit." "Each lemon would make a cup of juice." John Vallerga visited the Swede's place as a schoolchild and he too recalled these lemons. Vallerga had never seen a lemon tree before: "that lemon tree just sits in my mind today." Oscar Starr's ranch foreman, Ed Gomez, also spoke highly of Andrew's apple tree: "that was the best apples you would *ever* want to taste."

There was apparently nothing Lindholm could not do with a rope, and he was an expert carpenter. The barn at his place was "beautiful, there wasn't a warp in it anywhere." Prior to the advent of automobiles in the area he made several wheel sleds for himself and his neighbors. His one-room cabin and yard were "clean and beautiful." He also had a storehouse built of handhewn sandstone blocks where he kept his canned fruits and vegetables.

Like Valenzuela, Lindholm was a confirmed bachelor and, reportedly, a hard drinker. But unlike Valenzuela, who worked throughout the Vasco, Andrew Lindholm largely kept to himself, thus earning a reputation as a hermit. Jack Gleese defended his one-time neighbor: "He wasn't actually a hermit. . . . he liked to live in the mountains, and he

Andrew "The Swede's" Barn. The remains of Andrew's barn are unprepossessing at first glance, but upon further inspection the workmanship of a craftsman becomes apparent. Well-fit planks and joints are visible in the dilapidated structure. In its time, it was described as "marvelous," and was renowned throughout Los Vaqueros.

liked to live there by himself. And he didn't want anybody to bother him. He and his cats [laughs]. He had two cats, two Maltese cats. And they were *huge*. . . ." Even Gleese had to admit though that Andrew could be a "contemptuous [cantankerous?] old son-of-a-gun" but *always* polite around the ladies. Visitors to Andrew's might be treated cordially or rebuffed, depending on the old man's mood. On at least two occasions schoolchildren hiked up to his place with their teacher and were offered glasses of spring water.

Andrew is remembered for his prodigious strength, "strong as an ox." "Oh he was a marvelous man. Boy, that man could carry a hundred pound sack of grain on his back all the way down to his place." Andrew had light blue eyes and stood about five feet six or seven, with "wide shoulders that tapered down to narrow hips. . . [with] a big heavy chest, broad shoulders."

John Gleese, Sr., helped to secure a small county pension for the old Swede as he became elderly: "He'd come down into town, cash his check, lay in a supply of groceries, and get drunk on the rest of it." On one occasion one of the Grueninger brothers reportedly found Andrew passed out drunk in a water trough in Byron. The farmer pulled the old man out and revived him.

Mr. Gleese also took Andrew to the County Hospital in Martinez where he died around 1940. Before his death Andrew claimed to be "over 100 years old." In actuality he was probably closer to 85.

A basic premise of the Mexican celebration *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) is that as long as someone remembers you, then you never truly die. Hopefully through these biographies, Andrew and Fermin will remain alive in community memory and history.

CHARLES MCLAUGHLIN, RAILROAD BARON

In October 1867, 34-year-old Charles McLaughlin took possession of two properties in San Francisco that he would lease for the rest of his life: a suite at the Palace Hotel, and offices at No. 16 Montgomery Street. Both addresses were excellent ones, attainable only by those who had succeeded in the business world—through family connections, hard work, or cunning. It seems likely that McLaughlin was celebrating one of his life's major successes, which had just taken place that week: the sale, to Central Pacific's Big Four, of the valuable railroad franchise from the Pacific Coast to the Mississippi held by him and his partners, who had recently formed the Southern Pacific Company. The franchise was so coveted that the Southern Pacific was bought for the full price asked. McLaughlin cleared huge sums in cash on the deal, but that was minimal next to his land acquisitions. Because the Big Four could not pay all the costs in cash, McLaughlin acquired over 111,000 acres of land within 10 miles of the railroad—including many of the surveyed sections surrounding Los Vaqueros. Despite all the lands he had just received, McLaughlin had his heart set on another one: within a month of the deal he purchased John C. Fremont's half interest in Rancho el Pescadero—a short distance east of Los Vaqueros near the town of Tracy. Twice the size of Los Vaqueros, McLaughlin's spread was known as Bantos Ranch and became the home of his prize thoroughbreds. Thus, when McLaughlin seized the opportunity to own Los Vaqueros years later, his prime motive may have been expanding his Bantos holdings—not owning the land that so many others had fought for. He continued non-stop in his acquisitions; by 1871 Charles McLaughlin was among the five largest private landholders in the state, with 300,000 acres in his name.[21]

The First Million

It seems likely that it was a good deal of cunning and hard work, along with a youthful back, that helped McLaughlin secure his first million dollars in 1867. Born in Pennsylvania around 1833, he was still a teenager when he arrived in California in early 1850 and located near the northern mines in Marysville. There he established the California Stage Company, which readily expanded into one of the most extensive transportation networks in the state, with hundreds of miles of road and numerous stations. One of his stage lines was the active route between San Francisco and San Jose; so when San Francisco wanted to modernize, replacing the stage with a railroad, McLaughlin was the one to take on the task. Thus it was in August 1860 that he became the leader of a group of men who built the third railroad in California—the San Francisco & San Jose. This enterprise failed, but the group was solidly on its way.

By the end of 1864, Charles McLaughlin signed a contract with the newly formed Western Pacific Railroad Company, in the amount of $5,400,000, to construct a 123-mile railroad from San Jose via Niles and Stockton to Sacramento. Right after the new year, a firm headed by Jerome B. Cox subcontracted with McLaughlin; they would grade the Western Pacific railroad from San Jose to Stockton, do the necessary mason work, build the necessary bridges, viaducts, culverts, and so on, preparing the road completely for laying down the rails and ties. The subcontractors had completed the work to Niles Canyon, a distance of almost 21 miles, when McLaughlin ceased making payments. Since Cox had spent all his own money, he was compelled to stop work. McLaughlin denied their right to cease work, at the same time not acknowledging that Cox had nearly $158,000 due him for the work already done. The whole deal ended badly. McLaughlin completed the railroad, but neither Western Pacific nor, later, McLaughlin could finance the operation. Leland Stanford—not yet officially part of the Central Pacific railroad—bought out the company at considerable loss to McLaughlin.

Death of a Capitalist

The damage was not permanent, and McLaughlin would be besting Stanford soon in the splendid sale of October 1867. What was lasting from his contract for Western Pacific was his refusal to pay his subcontractors, who over the years were represented by Jerome Cox only. Cox first

brought McLaughlin to court in April 1867. He continued appealing the case over the next 16 years and 8 months, until finally—nearly mad from frustration and desperation—he shot and killed Charles McLaughlin.

The murder occurred when the two men were alone, so precisely what happened will never be known. McLaughlin did live for more than an hour, however, allowing both men to recount the story in front of witnesses. Here is what was recorded:[22]

> Young Arthur Casey, a young man employed in McLaughlin's office, came running breathless and hatless into the court of the Old City Hall. He darted in from the Washington street side, and said, excitedly to office Samuel Alden, who was the only policeman in sight, "For God's sake come over quick to no. 16 Montgomery avenue."
>
> When the officer arrived at the scene he asked: "What was this about," McLaughlin answered: "A lawsuit. He called me into this room and told me that if I did not pay him $40,000 he would kill me, and then he commenced to shoot, firing at me three times, and the first shot striking me in the neck." When McLaughlin had ceased speaking, Cox, who had paid close attention to what had been said, spoke saying as he cast his glance toward the prostrate form of McLaughlin; "You know you lie. Don't die with a lie upon your lips"

After a doctor informed McLaughlin that there was no hope for survival, McLaughlin made a final statement that repeated his original accusation: ". . . I have always been willing to settle with the man on fair terms. He shot me three times, once in the neck, once in the breast, and once in the stomach. The pistol was pointed first at my brain." McLaughlin expired after making only a faint mark certifying his statement. Cox pleaded self-defense and a "most formidable weapon," a 10-inch "hunter's improved knife," was found in McLaughlin's right hip pocket.

At the Coroner's inquest the next day, the jury heard testimony and, after an hour's deliberation, ruled that Jerome B. Cox acted in self-defense. Captain Cox, a Civil War hero, was a popular man indeed; the majority of Californians felt that McLaughlin had got what he deserved: "The public felt that the rich man had used as a means of oppression the only legitimate resource the poor man has—the courts. And when Cox maddened by the impossibility of getting justice peaceably, became the righter of his own wrongs, he was pardoned instantly by public opinion." In 1886 the United Labor Party nominated Cox for Governor of California and, that same year, the Superior Court awarded him the sum of $98,228.49 in his lawsuit against McLaughlin; this time the attorneys did not win their appeals.[23]

A CAPITALIST SLAIN.

Shooting of Charles McLaughlin.

JEROME B. COX THE KILLER.

An Appeal to the Pistol After Seventeen Years of Litigation.

There was another appeal to the pistol yesterday and another addition to the already long list of prisoners charged with murder. The actors in the latest tragedy were Charles McLaughlin, the capitalist and President of the Central Gaslight Company, and Jerome B. Cox, formerly a railroad contractor, but latterly, owing to misfortunes, a poor man, trying to make a living for his family at any work which he was able to obtain. Cox and McLaughlin

"A Capitalist Slain." This version of the sensational story of McLaughlin's murder was carried in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on December 14, 1883. McLaughlin showed a remarkable presence of mind as he lay dying on his office floor. According to this paper, he began his statement to police by saying, "I believe I am going to die. My name is Charles McLaughlin. I am about 50 years of age. I was born in Pennsylvania. I was shot by Jerome B. Cox."

Mystery Man

What kind of a man was Charles McLaughlin? We judge our millionaires harshly, tending always to side with the underdog. In fact Jerome Cox may have been a habitual hot-head, instead of a reasonable man driven to unusual acts by desperation; years before, he had attacked a judge who had ruled against him. In McLaughlin's defense, he may have believed that the Central Pacific bought the debt to Cox when they bought out the railroad franchise. In fact, one modern defender asks, "Could it be the battery of lawyers who fought Cox to a standstill were employed by, and working for, the Big Four and not for McLaughlin?"[24] We do not know. Oddly, despite McLaughlin's position at his death as the second largest landholder in the state (second only to Leland Stanford), as president of the Central Gas Light Company, and as a major figure in the transportation history of the state, few words are written on the man himself. From court transcripts we know his caretaker called him Mac, that he could be approached on the street with a business deal, that his wife, Kate, and he traveled frequently by land and sea, and that he had a passion for horses. And from his last words, we can tell that to the end his mind was on business; rather than bid his wife and friends farewell, he chose to protest the fairness of his dealings and thereby one-up any opponent.

STICKS AND STONES: BUILDING IN LOS VAQUEROS

The elements that constitute the rural historic landscape of Los Vaqueros include its farming and ranching complexes, pastures, windbreaks and windmills, orchard plantings, roads and trails, corrals, fences, water troughs, and livestock shelters. Traditions and innovations in construction, spatial arrangement, and design reflect the diverse cultural, social, and economic circumstances of an area's inhabitants. The particular mix that came together on the Vasco is what made the landscape of Los Vaqueros unique. It was ultimately a landscape of work—hard work that was perhaps not always rewarding, but the vernacular landscape the people constructed with "sticks and stones" tells a story about what was needed to live and farm at Los Vaqueros.[25]

Even though the tone of building custom was set by the landowners, individuals who occupied the Vasco influenced the look of the land with their own choices, innovations, and craftsmanship. A variety of building methods and materials can be found at Los Vaqueros. The earliest were, of course, the adobes that were erected in the mid-19th century. Later, wood-frame buildings predominated. Later still came the stucco ranch houses and riveted metal farm buildings of the Starr Ranch. But, above all, the widespread use of stone construction distinguished building at Los Vaqueros. The native origins of the builders—Basque, Mexican, Spanish, Yankee, German, and Italian—can be seen in type, style, and methods of construction. The blending of cultural traditions resulted in a utilitarian landscape that was both functional and individually expressive.

Tenant Ranches

The tenant system of farming that was established in Los Vaqueros in the 19th century was the governing force that defined the landscape well into the 20th century. Ranches were spread out widely over the land grant, leaving them isolated from each other. The dominant pattern of land ownership was of a single owner who was responsible for the basic "improvements" that would facilitate successful agricultural use of the land. These facilities usually consisted of a barn and possibly a house, constructed strictly for utilitarian purposes. In this respect the vernacular landscape of the Vasco grant acquired a rather industrial character, with much more uniformity in design and less individual investment in stylish or more permanent architecture than is found in a community of landowners. Tenants often built enclosures around their leaseholds and erected additional buildings and structures they deemed necessary for their operations. Sometimes, when tenants packed up and moved from their ranches, they took their own outbuildings with them.

Removed at some distance from the comforts and convenience of town life, ranches in the Vasco had to be fairly self-sufficient operations that could accommodate the needs of commercial ranching and grain farming in addition to providing for the needs of the family. Typical components of a ranch on the Vasco grant included a dwelling for the family, a privy, a bunkhouse for hired help, at least one barn for horses and/or cattle, a granary, storage sheds, chicken houses, a well, blacksmith shop, and a system of fences and corrals. In the 20th century, eucalyptus trees were the popular choice for a windbreak because they grew very tall very quickly. Ranching complexes were generally laid out in a moderately dense cluster, making for an efficient use of time and travel between the work areas and the house.

The Bordes ranch serves as a good illustration of what a successful ranching operation on the Vasco would have looked like. In 1919 the Bordeses had two horse barns, tack room, granary, harness shed, chicken houses, a bunkhouse that accommodated six to eight men, harvester shed, blacksmith shop, smokehouse, a well and windmill, a stone corral, and the family residence with a privy nearby. The estate of the landowner, Mary Crocker, appraised the land of only two improvements in 1929, a five-room house and a barn. The additional outbuildings and ancillary structures were erected by the tenants themselves and belonged to them.

Stately Barns

The barns in Los Vaqueros were generally the largest and most distinguished buildings on the ranch and were undoubtedly the most significant buildings in farming operations. Until recently, a few stately barns remained standing at Los Vaqueros,

such as the wood-frame, three-bay barn at the Starr Ranch. Mostly, what is left of the barns that graced the landscape are their stone foundations, which actually tell us a lot about the size and configuration of a typical Vasco barn. Western barns tended to be, on the whole, larger than their counterparts in the eastern United States. Barns in Los Vaqueros generally lived up to this reputation, being about 50 feet wide.

Inextricably tied to their local environments, barn forms are often directly a function of climate, geography, resources, land-use activities, and cultural identity.[26] Old photographs suggest that barn-building in Los Vaqueros belonged to a single tradition: the transverse-frame structure that is found in the barns of New England. The barn at the Perata/Bonfante ranch site (and possibly at the Weymouth/Rose ranch site) illustrated this tradition, and even improved upon it. It was a good, general-purpose barn with large doors at both gable ends so that machinery and wagons could be driven straight through. Access to the stalls in the side bays could be gained from either the center aisle or aisles that were located on the far sides. Multiple access freed up the side spaces so that the stalls could be converted for other uses, such as storage or additional work areas. The barn had a large hay loft that made the ground floor available for traffic and work. Hay could be easily loaded by a pulley system—or "hay trolley"—through the upper gable loft doors. These upper openings also provided necessary ventilation for the hay, thus preventing the possibility of spontaneous combustion and fire. One of the loft doors at the Perata/Bonfante barn had a hay hood, which would have kept the brunt of the rain from coming into the barn and spoiling the hay.[27]

Barns in Los Vaqueros were built for utility and served multiple purposes. Construction was economical and functional with no attention to "fancy" architectural details. Even so, there are some fine examples of building craftsmanship, such as the stone work that was lavished on the foundations and floors of the barns and the renowned woodworking of Andrew "the Swede." Black Hills rancher Jack Gleese recalled that Andrew "had a marvelous barn that he built all by hand." The one-story, one-bay barn erected by Andrew Lindholm and admired throughout the territory was constructed entirely of redwood. Andrew the Swede may have developed his carpentry skills when he was a sailor, before he

Big Barns, Small Homes. The economic priorities of Los Vaqueros farmers are reflected in the emphasis on working structures versus the family house. The barn at the Starr Ranch *(left)* was built in the 20th century and used to stable horses. The horses probably had more room than Andrew and Mary Fragulia, who, for a short time, called this small building *(right)* home. *(Barn courtesy Dell Upton; house courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

settled in the Black Hills, or learned them in his native Scandinavian country, where woodworking is an art.

"Be It Ever So Humble . . .

. . . There's no place like home." And humble they were, the modest abodes that Los Vaqueros farmers and their families called home. If the barn was the stately mansion of the grant, then the family ranch house represented a more egalitarian structure, devoid of pretension. That most of the dwellings on the Vasco were built strictly for shelter and not for "show" was probably because their occupants did not own the land they lived on, and, in many cases, did not own their houses. The economic priorities of generating adequate income from farming and ranching took precedence, as evidenced by the time and money spent on erecting and maintaining the necessary outbuildings and structures. More importantly, perhaps, the close-knit nature of family life in Los Vaqueros may have nullified the need to seek material fulfillment or status in stylish residential architecture. The warmth of the family could make any home a cozy haven.

Most families lived in an "old-fashioned country house, nothing fancy," as one resident put it. Houses in Los Vaqueros were typically one-story, and of single-wall construction with a gable roof. In single-wall construction, the top plate of the frame is secured to vertical boards that have been nailed to the four corners of the sills. Additional vertical members, often obtained from "first-cut" redwood, are then nailed to the sill and the plate, forming a single-wall thickness. The boards could be battened down with thin vertical strips of wood overlapping the board edges, creating what is known as "board-and-batten" siding. No additional framing on the interior hides the structural elements, which many people would cover with muslin, newspapers, or cheesecloth to create some additional protection from the cold air that might come whistling through the cracks. In the Bordes house, the interior walls were papered with burlap. The advantages of single-wall construction are that there is no dead space to trap moisture, which encourages rot, and the box-like structure puts equal stress on the four corners so that the walls do not lean or sag.[28]

Little houses on the Vasco often grew into bigger houses as rooms were added to accommodate growing families. For the first years of their marriage, Andrew and Mary Fragulia lived in a two-room "shack" with a dirt floor. It was later converted into an outbuilding on the ranch. As their success in farming continued through the years, they constructed a larger house that turned out to be one of the most impressive on the Vasco. By 1929, their "improvements" included a six-bedroom house with a two-seat privy out in back. The residence was in the building tradition of Los Vaqueros, one-story and single-wall. It had a kitchen, large living room, six bedrooms, and a full cellar, where the family stored their homemade wine, goat cheese, and other foodstuffs.

The Uses of Stone

Anyone who has ever spent a summer afternoon out in the blistering hot valley of the Vasco grant can appreciate the impact that environmental conditions of Los Vaqueros had on its inhabitants. Located in a Mediterranean climatic zone, with essentially two seasons consisting of hot, dry summers and relatively mild, wet winters, the vernacular landscape of Los Vaqueros was influenced by way in which people responded to these conditions through their construction choices. Farmers had to come up with solutions to the problems of keeping things cool in an era before electricity was in widespread use. Stone construction helped to solve these problems because it provided insulation and it was cool to the touch when kept out of the sun.

Local stone was used in construction all over Los Vaqueros, for floors, cellars, and other surfaces. It was roughly worked—if at all—and held together by no more than a mud-based mortar. Frequently, stone structures were "dry-laid," that is, without any type of mortar. Barn foundations and partial floors were constructed of local sandstone, roughly shaped and fitted together like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Stone pavements were also a good antidote for the mud created by winter storms. Cobbles and pavers were laid along pathways and outside entryways to barns and other outbuildings to prevent the important work areas of the ranch from becoming a sea of mud, trapping tractor wheels, and making work impossible.[29]

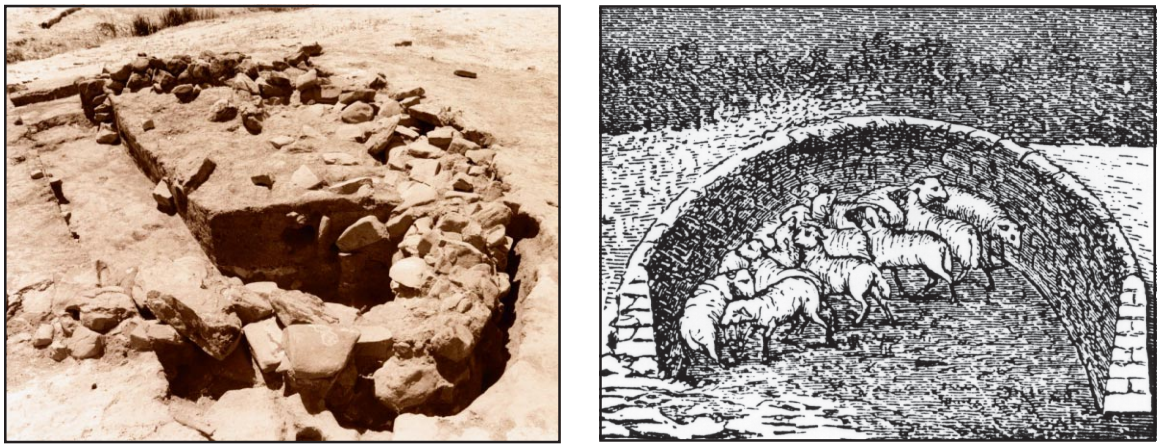
Barn Stone Floor. This is what remains of the large barn that once stood at the Weymouth/Rose site on the east side of the Kellogg Creek Valley. The stonework is extensive and forms both foundation and partial floor. There is no mortar between the stones, but they are carefully laid in an interlacing network that keeps the structure strong.

Stone cellars were also important in Los Vaqueros because they furnished cool storage for perishables. The cellar at the Connolly's ranch was underneath the house and had an evenly laid stone floor. At the Perata/Bonfante and Weymouth/Rose ranches the cellars were situated next to the stream—to take advantage of the cool water—and had stone sides for full effect. The Perata/Bonfante cellar was even dug into a hillside, below the level of the groundwater, so that it was constantly filled with cool water. A drain pipe kept the water level from getting too high. This cellar must have been much like the one that Jack Gleese remembered at Andrew "The Swedes" place:

> And he had a fruit cellar. . . . made of 12 by 16 hand-hewn sandstone blocks, no mortar. Built right into the side of the hill. And there was a spring by the side of the hill, and the water would come out. And he had a little ditching system in the floor of his cellar that, where he kept things. And the water would run through there. So it kept it cool in there all the time.

Stone construction at Los Vaqueros was not limited to buildings, but included other types of structures such as the dry-laid stone corrals on the range lands. When these were constructed and by whom is not altogether certain, but some of the local people speculate that they were built by Spanish (or possibly Basque) sheep ranchers in the 19th century. One of these stone corrals is a semi-circular one that was constructed on the Tomas Robles homestead in the Black Hills. It uses fence posts and oak trees, with barbed wire strung between them in its construction, and measures approximately 90 by 80 feet. The corral, constructed using dry-laid stones, features two small internal compartments. It was used well into the 20th century and regularly maintained. With walls only about 4 feet high, the corral was probably used for sheep that grazed in the hills.

Perhaps the most curious stone structure in the area is the three-sided livestock shelter that ASC archaeologists excavated in 1994. The structure, which is located along Kellogg Creek just north of the valley, is roofless and may have served to shield smaller livestock, such as sheep, from the driving wind or rain, both of which can be strong at Los Vaqueros. A design for a similar type of shelter was published in a popular plan book for farm buildings in the late 19th century. The proposed stone shelter was intended for use on the open plains of the Mid-



Livestock Shelter. Archaeologists excavted these remains of a three-sided stone structure *(left)* in 1994. Far from any known house or ranch, it was probably built as a shelter for small livestock, akin to the structure pictured in an 1886 "how-to" book on building for farms *(right)*. *(Illustration reproduced from Halsted 1886, pg. 84.)*

west, where sudden winter storms posed a threat to unprotected sheep. The Los Vaqueros sheep shelter was probably constructed by tenant rancher "French Frank" Raffett, who leased the grazing land on which the shelter was built. French Frank's version of the shelter may have been an attempt to "modernize" sheep-ranching operations at Los Vaqueros. The sheep shelter was situated next to a deep pool in the creek, possibly for the convenience of the sheep when they needed a drink of water.[30]

THE BONFANTE RANCH THEN AND NOW

It was late April 1995 when Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists picked their way through the knee-high, wet grass that concealed pits and gullies in the overgrown path leading to the old Bonfante Place. The spring foray was in preparation for digging the archaeological site, which was in a narrow, sloped valley overlooking Kellogg Creek at the southern end of the proposed reservoir. The first order of business was to relocate the evidence of the once-active farmstead that archaeologists had first noted more than a decade before—a well, a stone foundation, and a scatter of artifacts. Once found, plans for more extensive excavation could be laid.

The Peratas and the Bonfantes

According to historical records, this site was the headquarters of a ranch farmed by two Italian families—the Peratas and the Bonfantes. Thomas and Catherine Perata leased the land from the McLaughlin estate in 1885 and raised a large family there until 1908. Through an extended family connection, John and Angela Bonfante purchased the Peratas' interest in the property—probably furnishings and livestock—and took over the lease. John (born Giacomo and known to his family as Jack) Bonfante had immigrated first to New York, briefly returning to Italy in 1902 to marry Angela. Following the birth of their first child, Mary, in the province of Savona, John returned to America and sent for Angela and Mary when he was situated. In 1906 Angela Bonfante followed her husband to America, and the young family first settled in Livermore before moving to the Vasco, where they had three more children, Frances, Albert, and Evelyn.

The Bonfantes grew hay and grain, raised farm animals for home butchering, and had a small apricot orchard and a truck garden. They raised chickens, sold eggs for cash, and went to town only once or twice a month to purchase sacks of beans or flour and other staples. By the mid-1920s Evelyn, the youngest, was the only child left at home, and her father was getting worn down by the demanding farm life. So, in 1927 John Bonfante sold his stock

Bonfante Family. The young Bonfantes sat for a formal family portrait around 1912. Albert, the baby, is seated on mother Angela's lap; Mary stands between her parents; and Frances is on father John's lap. Evelyn had not yet been born. *(Courtesy Mary Vallerga and Frances Cabral [both née Bonfante].)*

"and etc." to C.B. Almeida and retired to Oakland.

Mary and Frances Bonfante, in a series of interviews from 1992 through 1995, recounted details of the family ranch where they were raised.[31] The place they remembered and the muddy, grass-covered site the archaeologists visited in the spring of 1995 seemed, at first, very different places. But as the archaeologists' study progressed—as they listened to the Bonfante sisters and considered the history of the ranch—the disparate views jelled into one, unified picture of life on the Vasco.

Thistles, Flats, and Depressions

Access to the old Bonfante ranch in 1995 was most easily accomplished on foot. From a narrow pull-off alongside Vasco Road (now "old" Vasco Road), a barely discernible path led through a fence

gate directly to a cliff edge a good 7 feet above Kellogg Creek. The bridge that once spanned the creek here was long gone, and the only alternative was to blaze a trail through the tall grass to find a low spot along the bank where a crossing could be negotiated. The archaeologists climbed the steep bank on the other side, through dense thistle, and worked their way back to a disced fire break aligned with the old bridge crossing. The fire break, which curved gracefully around the toe of a steep hillside, was actually the old roadbed of an earlier incarnation of Vasco Road.

When the archaeologists got around the toe of the hill, a small valley opened up on the right and a long, gradual slope led up to the old ranch site. The remnants of the first Vasco Road continued past the mouth of this valley, hugging the base of the hills and curving to the north. An alert observer could still discern the overgrown course of the road, which was just a narrow shelf on the side of the hill. This was once the route to the Vasco School, a route the Bonfante children traveled most days. Frances and Mary still remember that journey and what their ranch looked like as they approached it on their way home along the road: ". . . you could get on top [of the hill] then you could see the house, all the barns and everything."

How different their little valley looked in 1995. As the archaeologists entered the Bonfante's valley from the road below, they did not have the advantage of a hill, and the only structures that remained standing at the site were a small barn, a series of corrals, a cattle chute, and a livestock scale—all of which were built long after the Bonfante's left the Vasco. What the archaeologists saw of the Bonfante ranch complex were subtle landscape features that only *suggested* old building sites: an incongruously flat area covered with a dense growth of thistles (a sure sign of disturbed ground); a cluster of large sandstone slabs, some of which appeared worked; a small mound of bare earth next to a depression; and piles of structural debris hidden in the lush grass.

The Archaeology of Memory

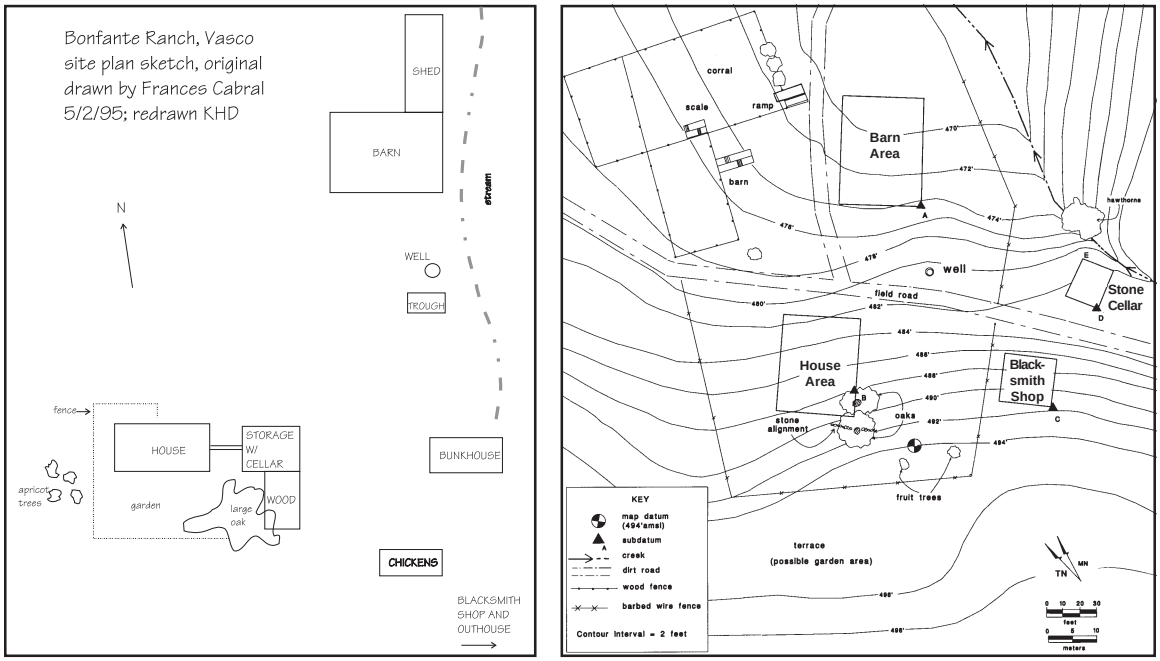
The Bonfante sisters were encouraged to remember how their ranch was laid out, so that the archaeologists could decide where they should concentrate their efforts. Mary and Frances guided an interviewer through the drafting of a sketch map, offering descriptions of the structures as they went along. With their guidance, the archaeologists were able to understand some of the landscape features they had already noted, as well as locate evidence of other structures that were overlooked during the initial field visit. Another suspect flat was pinpointed and, along the creek, another cluster of sandstone blocks covered with a dense growth of thistles.

While the archaeologists focused on the physical remains of the Bonfante's ranch, Mary and Frances provided the personal component, relaying memories of what these places meant in their lives. One of the first places that the archaeologists investigated was the well, which proved an inauspicious beginning. After digging about 8 feet down, they found indisputable evidence that someone else had gotten there first: a foil potato-chip wrapper, a Budweiser can, and a felt-tip pen that still worked!

But the memories of the Bonfante sisters were intact—that well was rife with meaning for them. The well was never equipped with a windmill, so the sisters had to fetch water with buckets that they would have to haul up the hill to the house. It was hard work, and not without danger: "We'd throw the bucket in the well; there was an eight foot board (sometimes I think about it, it gives me the creeps). Suppose we fell in there? We didn't have no fear. And we'd get a bucket of water and then she'd get one, I'd get one, we'd carry it up to the house."

Very little was left of the house by the time the archaeologists got to it, but information from the Bonfante sisters and the material remains was complementary. The house never had much of a foundation, so all that was left were a few flat stones, some boards, and lots of artifacts lying on the ground. The Bonfantes remembered it as "a funny-built house" because the kitchen had no doorway into the rest of the house: "And I always thought my poor mother, she came out on that cold porch, to go to the kitchen. And my dad used to tell them [the landlords], 'Cut a hole in that wall.' So she wouldn't have to go, you know. The heat from the wood stove would go in the bedroom."

The yard around the house was a working place—Mrs. Bonfante "didn't have no time to grow



Two Views of the Bonfante Ranch. Mary and Frances remembered how their childhood ranch was arranged and guided the drafting of this memory map *(left)*. Archaeologists exposed the remains of many of the ranch's buildings, and with the aid of a transit mapped their finds *(right)*. Remarkably, the two maps are quite similar.

flowers." The garden was for vegetables and was tended by a man "from the old country." Grapes grew on the fence surrounding the garden, and Mr. Bonfante made his own wine. Laundry was washed in tubs out in the yard; the archaeologists found buttons and pennies—no doubt lost over the course of countless washings—scattered all over the ground in front of the house. The pennies had dates ranging from 1902 to 1925, which spanned the years the Bonfantes lived at the ranch. The buttons were mostly plain, white shell sew-throughs that were well-suited for the utilitarian work shirts they undoubtedly fastened.

Next to the house was a cellar hole that Mr. Bonfante dug into the ground to store his wine. He dug the cellar down to bedrock and never bothered to line the floor or the sides. The girls remembered it because the bulkhead entry door provided them with a place to play: "It went down like this with steps and it had two doors like this that opened up because we used to get up on top of [them]; that was the only slide we had. Get up on top of the things. It's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves but then we didn't." Charred posts and burned earth at the bottom of the cellar indicated that the building above it burned down, long after the Bonfante sisters moved away. The pit was filled with household debris that had been lying around the yard for years—some of it was probably the remains of the bunkhouse and chicken house that Mary and Frances drew on their memory map. No sign of these structures was left on the ground in 1995 because the hillside had been swept clean in the 1950s by a landowner intent on clearing the land and filling the cellar hole.

Down the hill from the house, below the well, was the barn, where the archaeologists had first noticed a dense growth of thistles growing among sandstone slabs. The slabs turned out to be part of the barn's foundation and floor, which was terraced into the hillside. The barn was at least 40 by 50 feet, and, according to the Bonfantes was equipped with a central aisle, stalls on either side for 10 horses, and a hay loft. Family photographs show that it had vertical siding, a long sloping roof, hayloft doors in the peaks of the gable ends, and barn doors at the corner of each gable end. Mrs. Cabral remembered how hay was lifted into the loft:

> Well you see: when the hay's on the wagon, it was full of hay way up high. Well then there was a fork that came out of the barn on a cable [via the ridge pole protruding from the hayloft door]. And the guy out there was on the wagon; he'd get a hold that fork and pull it out, because it was on a rope. And you'd back the horse, would be inside the barn. . . . When you drove the horse out, he hooked that thing he had on to the hay and then he had a thing that would pull it. Would go up like this and then down a rail and when it got down so far we'd stop and he'd jerk the fork.

The house, barn, and well were the focus of the Bonfante sisters' memory map, and, probably, their young lives. Off to the east, indicated with just an arrow, were the blacksmith shop and the outhouse. The sisters also talked about a granary, but did not put it on their map. The blacksmith shop and the granary were not places for little girls, and Mary and Frances did not visit them often. Of the blacksmith shop, Mrs. Cabral said that they "never had time to go [in there]," and if they did venture in their father would shoo them out. Underneath the granary, where Mr. Bonfante stored feed for the livestock, was a stone-lined cellar accessible via steps at the side of the building. But the cellar was a frightening place, and the girls avoided it: "Yeah, well you could get on the side and go down. But we never; I was scared." Both of these places were investigated by the archaeologists and were best understood in terms of the archaeological evidence rather than the remembrances of Frances and Mary.

Beyond the blacksmith shop and the stone-lined cellar was the outhouse, the only structure the Bonfante sisters talked about that the archaeologists did not investigate. Some of the sisters' most poignant memories surround this structure, which was far away from the house ("It seems like it was a mile or two mile to me!") and intimidating to visit at night:

> Because at night, when we went up to the outhouse, we'd take a lantern. And sometimes two or three of us go at one time. And you could hear those [coyote howls] up in the hills. And some of us used to holler, "Oh, I'm scared." Run back to the house.

Data × Three

The Bonfante site presented researchers with an enviable opportunity: three complementary lines of evidence contributing to an understanding of life in a particular Vasco family. Archival data provided the rough sequence of events and who-was-there-when. Archaeology presented the material facts of life in the cellar holes, foundations, and refuse scattered across the hillsides. Oral history helped flesh out the people and places, allowing a glimpse of how two children viewed their lives on the farm. No single line of evidence could tell the whole story.

Interpretation of the rich data from the Bonfante site has only just begun as we ferret out the different meanings that buildings on the ranch had for the people

The Bonfante Barn. Three children romp with their horse in front of the Bonfante barn in the 1910s *(left)*, and 80 years later an archaeologist stands on just about the same spot *(right)*. Although the barn itself is gone, the formation of the hills in the background is the same, and the stone floor of the barn remains.

living there, and how those meanings might be expressed in material ways. Take, for example, the rough cellar hole next to the Bonfante's house. To John Bonfante it was, of course, a place to store his wine, but on a more profound level it may have been an expression of his cultural identity. As a tenant he did not stand to profit from the effort it took him to dig the hole, but dig it he did. The hole itself was roughly shaped, unlined, and without a formal floor. It was obviously not intended to improve the value of the property so much as to serve a perceived need. To Mary and Francis Bonfante the cellar provided a place to play, an informal slide in a time before children were provided with jungle-gyms or swing sets. They understood what the place was used for, but its importance to them was altogether different. Years later, after the Bonfantes moved away and the place was no longer used as a home-site, the cellar was seen as a dangerous hole or a convenient receptacle for the residue of abandoned domestic life.

As objective and scientific as we may try to be, it is impossible for us as archaeologists to view the past without being influenced by our own experiences and viewpoints. The Bonfante site is a good lesson. Hauling gear across Kellogg Creek, along the disced firebreak, and up the long hill to the site every day impressed upon us the isolation of the ranch. As expansive as the view from the Bonfante ranch is, the hills felt close and confining. Nothing is flat—the archaeological features were spread out up and down the slopes, and negotiating the rough terrain between them was always a challenge. The valley itself channels air from the open spaces above and below, acting as a wind tunnel that chills even the hottest summer days.

But the memories of Mary and Francis Bonfante and the material remains of their lives belie the isolation and marginality we perceived. Places and situations that seemed dangerous to us (and to Mary and Francis as adults!) were remembered with the joy the sisters felt as playful children. The fear of venturing to the outhouse in the middle of the night was ameliorated by the company of ever-present siblings; the danger of falling in the open well ignored. Excavated dishes, bottles, cans, and machinery parts came from distant markets, revealing the limits of "self-sufficiency" and demonstrating how connected to the rest of the world the Vasco farmers really were.

IMMIGRANTS AND NEIGHBORS: THE BORDES, CABRAL, FRAGULIA, AND GRUENINGER FAMILIES

A German-born tanner, an Italian picture bride, a young stowaway from the Azores, and a Frenchman from the Pyrenees: although each of these people started off in different parts of Europe they ended up as farmers and neighbors in the Vasco. Census records and oral-history interviews attest to a remarkable mix of mostly immigrant families in the Vasco from the late 19th century on. But what was the pull, the attraction? What were the factors that led these young immigrant men and women to leave family and friends behind, with little or no hope of reconciliation?

Fred "Frenchy" Mourterot, who identified himself as the "last long line teamster in Livermore," recalls that his father *never* wanted to return to France. "That country's no good," he would say. "You work for a cent a day and then they come and collect your money." His father worked as a wood cutter, "And they'd make you a sandwich for lunch: one sardine would make three sandwiches!"[32]

Henrietta Appel came to America because she could not get along with her new stepmother. When she returned to Germany for a visit, the stepmother complained that her small steamer trunk was "'so much in the way.' Well, if it's in the way," the young woman replied, "I'll soon leave." And she did, this time coming straight to San Francisco where she met and married Jacob Grueninger in 1880.

Whatever their reasons, approximately 20 households ultimately settled in the Vasco, most of them as tenant ranchers for Mary Ives Crocker. Here are the stories of four of them.

From Germany: Jacob and Henrietta Grueninger (née Appel)

Jacob Grueninger was born in Hesse, Germany, and was a tanner by trade. His wife, Henrietta, ran a delicatessen in San Francisco. Through a German friend the Grueningers learned that public land was available to homestead near Byron. Thus with no previous farming experience, and with three young children in tow, the couple left the urban environs of San Francisco to start life anew as farmers. In 1883 Jacob Grueninger filed a Homestead Entry on an 80-acre parcel just north of the Vasco grant. As their daughter Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger) remembers, "There was nothing there, you know, just the bare land. And they had to drill wells, put buildings in, everything." A local carpenter was hired to construct a house and outbuildings. Mrs. Crosslin recalls that her childhood home included a five-room single-wall house of redwood, several chicken houses, a granary, and "a lot of big barns."

Like most of their Vasco neighbors, the Grueningers made a living any way they could. They raised hay, grain, poultry, and game birds. Mrs. Grueninger carried on a brisk trade with the resort at Byron Hot Springs, and her eight children were pressed into service to deliver eggs, squabs, and rabbits. Eggs and turkeys (for Christmas) were also

Grueninger Family. This studio portrait of the young family was taken around 1894. Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger), interviewed at age 98 by the project oral-historian, is the infant on her mother's lap. *(Courtesy Kathy Leighton.)*

shipped into Oakland. They milked cows for their own use, then skimmed and sold off the cream.

In 1919 the Grueningers purchased the 160-acre Easton Place along old Vasco Road. The Easton home was large, and the only two-story house in the Vasco, although it too was of single-wall construction. The horse barn was one of the oldest standing structures in the Vasco. With this move "up to the road," the Grueningers left their original homestead vacant, but the land remained in the family until 1971.

When Jacob Grueninger died, his oldest son, Ed, took over the farm. He eventually deeded the property to his nephew Pyron Crosslin. Over the years the Grueningers acquired neighboring properties, the Baker/Barkley farmstead and the Brown place. They also leased lands east of Vasco Road, which they used to pasture sheep. Although in 1935 they were still largely dry farming, gradually Ed and Pyron acquired enough stock to be truly a "ranch." Crosslin put up a new barn in 1945 (from recycled lumber) and added a horse arena. He eventually sold the ranch and moved with his wife to Byron.

From Italy: Andrew and Maria Fragulia

About the time the Grueningers were settling in on their homestead at the north end of the valley, another young couple was setting up housekeeping further south in the grant. Andrew Fragulia was born in 1863 in Milan, Italy, and immigrated to San Francisco by way of Brazil in 1879. When his father died in South America, the young man pushed on to California where he settled among *paesan* (fellow countrymen) in San Francisco's North Beach. He agreed to marry Maria Volponi—the sister of a friend—sight unseen and he paid her passage from Italy.

Andrew Fragulia worked for the Southern Pacific railroad, but "hated" living in San Francisco. When the train passed through the Livermore area, he looked with longing at the ranch land that rolled by. Around 1886 the Fragulias moved out to the Vasco and took on a 600-acre lease with partner Nick Ratti. Andrew and Nick could not get along and they dissolved their partnership. Ratti moved into Livermore and opened a saloon that included *bocce* ball courts in the backyard. The first of the

Fragulia Family. Andrew and Maria Fragulia pose with their 11 children on their Vasco ranch, Thanksgiving, around 1930. *(Courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

Fragulias' eleven children was born at the ranch in 1887.

Paul Fragulia recalls how hard his father had to work to clear their hilly and inaccessible site at Los Vaqueros: "When he went on that ranch, he had to work days and weeks, months, picking rocks out of the field so that he could farm it. There's piles of rocks all over that ranch. Every place where there was a solid rock he couldn't get out . . . then he piled the other rocks on it and worked around them." Yet the farm prospered. The Fragulia Place had the only substantial truck garden in the Vasco, a 1-acre Garden of Eden attributable to the constant attention of Maria's brother, John Volponi. As Paul Fragulia's daughter explained, "We're Genovese [laughter]. Yes. Very frugal, very hard-working!"

For their first few years at the ranch, Andrew and Maria lived in a two-room shack with a dirt floor. As the family grew, the Fragulias built a four-room house and later expanded it to include two additional rooms for the boys. Mrs. Fragulia made goat's milk cheese, which she stored alongside the barrels of homemade wine in the cellar.

Fragulia family photos reveal a rich life filled with communal work parties and frequent visits from city friends and relatives who loved to come to the ranch and play out "the old West." The irony was not lost on the Fragulias, who *were* cowboys in every sense of the term. Yet they graciously photographed their friends dressed up in chaps and vests, poised menacingly with the Fragulia's Colt-45, or astride a horse that the "cowboy" or "cowgirl" could not have ridden across the yard.

Maria Fragulia died in 1933 and her husband followed her less than two years later. James Fragulia, a bachelor, took over the ranch. The Fragulia Place was sold to Oscar Starr in 1941.

From the Azores: The Cabrals

Frank Nunez Cabral was perhaps the youngest immigrant to land alone in the Vasco. Born on Santa Maria Island in the Azores, he stowed away on a ship bound for America when he was just nine years old. Cabral joined his brother in Oakley and began to work as a shepherd for ranchers in the area. From this humble start he worked his way up; eventually he owned or controlled 6-7,000 acres and was considered "one of the richest guys in the area."

Frank Cabral married Mary Pernero, whose family had come from Pico in the Azores. By 1900 they had two children, Stanley and Mary, and lived in a "shack" at their sheep camp east of Vasco Road on "Tin Can Alley." After their first son was old enough to go to school, the Cabrals moved into Byron although Frank Sr. often stayed for long periods at the camp, supervising his Portuguese shepherds.

Even though he was illiterate, "You couldn't put nothin' over on him." As one neighbor remembered, Frank Cabral would "take his foot and kick a sack of wool and if you'd tell him the price, he'd tell you how much that wool would bring."

The Cabrals took over the Raffett Place around 1924 and they also leased land for another sheep camp at the "caves." Frank Cabral ran cattle on the west side of Vasco Road and was known as a hard-rider: "He'd come down that hill, they'd never seen anybody go so fast on a horse, after the cattle." He also owned a ranch near Byron that he acquired through a foreclosure.

The Cabrals' two sons also made their mark on the Vasco. Frank Jr. married a Vasco native, Frances Bonfante, and they lived at the Raffett Place for the first year of their marriage. Stanley Cabral leased land at the site of the old Vasco Adobe prior to its purchase by Oscar Starr. Stanley Cabral owned a harvester, ran a harvesting crew, and was credited with being "quite a mechanic."

From France and America: Sylvain and Mary Bordes

One of the earliest residents of the Vasco was Sylvain Bordes. He was born in France along the Spanish border in 1845 and apparently immigrated to America in 1865 at the age of 19 to avoid a mandatory seven-year military service. Bordes landed in New Orleans and then pushed on to California via Mexico. From Mexico he came up to San Jose with a group of Mexican miners to work as a teamster in the New Almaden Mercury Mines.

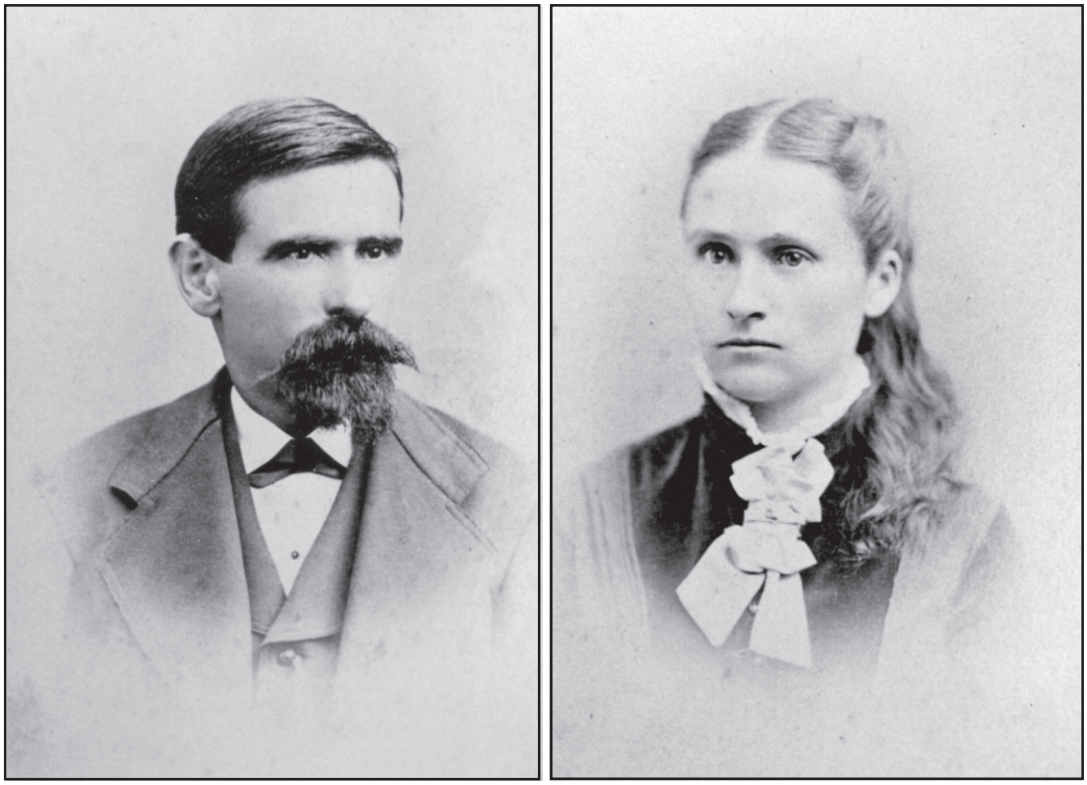
Bordes met Louis Peres through an uncle who owned the Europe Hotel in San Francisco. Peres, a fellow Gascogne, apparently needed a foreman for his Vasco rancho, and so Bordes walked the 60 miles from San Francisco to the ranch around the south end of San Francisco Bay. A local Irish-American

farm girl, Mary Barnes, caught his eye. Family history and surviving letters attest to the fact that she, too, "had set her eyes" on Sylvain, although her father disapproved of the hardworking vaquero because he was French. Nevertheless, the two were married on December 19, 1878, and were one of the few inter-ethnic couples in the Vasco. The Bordeses eventually had 11 children, of whom 9 survived.

Sylvain and "Minnie" Bordes lived temporarily in an adobe at the ranch site later known as French Frank's. Their first son, Jacques, was born there on December 31, 1879. They then moved south in the grant to the "Righter Place," a wedding gift to them from Louis Peres although unfortunately the deed was never recorded. The ranch eventually passed to Charles McLaughlin with the rest of Peres's property. The Bordeses thus became long-term tenant ranchers rather than landowners. The 1891 Contra Costa County Tax Assessment indicates that they were doing well and had acquired considerable livestock and farm equipment. Their personal property was assessed for a total of $1,840.

By 1917, when Fred Mourterot worked at the ranch, the Bordes Place was one of the most successful operations in the valley. Bordes leased close to 4,000 acres, most of it east of Vasco Road and south of Starr Ranch. Approximately 1,000 acres were thrown-in rent free as this land, west of the road, was "just solid rock," but good enough for running horses. Mourterot recalls that Bordes had 1,500 acres in hay and grain. He raised and sold horses, with a herd of about 100 head that included the Belgiums that pulled the 32-horse harvester around the steep hills. The Bordeses operated one of the area's harvesting crews. A herd of 150 to 175 mixed breed cattle wore the N-C brand. The cattle were driven to Livermore to be slaughtered or were taken out of Livermore by rail.

Mourterot recalls that the Bordeses' ranch hands were paid $1.50 a day, plus room and board. They ate with the family but slept in a bunkhouse.



The Bordes. Sylvain Bordes *(left)* and Mary Bordes *(right)* posed for these formal portraits, probably in the 1870s when he was in his 30s and she was in her 20s. *(Courtesy Franklyn Silva.)*

Bordes always paid in cash. "He had a buckskin bag, with gold in it. He paid with gold. And when you came down on Saturday night, you'd take five dollars off [from] your wages." The remainder was paid off at the end of the season.

For a ranch so stock-wealthy, there is little evidence that capital was re-invested in architecture or material comforts. As with other tenants, the Bordeses lived in a one-story single-wall house papered with burlap. A brisk wind would find cracks in the boards and "blow the paper loose." The furniture was simple, the large dining table homemade. The family had prescribed seating and Mrs. Bordes sat "under her clock."

By 1917 Sylvain Bordes was apparently enjoying his senior years. Each day he hitched up two mismatched horses, "Punch" and "Judy," and drove them into town to drink wine with friends at Demasses, a French-owned bar. His son Jack spoke French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Undoubtedly Sylvain also spoke several languages, as did many other first- and second-generation farmers and sheepherders in the area.

Sylvain Bordes died in 1918 and his wake, held at the ranch house, was an event long remembered by local residents. According to the *Livermore Herald*, the cortege that followed the casket to the cemetery was 2 miles in length, "the longest that has ever been seen in this community."

OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS: SOCIAL NETWORKING IN LOS VAQUEROS

The Los Vaqueros community of the early 20th century was held together by a complex web of social connections that supported not only this group of farming families, but each individual who participated in the community. The newborn infant sitting on Aunt Annie's lap was playing just as active a part in cementing community ties as did the square-dance caller who brought people together on Saturday night. Social networking through family relationships, communal activities, and lending a hand to one's neighbor is how people share themselves and become part of an interdependent community.

How does one observe a social network in action—growing, changing, transforming itself? An active people-watcher may want to implement a strategy of field work that includes sitting in church, visiting school classrooms, wrangling invitations to all the weddings and funerals, in addition to attending every community dance or rummage sale. For the armchair people watcher, however, there are always the local newspapers. While sipping morning coffee in bathrobe and slippers, one can casually stroll through the local announcements and social columns, uncovering all sorts of informative angles on the functioning of a social network.

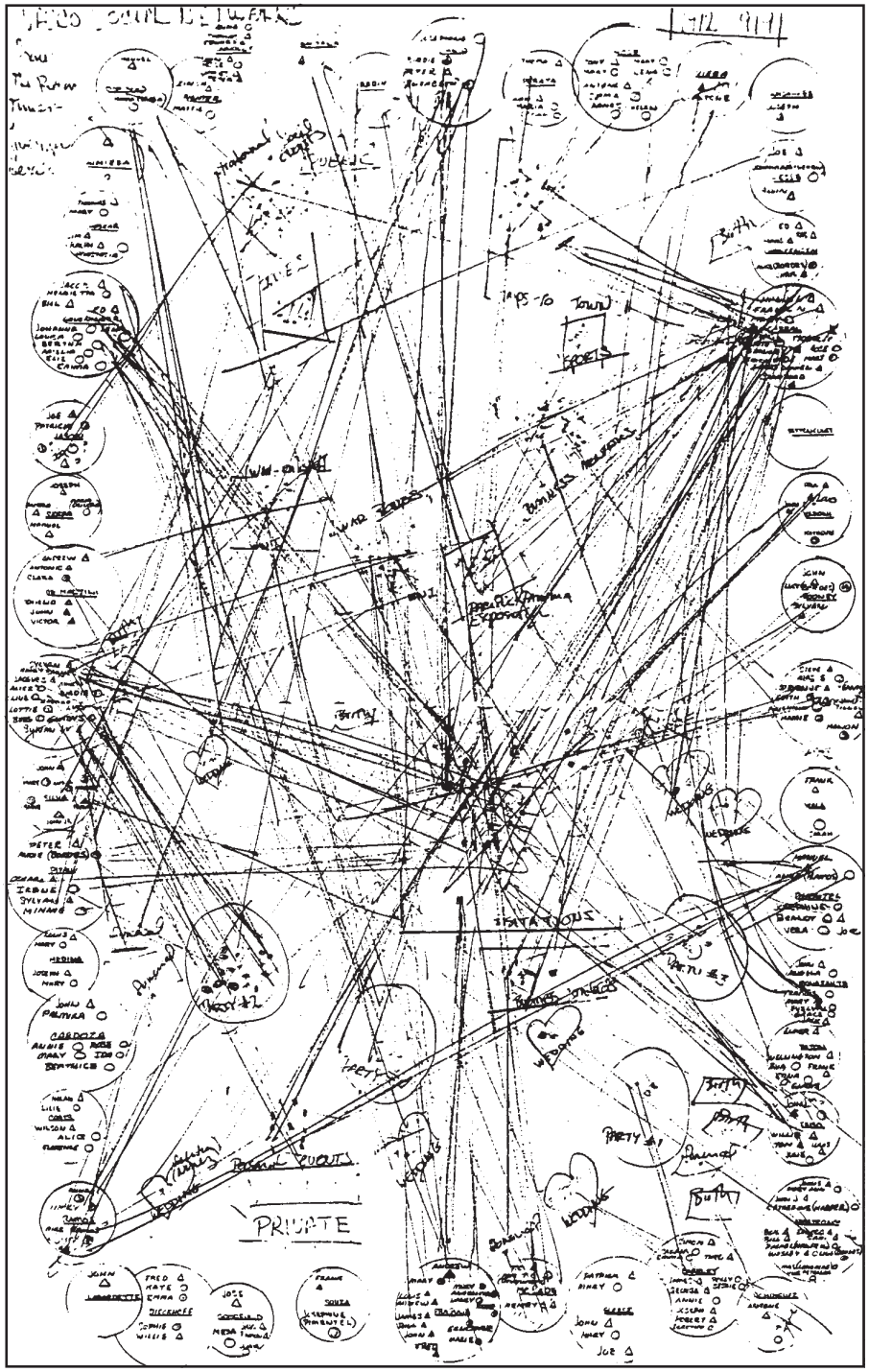
"Doings" on the Vasco: Social Reporting

A general impression of the Los Vaqueros community network during its heyday between 1900 and 1935 can be had through a review of old issues of the two major local newspapers that covered the area: the *Livermore Herald* and the *Byron Times*. Somewhere between the articles on how to treat hoof and mouth disease, the latest fashions in ladies' hats, and advertisements for Constance Bennett's rollicking new boudoir comedy are the social columns. This section usually reports the "doings" of community residents, with a heavy emphasis on mentioning people by name (it's nice that even the average and not-so-notorious can get their name in the paper—at least once). Types of activities that were regularly covered included things like who made a trip to town, visited friends or relatives, or participated in fraternal or community social events; business dealings; attendance at private parties; births, weddings, funerals; personal disasters such as fires, illness, or accidents; home improvements; automobile or livestock purchases; hospital visits; and agricultural activities, such as the types, amounts, and prices for crops, etc.

What can this type of information tell us about a social network? One of the most obvious things newspaper items can tell us is who the most visible participants in the network were. Which individuals or groups appear at the core of activities, and which show up occasionally or not at all? These newspaper items are, of course, subjective observations that include only those individuals or families within the community who were considered "newsworthy" by the reporter. Los Vaqueros's most newsworthy socialites were quite a multicultural bunch—Portuguese, Basque, German, Italian and Irish. The most socially visible core were represented by the family names of Cabral, Pimentel, Bordes, Dario, Grueninger, Morchio, and Armstrong.

How did the local papers regard the cultural diversity of the Los Vaqueros community? Interestingly enough, although discrimination against many ethnic minorities, including Portuguese and Italians, is well documented in the history of immigrant groups in California, no hint of this was noted in the newspaper reports on community residents. Indeed, when individuals from these groups are mentioned, there is almost never any reference made to their ethnicity. In rare instances when individuals are identified by their ethnicity, the tone of such remarks is rather glowing and complementary, suggesting the immigrant's contribution to the Anglo-American standard in the ethics of hard work and independence: "that's your hard-working Italian for you—," and "our successful Portuguese sheep rancher, Manuel Pimentel got top prices for . . . his sheep." It would appear that a certain amount of economic success combined with long-term residence in the region imbued some families—regardless of ethnic origin—with a pioneer status highly regarded by the larger surrounding community.

At the other end of the scale, there were Los Vaqueros residents whose names seldom, if ever,



Los Vaqueros Social Network Diagrammed. One way to begin to understand the structure of a social network in a given community is to map all the relationships between people mentioned in the local newspapers. The complex and chaotic nature of the Vasco network is well illustrated in this handwritten working diagram that covers the years 1912-1919. The original is approximately 2 × 3 feet! *(Working diagram by Bright Eastman.)*

made the social columns of the newspapers. Several families lived in the hills surrounding the land grant who, according to oral-history reports, "had no money, lived on the goodwill of the neighbors," perhaps selling eggs for income. Other individuals may have made important contributions to the community without catching the reporter's attention: sharing child-rearing or animal-husbandry advice, providing moral support in times of loss, and other such personal interactions that would not likely make the social section.

From the social columns of the *Byron Times* and *Livermore Herald*, one can also learn the nature of social interactions and kinds of social events

Sharing Child Care. An invisible component of the Los Vaqueros social network was undoubtedly forged in moments like these. Mary Ferrario sits on an open Vasco hillside with her small charges, Evelyn Bonfante and friend. *(Courtesy Mary Vallerga and Frances Cabral, both née Bonfante .)*

people on the Vasco enjoyed. After all, individuals and families were not only worth mentioning by local reporters because of their long-term settlement in the area, their hard work at the church bazaar, or the number of sheep they had headed for market. Newsworthy subjects were also those people who gave lively parties, danced, played music, had the best costumes at the masquerade ball, and were observed engaging in a variety of interesting social activities. One can get a glimpse of the composition of the network through lists of the names of party guests, musicians, who hosted an event, and who was the guest of honor. These were the sorts of things reporters thought their curious readers might want to know. Reporters seemed to take special delight in reporting on the social escapades of "the Bordes girls, the prettiest girls on the Vasco," and the lively Mamie Cabral, who was often seen leaving town to visit friends elsewhere. Most of the Vasco families entertained, visited, and conducted business relations within their family and/or ethnic group. Reports on who was partying with whom indicate that people tended to form groups that consistently partied together. These groups revolved around one of the more socially visible families and their in-laws. Another party pattern was represented by a general ethnic mix of community members who socialized with just about everybody.

The Advantages of Being Part of a Social Network

Certain social networking patterns in Los Vaqueros can be viewed as strategic, in that they created a larger pool of resources for the landless tenant farmers who relied, to a great degree, on people within their kinship group and immediate community for economic survival. Activities that were socially strategic might include visiting, forming business relationships, and staging community events. Calling on ones friends, relatives, and in-laws was an important networking strategy in Los Vaqueros. Important information could be shared, plans could be made, and help could be given and received by members of the visitation networks. The female members of the community were largely responsible for maintaining the visitation network.

If visiting was the arena for participating in the social network for Vasco women, business relationships seem to have been the province of the Vasco men. Between 1902 and 1935, the *Byron Times* and the *Livermore Herald* reported on many cooperative business ventures and economic relationships among the Los Vaqueros males. Fathers and sons farmed and ranched together on the grant, enlisting the help of their brothers- and sons-in-law, uncles, cousins, and neighbors. The strongest and most numerous of the business relationship groups existed among the Portuguese constituents of the community. This type of intra-ethnic networking was a way to build economic resources; a custom that was es-

Women Visiting. Neighbors gather on bales of hay at the Fragulia ranch. *(Courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

pecially pervasive among Portuguese immigrants in California.[33]

Landmark occasions such as weddings were also opportunities to make important social connections and expand one's potential economic base. A notable example of upscale social networking on the Vasco was the Fragulia-Barbagelata wedding. When Andrew Fragulia's daughter Mary married John Barbagelata, guests at the wedding and reception included members from almost all of the Vasco family groups, in addition to many socially prominent people from nearby Byron and Livermore. Other types of large community events, such as kitchen or barn dances, were not only an opportunity to have fun, but to make a stand for community interdependence.

Community self-help was customary in Los Vaqueros. Community members report that bartering and exchanging services were ways in which community members helped each other. Being a "good neighbor" on the Vasco meant participating in these mutually supportive activities with "no real score keeping."[34] With no hospitals nearby and doctors some distance away, people on the Vasco had to master some degree of medical skill. Some women were experienced midwives and were called out in the dark of night into the hills to aid in home deliveries. Women also nursed the sick in their own families as well as in those of their neighbors.

Labor was sometimes exchanged between cowboys in the Black Hills and farmers on the Vasco. Cowboys from the hills rode down to help with the cattle round-ups, branding, and other ranching activities. John Gleese, known as the toughest cowboy ever to ride out of the Black Hills, was also a deputy sheriff for a time. Reluctant to impede the thriving bootlegging industry in the Hills during Prohibition, Gleese would remind his neighbors to keep their stills out of sight—as far as "the law" was concerned, he hadn't seen a thing.

Thick and Thin

However geographically isolated the close-knit community may have been, members were involved in and affected by world events. When the United States became involved in the First World War, 11 young men enlisted or were drafted for service in the armed forces, and many of them saw combat. One young woman of the community, Lottie Bordes, served abroad during the war as a nurse. The *Byron Times* also noted a total of 15 Vasco residents who purchased war bonds, including parents of several of the young soldiers. Even as the traumatic events of the war touched the lives of the Vasco families, the ravages of the Spanish Influenza pandemic in 1918 and 1919 did not spare this remote farming community. Many were reported stricken with the virus. Some were hospitalized and, tragically, some died. The Rose family lost two of its young men—first cousins—within a week of each other. More enjoyable events also drew Vasco residents out into the exciting, fast-paced world of early 20th-century technology, when many residents visited the Panama/Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco during the year 1915.

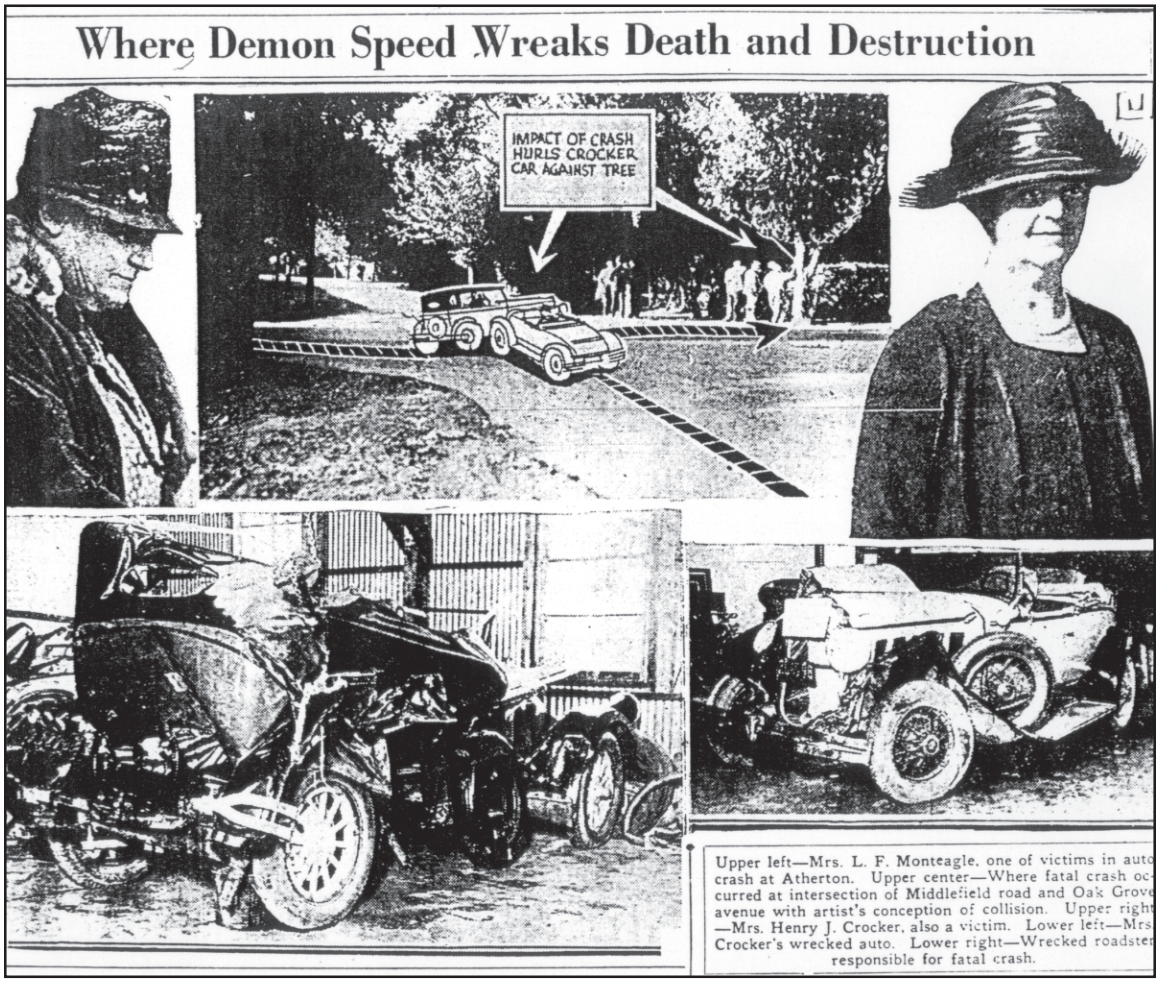
To what degree was the social-networking system in Los Vaqueros typical of those maintained by other farming communities in northern and central California during the early 20th century? In many ways it must have been as unique an entity as the individuals who were a part of it. In other ways, the networking system in Los Vaqueros may have been one of many such social systems that arose in response to similar economic and social conditions in

agricultural communities throughout California. At a time when farming and ranching were major components of the state's economy, opportunities for foreign immigrants and westward-migrating Anglo-Americans brought people together in multicultural settings like the Vasco. By participating in family and community activities, the people who lived and worked in the Los Vaqueros region were able to create an effective system of mutual support. Although conflict and tensions most certainly existed, a shared desire to succeed on this land fostered a spirit of cooperation among its inhabitants, weaving them into a multicolored fabric of "place."

A MOST PUBLIC-SPIRITED LADY: MARY CROCKER

Born Mary Virginia Ives, the heir to the McLaughlin estate was the daughter of a physician who lived in the little town of Volcano, in the heart of the Amador County gold country. When her father died unexpectedly in 1873, 4-year-old Mary was adopted by Charles McLaughlin and his wife, who had lost their only child—a 7-year-old girl—three years earlier.[35] Mary's mother was alive until 1913, and Mary's relationship to the McLaughlins was variously described as "niece," "adopted daughter," and "foster child." It could be that her father's estate was too strained to provide a proper social upbringing for her and her several siblings. If this was the case, the children had been "farmed out" to various relatives; a more elegant phrase would apply here, however, since little Mary went to live at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Mary's upbringing would have included training in the right schools; perhaps her share of the foreign travels the McLaughlins enjoyed; and full exposure to how one behaves in polite society.

Mary was being reared to marry into a good family. As it turned out, she made an alliance with a nephew of one of McLaughlin's favorite foes—



"Speeder Kills Society Matrons." So went the headline in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of June 27, 1929, announcing the untimely death of Mary Crocker. Rivaling the voyeurism of today's tabloids, this inset provides details of the tragic event; Mary Crocker is pictured in the upper right.

Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific's Big Four. In April 1889, one year after Kate McLaughlin's death, Mary was married in San Francisco before two thousand guests to banker Henry J. Crocker. It was reported that her adopted mother's recent demise had "prevented her in a measure from entering fully into the gaieties of social life here."[36] With Kate McLaughlin's death, Mary and her cousin Kate Dillon Winship had received nearly all of the 4-million-dollar estate—worth many times that figure in 1990s dollars.

The story so far might read like the classic "Poor Little Rich Girl"—the tale of a young person wealthy by material standards but bereft of all other assets. In fact, Mary Ives Crocker may have led a quite satisfying life. She stayed in touch with her siblings, had two sons and two daughters and enjoyed her grandchildren, shared in her husband's business interests, and relaxed with him on a "dude ranch" they maintained in the uplands of northern Sonoma County. Among the "jewelry, trinkets, and keepsakes" she kept in a safe-deposit box at her husband's bank were a number of diamond, ruby, and pearl items shaped as butterflies and crescents and even a lorgnette, that wonderfully dated signature of a lady of means. There was also a "California Bear scarf pin" and "1 Shriner's ring,"[37] suggestive of her sportier side.

The *Byron Times* booster editions throughout the 1910s and 1920s were ready to claim Los Vaqueros's association with Mary Ives Crocker. The Crocker-Winship interests were handled out of San Francisco, where the company maintained "commodious headquarters." Henry Crocker, who had been actively involved in his wife's landholdings and a promoter of subdividing Delta and adjacent lands, died in 1912. While Mary Crocker was repeatedly praised by the *Byron Times* for her involvement in her Contra Costa lands, it is unlikely that she spent any time on the grant. Financial matters were handled at "headquarters," while mundane operations were overseen for several decades by Charles Lamberton, her genial land manager, fondly remembered by tenants for his understanding ways. Although former residents recalled that "the Crocker estate was mentioned all the time," no direct contact with the Crockers was remembered.

Mary Crocker's life was abruptly ended in June 1929. Returning from a luncheon, Mrs. Crocker's chauffeur-driven limousine was hit by a roadster driven by a drunk driver; also killed were two other socially prominent women. The brutality of the accident and the prominence of the victims resulted in front-page headlines and several follow-up stories.[38] Mrs. Crocker, age 60 at her death, was particularly remembered for her philanthropic work, including funding an addition to the Stanford Home for Convalescent Children and a 20-bed unit to Stanford Hospital. Just before her death, the *Byron Times* had praised her as a prime mover in many development projects and as a "most public spirited woman."[39] Perhaps also attesting to the good-spiritedness of Mary Crocker, her estate was not given over to one or two people but spread out among a wide range of family and friends. Among those she remembered—handsomely, in the amount of $15,000—was Charles Lamberton, the manager of her tenant holdings. It is to Mary Crocker's credit that she acknowledged his good heart.

FARM WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The proverb "A woman's work is never done" was undoubtedly first uttered by a farm wife. Although the chatty social notes of the *Byron Times* portray a public, idealized picture of women's social lives, the *private* image of the Vasco farm wife could be quite different. Experiences certainly varied from family to family, but consistently women worked hard for farm and family.

Women's Work

Mary Vallerga (née Bonfante) summarized her daily routine as a newlywed: She would make breakfast, feed the chickens and the lambs on the bottle, milk the cows, walk up a mile to pump water down to the house, cook lunch and dinner over a wood stove, wash clothes by hand, and water the cattle. "That was my college!"[40]

Even the women in the Bordes family—well off in comparison to most of their neighbors—engendered the concern of at least one sympathetic nephew:

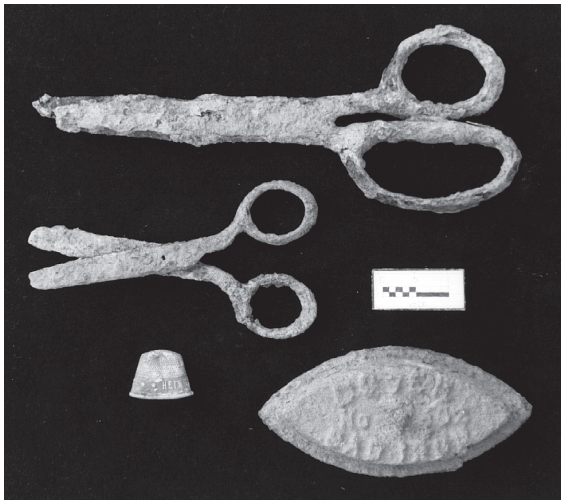
> At times I wondered whether I could adjust to life there during the winter season, and felt great sympathy for the women. No radio, infrequent trips into Livermore, little contact socially, kerosene lamps of the simple wick type with their yellowish light—very little difference from centuries past. [Yet] I don't remember any complaints falling on my ears. They did have a piano.[41]

During this era there were no presidential mandates guaranteeing new mothers a two-day hospital stay. One German American man recalled, dryly, that the only help his grandmother could expect from her husband at childbirth was that he would tie the cow to the back door of the house, so that she need not walk up to the barn at milking time. And two sisters of Italian American descent remembered that the day following the birth of their brother, their mother got up out of bed, went to round up the cows for milking, and then proceeded to cook dinner for the harvesting crew. The new baby was rocked to sleep in a macaroni box filled with straw.

In contrast to oral histories collected from other rural and urban working-class women, there seems to have been precious little time for women in the

Angela Bonfante Driving a Hay Mower. Women worked like women—cooking, gardening, and giving birth—but many of them also worked "like men," not only because of economic necessity but because it was expected of them. *(Courtesy Mary Vallerga and Frances Cabral [both née Bonfante].)*

Vasco to gather together to quilt, embroider, and exchange news. But at home they always found time to do the family sewing: they sewed their children's clothing and might edge their daughters' flour-sack undergarments with a little lace. Mrs. Bonfante's sewing kit included at least two sizes of scissors, a small sad iron, and a thimble.



Sewing Implements. Some of the artifacts that we most commonly associate with women are implements used for sewing. These scissors, sad iron, and thimble were excavated from a cellarhole at the Bonfante site.

As in other American farm households, Vasco mothers controlled their "egg money." Eggs (or chickens or cream) were sold or traded in town and the profits were quickly applied toward new shoes for the children. Most food was made from scratch and some of it was canned at home in Mason jars. But the farm wives were far from isolated or "self-sufficient." Food that wasn't produced on the farm was purchased in town on periodic shopping trips. Mrs. Bonfante, for example, stocked her larder with commercially butchered pork, tin cans of food, soda pop, and the latest in matching table wares.[42]

The hard-packed adobe soil was unforgiving, and most women had to rely on fruit and vegetables that they put up from their annual outings to Delta ranches. Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger), born in the Vasco in 1893, remembered that her mother

> didn't have luck growing anything in that soil there at all. I know she tried, but she couldn't. So every fall they'd go to [an area] between Byron and Stockton. And they'd buy five or six sacks of potatoes. And they bought a sack of beans and a sack of . . . onions to do us the winter. So we ate a lot of beans and potatoes [chuckles]. And they raised a lot of pork. They'd cure their own meats . . . she made sausages of all kinds . . . And she made a lot of cottage cheese; we had to eat a lot of cottage cheese in those days.

Some women, like Henrietta Grueninger and Elisa Robles, were gifted midwives and healers. Mrs. Grueninger delivered all of her neighbor's 12 children and was gratefully referred to as "that old stork" by the local physician.

If the lot of a married woman was one of hard work and little ease, the situation for a widow was even more precarious. Following the death of her husband, Pierre, Annie Pitau (née Bordes) and her four children were taken in by her maternal grandmother. Lucy Rooney (née Bordes), however, was more or less on her own when her husband died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. For four years she milked cows at her parents' ranch to pay for her children's room and board. Lucy then purchased a 40-acre farm outside of the grant with money she inherited from her husband's father. She and her family worked the place alone and raised sheep, cattle, and chickens, and sold cream in town. Several suitors courted the young widow, and she shrewdly put them to work. Only one of her sons, Sylvain, was old enough to do heavy labor, and he worked 12-hour days between the home place and his job as a field hand on a local farm. Sylvain Rooney grew up devoted to his mother and supported her in later years.

But if these ranch women worked hard they also enjoyed some of the liberties of life in the West. As in Spanish California, women could be expert riders. Even young girls in the Vasco thought nothing of riding bareback across the hills. Bertie Dario (née Bordes) in particular was respected for her prowess with both horse and whip. Bertie's daughter, Elizabeth Schwartzler (née Dario) remembers that her mother rode in the first Livermore Rodeo parade.

Music provided an important outlet for many women. Most of the Bordes women played an instrument, and several other descendants recalled that

their mothers sang. In early years one woman, Mabel Christensen, regularly played for the Saturday-night dances.

Work Time, Play Time

Children on these tenant ranches were also expected to work hard. The family functioned as an economic as well as a social unit, and children represented an important labor force. It is not too surprising then that many of the people interviewed stressed the work they did as kids, rather than the games they played. As John Vallerga quipped: "I worked ever since I could reach the teats on a cow!"

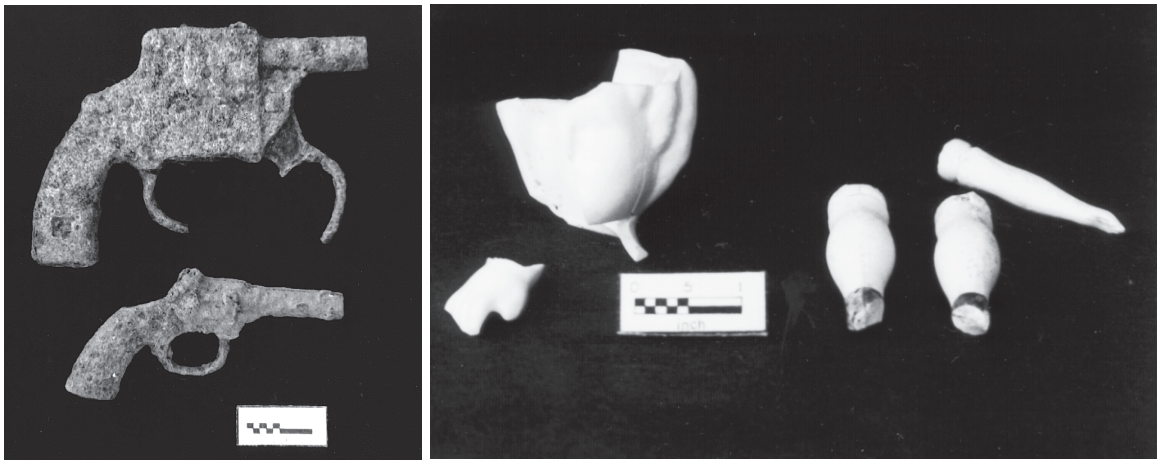
Tasks were usually gender specific: thus most families identified girls' work versus boys' work. As an example, on the Grueninger ranch it was the girls' job to pump the trough full of water for the horses and the cows, and "it seemed that they could just drink that water as fast as we could pump it!" The girls also milked the cows, gathered eggs, fed the pigs, and brought in the kindling for the wood stove. The boys helped their father with the general farm work. At holiday time all of the children lined up in one of the outbuildings to dress the turkeys that the Grueningers shipped to the city.

But Vasco children also got the chance to be playful: in summertime, even though chores needed to be done, there was time enough to wade through the water in Kellogg Creek, catch polliwogs and turtles, and play traditional games. Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger) remembers that she and her siblings preferred to play at the home of their neighbors as the Barkleys were cheerfully permissive:

> We'd go to the Barkleys and we could just tear things up [laughter]. We could climb through the windows, and hide under the beds or anyplace that we wanted to play hide-and-seek. And we used to play Auntie Over [Annie Annie Over] . . . at the barn. And Mr. and Mrs. Barkley would sit on the porch and they would just root for us; have just as much fun as we were having.

Commercially produced toys were not common, but there was plenty to do: "We had to make our own play. We didn't have the toys like kids have today, you know. We used to make mud pies and put them up on the roof to dry. And we'd sell them to the one that played bakery, or store." The toys that the children did have included guns and dolls. And, of course, the landscape itself provided powerful stimulation for childhood imagination. Mrs. Crosslin remembered,

> we used to have a blackboard out on our back porch. You know I was playing out there, drawing pictures. Was a thunder storm come up. And I said [to my dad] "What is that?" And he said, "Oh, that's the devils dancing on top of Mount Diablo!" And to this day I can remember that.



Toys. Although Vasco homes may not have been overflowing with commercially produced toys, the children were not bereft of playthings. In addition to the many opportunities for play afforded by the landscape itself, manufactured toys were part of farm children's lives. Two toy guns *(left)* were found by archaeologists at the Perata/Bonfante site, and the remains of at least two porcelain dolls *(right)* were recovered from the Weymouth/Rose site.

Friends Forever

Education was highly valued among the farmers and ranchers at Los Vaqueros. As one tenant put it: "Yeah, but the old timers, they left misery over there in Italy and they come over here. They're looking for a better life. And they wanted their children to *learn*." In 1885, in an effort to keep tenants on the grant, the estate of Charles McLaughlin built a schoolhouse and petitioned the county to establish a school district. From then until 1936, local children attended their own school in an open classroom with grades one through eight. Following graduation, students continued their education at Brentwood.

The school itself was rudimentary: the teacher also functioned as the janitor and on occasion had to split wood for the stove. Children remember that the well had no pump, so they had to pull buckets up by hand. Sometimes the well ran dry and the children had to bring their own water in bottles, which they would fill at the Perata's spring up the road.

Relationships among Vasco families were often forged at school where children from all the over grant were brought together. Some of the friendships were carried on into later life, but were perhaps never again as ingenuous as the school-girl sentiments expressed in Emelia Grueninger's 1904 autograph book. Rose Fragulia must have been a special friend:

> Dear Emelia,
> There is a golden cord
> which binds two hearts together.
> And if that cord is never broken
> you and I are friends forever
> Your sincere Friend,
> Rose Fragolio [sic], March 16, 1904

As in many rural areas, the school also served as a focal point for the community. Dances with live music or, later on, phonograph records brought families together in a neutral, public space. And as in "Starkley," the California town studied by historian Elvin Hatch, when the Vasco school closed (circa 1936), "the community soon ceased to exist as a distinct entity with a social life of its own."[43]

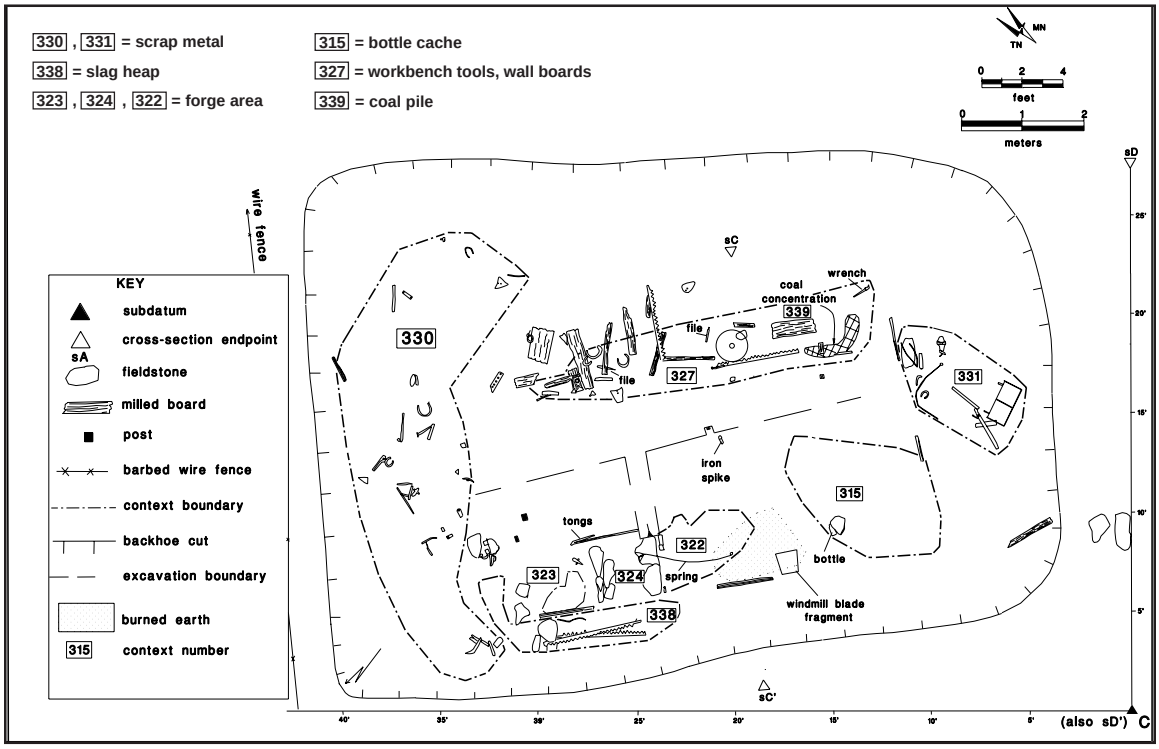
JOHN BONFANTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP

Out on the Vasco among the ranchers who farmed and the farmers who ranched, most of the Los Vaqueros agriculturalists had to be jacks of many trades. Even though there was a strong sense of community and sharing among the tenants on the Vasco and the homesteaders in the Black Hills, each family had to be prepared to provide for itself. A farmer in the early 1900s had to possess some knowledge of blacksmithing to keep the horses shoed and the wagons, mowers, and carriages in working order. And even if the farmer was not an expert craftsman, he needed to maintain a place for a visiting smith to work.

The Bonfante family ranch at the southern end of the Kellogg Creek Valley was equipped with a small blacksmith shop, which Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists excavated in 1995.[44] Such a shop was usually not just a place to forge metal. It served as a multi-purpose workshop that accommodated not only blacksmithing—shoeing horses, repairing tools, and fabricating latches or replacement machine parts—but also leather working and socializing. The shop was usually considered the men's domain, but even little girls ventured in there once in awhile, enough to tell the archaeologists something about their father's shop, anyway.

The Anatomy of a Blacksmith Shop

There was not a lot of flexibility in how a blacksmith shop was laid out, and there were certain elements that all of them had to have.[45] Every shop had a work area where the forge, anvil, bellows, quenching tub, and workbench were all in close proximity to one another. On the other hand, the storage area—where fuel, extra tools, and raw stock were kept—could be somewhat removed. The refuse pile, where the smith discarded the scrap metal and slag, could likewise be anywhere out of the way. Many shops



Archaeological Map of the Blacksmith Shop. Archaeologists thoroughly mapped all of the artifacts and structural remains they uncovered at John Bonfante's blacksmith shop. In spite of the fact that the building and most of the equipment were completely gone, the distribution of artifacts revealed much about how the shop was laid out.

also had a domestic area where the smith took his meals or socialized with visitors.

When the archaeologists excavated Mr. Bonfante's shop in 1995, there was really very little of it left. The building itself had been removed years before, and most of the equipment was gone. What remained was lots of artifacts, mostly metal, that had stayed pretty much in their original positions. So even though no forge, anvil, bellows, quenching tub, workbench, or coal bin survived, the archaeologists were able to discern how the shop was laid out.

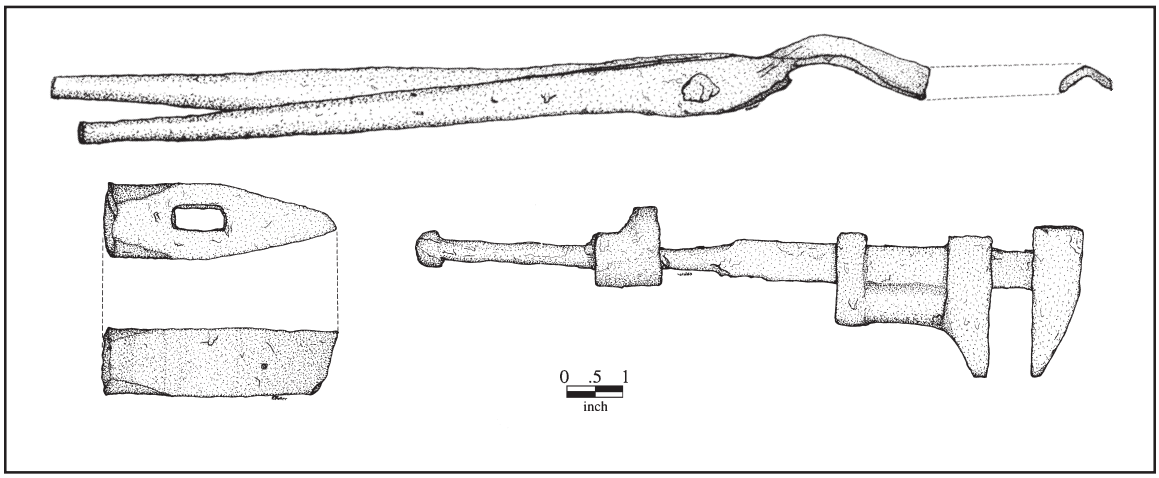
The Bonfante's shop was built on a hillside and was terraced in two levels. Remnants of boards and a few posts suggested that the upper terrace was enclosed, while the lower terrace was covered with a lean-to. The blacksmithing was done in the enclosed part of the shop on the upper terrace. The lower terrace may have had a shed roof with open sides where animals were brought in to be shoed and where harnesses needing repair were hung on the shop's outside wall.

A parallel alignment of stones on the upper terrace was probably all that was left of a forge base or perhaps support for an anvil stand. Tongs and a hammer heads—hot-metal tools used most frequently in the vicinity of the forge and the anvil—were found flanking these stones.

The workbench, another component of the work area, was probably located across the narrow shop from the forge. Files and an adjustable wrench were found there. Files were commonly used on cold metal, while an adjustable wrench could be used with a vise to twist hot metal; both operations usually occurred at the workbench, which should be at least 4 or 5 feet removed from the forge and anvil. The workbench was often home to the smallest hardware and paraphernalia that collected in the blacksmith shop, and this in fact was where a broad array of bolts, nuts, spikes, hooks, chain links, rods, and nails was found.

John Bonfante's workbench was probably set against the wall of the shop: many of the artifacts associated with it were actually found on the lower terrace where they landed when the wall fell. Indeed, boards from the wall itself were found among a great array of artifacts on the lower terrace, which were undoubtedly the remains of objects that had once hung on either side of the wall.

The refuse area was outside the shop where heaps of scrap metal and discarded hardware were found. There was probably a window behind the



Blacksmithing Tools. Tools like these provided clues about the layout of John Bonfante's blacksmith shop since they would have been used in different areas. The tongs *(top)* are probably a type called "hollow-bit" or "bolt" tongs particularly useful for holding round stock such as rods over the forge and on the anvil. Both hammers *(bottom left)* are "straight-peens," designed to spread hot metal sideways when pounded on the anvil. The adjustable wrench *(bottom right)* was probably used to twist hot metal in a vise mounted on the workbench. *(Drawings by A. Richard Wolter.)*

forge because nearby, on the opposite side of a board that was probably the wall, was a pile of slag (forge residue) that conformed to the corner of the building. The smith probably threw the residue right out the window when he had to clear out the forge.

The storage area was not well defined, and may not have been a discrete area. The largest cache of coal was found on the lower terrace in an L-shaped configuration that suggested the edge of a box or bin, so perhaps that is where John Bonfante stored his fuel.

"That Thing That Puffed"

John Bonfante's blacksmith shop was definitely the domain of grown men. It did not figure big in the memories of the Bonfante sisters—Frances Vallerga, Mary Cabral, and Evelyn Sod—when they were interviewed in the 1990s[46]: as Mrs. Cabral said, "Well, I know there was a little blacksmith shop there because they used to shoe the horses. . . . They shoed the horses and I don't know what they had in there. But then we never had time to go [in there] . . ." Her understanding of what went on in the shop was vague at best:

> Well, sometimes there was irons that was broken and they'd heat up the horses shoes, heat them up and put them on the horses. And they do all kinds of things like that. But sometimes there was an iron, you had to put it together.

But the shop was still part of their lives and memories, and they filled in details of the operation that could not be discerned from the archaeology. Mrs. Cabral remembered clearly that the forge's fire was flamed with a big bellows (". . . that thing that puffed, you know, the air to make it get hot"). She also remembered that the shop was a closed building with a door for an entrance. Mr. Bonfante used the shop to shoe horses, but apparently had help from one or two intermittent workers to do other smithing and to assist him during the summer, "when they're shoeing the horses" in earnest. At least one of the helpers also used the shop to mend horse harnesses; Fermin Valenzuela was mentioned as working at the shop, and considering his skill with horses, perhaps this was his job.

The Izzer Was No Wazzer

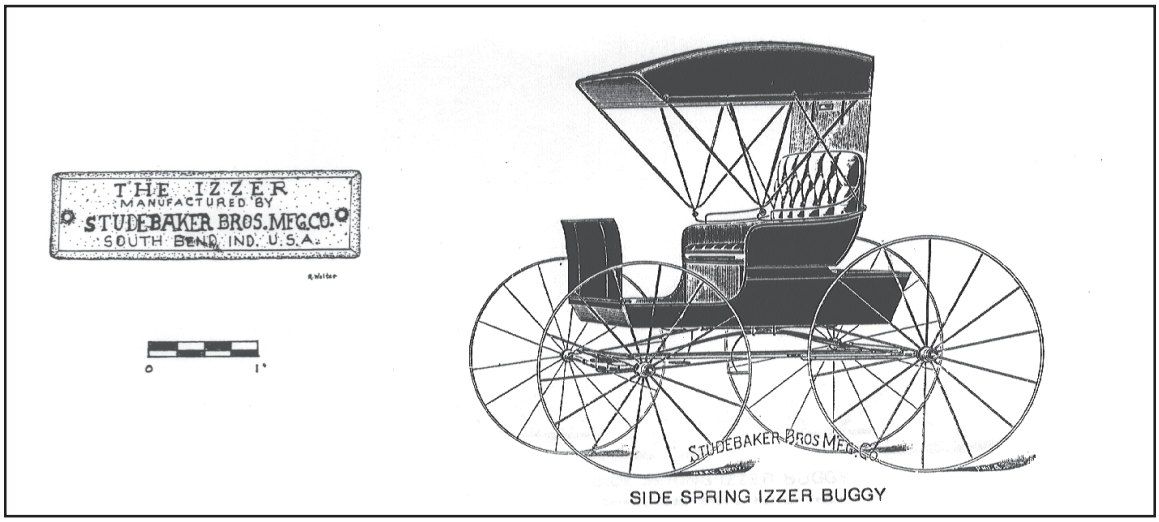
Artifacts were really the key to understanding the workings of John Bonfante's blacksmith shop, and the archaeologists found plenty of them. What the artifacts conveyed most eloquently was the multiplicity of activities that went on in the blacksmith shop.

Shoeing of horses was certainly one of the main functions of the shop. Archaeologists found 25 shoes of varying sizes that were probably from both draft and mount horses. But there were also pieces of agricultural machinery, wagon parts, team hardware, woodworking and mechanics' tools, and lots of structural hardware: clearly the blacksmith shop was used for the repair and fabrication of all manner of household, livestock, and farming items. On the other hand, very little if any unmodified, raw stock was found at John Bonfante's blacksmith shop, suggesting that he and his smith relied on reusing old scrap for their repairs.

At one time or another John Bonfante had his buggy in the shop to repair it; perhaps he was replacing a step, fixing a broken spring, or welding a break in a metal strut. Whatever he was doing, he lost the buggy's name plate, which ended up in his pile of refuse. The name plate identified the buggy as "The Izzer," manufactured by none other than the Studebaker Brothers of South Bend, Indiana. The curious name, which was applied to a whole line of buggies, supposedly originated thus:

> One of the Studebaker brothers, at a County fair where they had an exhibit, was trying to sell a farmer a Studebaker buggy. He had used the word "was" several times during his sales pitch, "the box was well made," "the seat was well upholstered," etc. The farmer finally said he wanted an izzer not a wazzer. Mr. Studebaker was so taken with this remark that thereafter some of the Studebaker buggys were called "Izzers."[47]

There was also an enormous quantity of harness and bridle material, suggesting that leather was repaired in the shop as well. Many of the pieces showed signs of mending with rivets or added layers of leather. One whole bridle with blinders was



"The Izzer." The discovery of this curious name plate *(left)* in a refuse pile at the blacksmith shop prompted further investigations. Equipped with knowledge that there is a museum, historical archive, or trade association for almost every major product made in the United States, it did not take long to find the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend. The archivist there searched their collection of catalogs and found this advertisement *(right). (Drawing by A. Richard Wolter; Advertisement reproduced from Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Co. 1900.)*

found that matched almost exactly the bridle in a historic photograph of Mrs. Bonfante driving a pair of horses.

There were also many artifacts that told the archaeologists about the smithing process itself. Forge fuel—small pieces of lignite coal—was found throughout the shop. The coal was friable and filled with impurities, and was probably a low-grade type mined from the flanks of Mount Diablo in eastern Contra Costa County. Forge residue—a conglomerate of partially used fuel and natural impurities, called slag—was found outside the shop, near the forge. The slag appeared to have been discarded long before its total fuel value had been used.

Several of the tools Mr. Bonfante or his blacksmith used were found as well. There were at least three pairs of tongs, two hammer heads, two adjustable wrenches, at least five tanged files, and a chisel.[48] A single fragment of yellow firebrick and a piece of a manifold were the only likely remains of the forge itself.

Beer on Whiskey, Very Frisky

John Bonfante used a corner of his shop to stockpile empty bottles. Archaeologists excavated the broken remains of his "cache" and found more than 70 containers, 11 of which were still whole. Near the pile of bottles was other refuse that included some food remains (bones; almond, peach, and squash seeds; a coconut shell; and food containers), lots of leather strap, and bits of a plate or two. This was undoubtedly the social center of John Bonfante's blacksmith shop, and, being close to the fire, perhaps the spot where Fermin Valenzuela sat to repair harnesses during the cold winter months.

Whoever supplied the bottles for the stockpile was definitely not drinking soda pop. The cache contained at least 54 alcohol bottles for beer, bourbon, gin, and whiskey. A curious container was a Chinese brown glazed stoneware rice-wine bottle that attests, perhaps, to the drinker's catholic taste in liquor. Clearly, this habit was not without side effects: in addition to the liquor bottles there were 14 medicine bottles, most of which were stomach remedies. These included soothing milk of magnesia in distinctive cobalt blue bottles (in a giant size) and a bit of the hair of the dog: 78-proof stomach bitters manufactured by an Italian firm, Fernet-Branca.

All of the bottles that could be securely dated were manufactured just before Prohibition; but the Bonfante's lived at the site well into the 1920s. John

Bottle "Cache." Surprisingly, many of the bottles found in this pile in the corner the blacksmith shop stayed whole for nearly 70 years after the Bonfantes moved away. Archaeologists uncovered the "cache" of more than 70 containers under just a few inches of soil on a hillside trod by grazing cattle!

Bonfante was either saving the bottles, hiding them from his wife and children, or maybe a bit of both. It is particularly curious that in all the other places that the archaeologists found refuse at the Bonfante site, there were no alcohol bottles.

Well into the 20th century, and particularly during Prohibition, there was a booming business in second-hand liquor bottles.[49] It seems unlikely that John Bonfante would not have cashed in on this opportunity unless he had a better use for his stockpile. We know that John Bonfante made his own wine, which he stored in a cellar he had dug next to the house; perhaps he collected the old containers to bottle his own product.

Helping Hands

John Bonfante, like many of the farmers living at Los Vaqueros before the second World War, maintained a blacksmith shop to shoe his horses and make simple repairs when necessary. But, not a blacksmith by trade, he relied on the services of a professional who traveled from ranch to ranch, and, according to Mary Cabral, would "carry all his stuff on his back." Paul Fragulia remembered the same thing on *his* family's ranch: "This blacksmith would come in every year, every springtime around, just before the summer come in, and he'd stay right at the ranch until he got them all shod."

And then there was the harness maker who, according to Evelyn Sod and Mary Vallerga, would come "during the wintertime"; he would "come to our ranch, he went to the Bordes Ranch, he went to the Fragulia Ranch, he went to all them ranches to fix the harness." Perhaps this is who sat by the fire and discarded of his leather scrap near the bottle cache.

Even in the realm of work, then, the Vasco agriculturalists were not solitary. It is easy to imagine that helping hands were not all that the visiting blacksmith and harness maker provided. Moving from ranch to ranch as they did, they undoubtedly passed along local news and offered male companionship to the isolated farmers. At John Bonfante's place, they may have even enjoyed a drink away from the watchful eyes of the family.

BOCCE *TO BASEBALL: FOLKLIFE AND ETHNICITY IN THE VASCO*

To what extent did the immigrant farm families of the Vasco continue to be "Italian" or "German" versus becoming "American?" What traditions did they retain and how quickly did they accommodate to the values and cultural practices of their adopted country? These questions, although central to a study such as this, are surprisingly complex and turn on our often fallacious assumptions about nationalism and ethnicity.

For example, "Italians" are often thought of as a monolithic ethnic group who share a common cultural heritage. Italy, however, was not a unified country until 1861 and as a consequence Italian immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries did not think of themselves as Italian at all but rather as *paesan* from a particular region or town, as *Barese* or *Calabresi*, as examples. The Fragulias made the hilly terrain of their Vasco tenant ranch profitable because they were "*Genovese*," not because they were "Italian." In America, social networks, marriage, and accessibility to jobs were often tied to this regional affiliation.

In a similar vein Greeks initially socialized among *patrioti*, and Portuguese-Azoreans identified most closely with others from their island of origin. Because these various regional identities were meaningless to Americans, new ethno-national categories were created. Thus "Italians" and then "Italian Americans" gradually came into being. To some extent, ethnicity and identity based on one's national origin were "invented" here. So even though census records may have counted "German" or "Mexican" households, we should ask how groups thought of themselves.[50]

Ethnic Ties

Looking at the Vasco, and with these qualifications aside, we see that first and second-generation families did indeed hold onto and express an identity that was based on ethnic ties. Although there was inter-ethnic mixing at some levels, people generally socialized along lines of ethnic affiliation. As Paul Fragulia recalls, "They'd stay more or less in their own [group]. The Portuguese stayed more on their own side and the Italian was the same way. The Germans was the same way. They very seldom intermarried."[51] For example, of the four families profiled in a previous essay, only the French emigrant Sylvain Bordes "married out" when he courted a local Irish-American farm girl, Minnie Barnes. And, in fact, Mr. Barnes initially opposed the union *because* of Sylvain's heritage.

Census data and oral-history interviews indicate that most farmers recruited hired help from their native group; social networks were also initially constructed within the ethnic group. Sylvain Bordes rode into town each day to socialize and drink wine at the French-owned saloon, Damasse's. The Grueningers first heard about available public land in the Vasco through a local German family, the Heizers. Azorean-born Frank N. Cabral almost exclusively hired fellow countrymen to shepherd his extensive flocks of sheep.

Fiddle Tunes and Polka Dances

During excavations, Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists found few ethnically distinct artifacts as they patiently sifted through broken machine parts and pottery sherds. Clearly most Vasco farmers purchased standard "American" goods at stores in Livermore and Byron or perhaps through mail-order catalogs. Itinerant peddlers also went from ranch to ranch. But much of a group's traditional expressive culture or "folklife" is ephemeral and intangible and leaves little or no trace in the archaeological and historical record. How do you dig up a fiddle tune, a polka dance, or a proverb?

So although Vasco families may have bought similar inexpensive white ironstone dishes from the local store, the food that they served on these dishes was remarkably different from household to household. Women baked their own bread, canned their own food, and cured their own meat, thus making it easy to maintain traditional foodways.[52]

Italians made noodles for pasta, Portuguese prepared their own spiced sausage, and Germans put up barrels of herring fish. The Italian families along with "French Frank" made wine each year.

As Paul Fragulia quipped, "Yeah, we made our own wine. Mother made our own cheese. And chickens laid all their own eggs! [laughter]." Food was important in maintaining inter-ethnic ties as well. Neighbors were essential at harvesting and in times of crisis, and reciprocal exchanges of food helped to maintain these important social and economic ties. Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger), born in the Vasco in 1893, recalls that her mother made deep-fried doughnuts, a traditional German delicacy:

> And oh, she made the best raised doughnuts there was. And I know she used to spread a big sheet out on the table, and she'd put the doughnuts [there], let them rise, bake 'em, and dip them in sugar. . . . And oh, they were so good. And I think 'bout every time she baked doughnuts, she says she thought that the Barkleys could smell them, because here a bunch of kids come. [Laughter] And she'd always try to send a bagful home, to take to their mother, but I don't know whether they ever got home [or not].

The Grueningers also regularly exchanged gifts of meat with their neighbors: "I don't ever remember my folks ever butchering a beef. It was always hogs. But now Barkleys would butcher a beef once in a while. And I could remember Mr. Barkley coming over carrying probably almost a quarter piece of beef on his shoulders. He gave it to my folks. And then they'd give him some, you know, when they'd butcher."

Foodways are a private and safe way to express ethnic and cultural values. Language is another way to privately hold onto one's heritage. Most children raised in immigrant households in the Vasco reported that they spoke little or no "American" before they entered school. John Vallerga, born at his parent's county-line ranch, remembers that on his first day at the Vasco School the teacher asked him to read from *The Little Red Hen*. When he answered "Me no can do," she turned to him and said derisively, "I've got another foreigner!"

Because of the multi-ethnic work force, many immigrants became polyglots by necessity. When Fred Mourterot's father arrived from France he spoke no English whatsoever. He began to herd sheep for his future father-in-law, French-born Joseph Blondin. In the process he learned to speak Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese from the other sheepherders. He then purchased an English-French phrase book at a local drugstore and taught himself to speak English. "He spoke five languages fluently when he died." Although the Mourterots spoke French among themselves, "if there was anybody around we spoke the American language." Pete Dario and "Brother" Bordes, both Vasco-born, were also facile in several languages as well as fluent in French.

Boundaries

Some cultural traditions were publicly expressed and helped to maintain clear boundaries between groups. In the hotly contested discussion about "ethnicity," most researchers agree with the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth that ethnicity is primarily negotiated and signaled at boundaries. Thus it is the *boundary* that defines the group, "not the cultural stuff it encloses."

Holy Ghost Court, Livermore. Local children dress as queen and court for a Holy Ghost *festa* around 1930. The participants are *(from left to right)* Caroline Mello, Madeline Caldera, Ernie Basso (son of former Vasco residents, Steve and Emma Basso), an unknown person, and Dorothy Olivera. *(Courtesy Ernie Basso.)*

The Italian game of *bocce* (somewhat akin to lawn bowling) figured prominently in the social lives of local Italian-born men and their sons. The *bocce* court, whether at French Frank's in the Vasco or at the back of one of the Italian-owned saloons in Livermore, provided a familiar (and one might add) gender-exclusive landscape. Thus it was a place for guys to go to play *bocce*, drink wine, gamble, and play cards.

The local Portuguese-Azorean community also kept up its cultural heritage through *chamarittas* (dances) and the profoundly religious observance of the Holy Ghost *festa*. This highly public event drew spectators from near and far, and, along with the Livermore rodeo and parade, constituted one of the few major outings for many Vasco farm families. The Livermore *festa* was sponsored by the local branch of the Portuguese-American fraternal society the I.D.E.S. (*Irmandade do Divino Espirito Santo*). The celebration was held at the Holy Ghost Grounds, now the Eagles Hall, and included a procession to and from church by the queen and her attendants, a dance, fireworks, and a communal meal of *sopa*, a meat broth served over French bread. According to folk legend the festival originated with Saint Isabel, queen of Portugal from 1295 to 1322, who miraculously turned roses into bread to feed her starving people. The festival is now only celebrated in the Azores and by Azorean immigrant communities, but apparently was once widespread throughout Europe. Of interest is the fact that second- and even third-generation "Portuguese" in and around the Vasco participated in the annual event.[53]

Shared Culture

Although Vasco farm families continued to speak their native language, cook traditional foods, and preferably marry within their group, they also participated in a ranching culture which was decidedly "American" in character. Saturday-night dances, held in a farmhouse kitchen, a granary, or at Vasco School, contributed to community identity and social cohesion. The music varied over the years but was usually homespun and "American," although in actuality it was a mix of Irish, Mexican, and Anglo-American folk tunes, tin-pan-alley songs, and popular melodies. Johnny Stanley and Pete Christensen, a fiddle-and-guitar duo, often played for dances in the teens. And the squares, round dances, waltzes, and two-steps would have been familiar to folks in other rural areas of the country at the time.

Italian men played *bocce* but they also played baseball and pitched horseshoes. And seasonal events that also functioned as rites of passage, such as harvesting and round-ups, usually culminated in a western-style barbecue for workers and neighbors. Over the years ethnic traditions gradually gave way to this broader farming and ranching culture, with its attendant skills, lexicon, and values. Several local residents became adept rodeo riders. To this day, however, many former residents of the Vasco and their descendants, particularly those of Italian and Azorean descent, also continue to think of themselves as ethnic Americans.

Baseball at the Fragulias. Italian families gather at the Fragulia's Vasco ranch to play a friendly game of "American" baseball. *(Courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

SOCIAL EVENTS IN LOS VAQUEROS: RITUALS OF TRANSITION, SOLIDARITY, AND TOGETHERNESS

When Alice Coats stood before the mirror on her wedding day in her white bridal gown, she may have trembled with excitement, happiness, and possibly a little anxiety. Her life would never be the same after this day was over. As the community paid their final respects to Patrick Gleese at his funeral, they also said goodbye to an era in their history. It was now their duty to honor his memory and get on with the business of living. Since the origins of human society, people have always needed to mark important life stages with some kind of ceremony, and to celebrate their communal life with social events. And we must not forget the basic human desire to have a good time enjoying each other's company! Social events in Los Vaqueros were a vital part of communal life that expressed the universal need for rituals of transition, solidarity, and togetherness.[54]

Rituals of Transition: Weddings and Funerals

Weddings in Los Vaqueros were both joyous celebrations of two souls in love, committed to walking life's road together, and an important public recognition of family and social unity. A total of 16 Vasco weddings and one elopement were reported by the local papers between 1902 and 1928. Articles on weddings provided juicy details such as the bride's trousseau, the groom's occupation, wedding decor, guests in attendance, and often the honeymoon destination. Couples were married at home or in a local church. Reported as the "first wedding in the Vasco," the marriage of Alice Coats to Edward McIntyre received special attention from the *Byron Times* in 1908. Performed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Nolan Coats "in the Vasco country," it was said to be "the first wedding ever solemnized on the grant." It was attended by "immediate relatives and a few friends." The bride, the reporter noted, was "one of the Vasco's most popular young ladies"; she "looked charming in her bridal robes of white, trimmed in light blue." The groom, "a highly esteemed resident of Stockton," was employed in an iron works. He whisked his lovely bride away to Stockton where they set up housekeeping.[55] During this time, so many marriages were taking place among Vasco young people that the papers reported a "marriage epidemic" that was "taking away the pretty girls."

The Marsh Creek home of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Morchio set the stage for the wedding of their oldest daughter Eda to Paul Volponi. The bride "looked pretty in a combination costume of lace and net of a soft creamy tint. She wore a wreath of orange blossoms." Her sister Mamie acted as bridesmaid and wore "a Princess gown of rose colored mull and lace." Vic de Martini served as the groomsman, and more than 40 guests sat down to dinner. The guest list featured names of the Vasco's Italian families, including all the Morchios, de Martinis, the Volponis, and the Fragulias, in addition to prominent Italian families from surrounding areas.

Elopements are sources of scandalous speculation and romantic excitement for spectators, in spite of the circumstances that may have motivated the desperate couple. One rather notorious elopement on the Vasco (which was foiled in the end) occurred at the Bordes ranch when 14-year-old Annie Bordes, daughter of rancher Sylvain Bordes, ran off with a young Basque hired hand named Peter Pitau in 1897. The couple made it as far as Monterey where they planned to "procure a tug and have the marriage performed at sea by the pastor of the tugboat." Their nuptial intentions were thwarted when law officers from Livermore, who had been informed of the couple's flight, telegraphed Santa Cruz where the two were apprehended. Even though Annie was returned to the bosom of her family on the Vasco, she eventually married her dashing suitor and they settled down to raise a family and become part of the growing Bordes social network.

Funerals among Los Vaqueros residents were occasions to mark the passing of its venerable pioneers, to honor the memory of loved ones, and to collectively mourn the loss of those near and dear in the community. The death of Los Vaqueros pioneers was noted in local newspapers with lengthy obituaries that chronicled the life of the deceased

and acknowledged their contributions to the community. These articles also provided some details about the funeral.

The esteem in which pioneer settlers were held was shown in the obituary for Patrick Gleese, who arrived in the area in 1868. "The funeral took place from St. Michael's church . . . and the attendance was an indication of the regard with which he was held by his neighbors and associates. The church was thronged and the funeral cortege was one of the longest ever seen in the valley. When the head of the procession was at the grave, the last vehicle had not passed." When his son Joseph died in 1910 at 30 years of age, a victim of the "white plague," a similarly magnanimous tribute was paid him by the community. "The remains were brought to Livermore Friday morning and were taken immediately to St. Michael's Church where funeral services were held by Rev. Father Power. A large number of friends of (the) deceased and his family followed the remains to their last resting place in the Catholic cemetery."

A funeral that went down in local history was that of old John Elliott who died in 1911, and was "one of the pioneer residents . . . who was one of the substantial farmers of that section and notable character." Elliott had commissioned friend and fellow farmer Jesse Young to prepare a tomb for him in one of the caves on Brushy Peak known as Postoffice Rock. The funeral took place in the local Methodist Church, after which the casket was "borne to its last resting place in the depths of the cave by six stalwart neighbors of the deceased. The coffin was placed in the center of the cave, head toward the west, the massive iron door was closed and the kindly old pioneer's wishes were carried out and his remains were left to await the Resurrection morn."

Tragically, death claimed not only the aged, but the young in Los Vaqueros. The funerals of the young people of the community were marked with a particularly deep tone of sadness. An automobile accident claimed the life of 34-year-old Steve Morchio, Jr. and his wife. Reporters echoed the sadness of the community in their obituary in 1928. "In his passing two families suffered an irreparable loss—his own and that of his beloved wife, formerly Bella Santos, whom he married five years ago. . . . The floral tributes, beautiful emblems, testified to the place (the) deceased held in the communities."

One of the largest funerals held in Byron during the early 20th century was conducted for "Baby Violet," nine-month-old infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Armstrong who died suddenly in 1911. The local newspaper reported that "the funeral was one of the largest ever held in Byron, fifty carriages and ten automobiles being in line. The floral tributes were beautiful and completely enveloped the tiny coffin and grave."

Rituals of Solidarity: Work Celebrations, Dances, Picnics, and Balls

Rituals of solidarity tend to be of a public nature, involving many members of the community. Activities and events that promote community solidarity and productive interactions can be geared toward some altruistic goal that requires serious commitments of time and energy from participants. They can also be staged for no other purpose than just having a grand old time, fun being the primary ingredient. Los Vaqueros solidarity rituals during the first few decades of the 20th century combined all these motives into a rich pattern of social events.

Annual cattle and horse round-ups and rodeos were part of the seasonal round of ranching activities on the Vasco. The assistance of all able-bodied cowboys and cowgirls was required to herd the cattle into corrals and cull them for branding, castrating, dipping, and other procedures. Horses had to be rounded up and broken, after which ranch hands might stage a little rodeo of their own on each other's ranches to show off their riding skills. These activities were also a good excuse to barbecue, play music, and dance when the hard work of the day was done.

Harvesting and baling the hay also required communal efforts. The completion of the haying season would culminate in a group celebration after the hay was harvested, baled, and sold. Usually, folks would have a picnic. The Bordes ranch pasture was a favorite picnic spot where the farmers and their families would gather under the shade of trees near the creek to barbecue and share all sorts of good things to eat.

Whatever did people do for amusement before movies, television, and the internet? In the "good old days" before the electronic age furnished us with most of our entertainment, folks cultivated all sorts of novel ways to have fun. For Los Vaqueros residents, local organizations regularly staged public dances, masquerade balls, and picnics that were widely attended and enjoyed. Secular and religious organizations that sponsored these social events included the Native Sons of the Golden West, the Byron Social Club, the Portuguese society I.D.E.S., St. Michael's Catholic Church, and the Odd Fellows, to name a few. The grand social event of the season was the "Great Masked Ball" sponsored by the Native Sons and usually held in February. If you had never attended this ball—in costume, mind you—you really didn't know what fun was! Between 1908 and 1929, the *Byron Times* regularly reported on the planning and glorious outcome of this annual event. Many Vasco residents were mentioned not only for their attendance, but because they won prizes for the best costumes. Costumes could be humorous, historical, artistic, or esoteric. Mary Bordes, for example, went in the guise of "Morning" to the 1908 ball, and Bertie Bordes was the "Queen of Hearts." At the same ball, the Grueninger boys, Edward and William, went as a baker and a cowboy, while T.J. Kelso was dressed as a "Schoolboy." One can only imagine him in short pants, lace collar, and blond curls.

The masked ball of 1914 was another "glorious success" with 300 people present. People danced until five in the morning "to the strains of the peerless Merzbach Orchestra." Among the prizewinners from Los Vaqueros were Irene Pitau and Bertha Grueninger, "two pretty, petite girls," who divided the third prize dressed as "Baby Dolls." The boys, it was said, "agreed they looked too sweet for anything." If you attended the ball in 1929, you could have swayed to the sensuous sounds of "The Knights of Joy" seven-piece orchestra.

Public dances were also held as a regular form of entertainment. Saturday night dances might be sponsored by any one of the above-mentioned organizations. Dances were held anywhere a good dance floor could be found. The floor of the Marsh Creek School felt the happy feet of many dancing couples one Saturday night in February 1908. It was pronounced "one of the gayest dances of the season" and "one of the most delightful affairs ever held on the Creek."

Sometimes the landscape itself begs to be danced upon. Nowhere in Vasco country were Saturday night dances so thoroughly enjoyed as on Brushy Peak, near Altamont. Brushy Peak had been the site of local picnics since the late 19th century. In 1880, the Altamont Social and Base Ball Club erected a wooden dancing floor, and for the next 40 or 50 years, local residents kicked up their heels on those hills! Brushy Peak organized its own social clubs that gave picnics and dances, serving "elaborate lunches under the big trees." It even had its share of "Bohemians." Members of the Brushy Peak Bohemian Club staged its annual outings there to honor the memory of "departed" members. The club would leave for its "rendezvous" on the Peak at about 10 o'clock in the morning, in horse-drawn "busses" and a "commissary wagon" on which the "members kept an anxious eye while en route." After the solemn duties were performed, members sat down to dinner, "which according to all accounts, was a feast fit for the gods." The party would continue until the cool of the evening with songs and stories.

Brushy Peak was not without its dangers. Joe Jason, Vasco farmer and frequent dance caller and floor manager on Brushy Peak, went on record in 1910 as warning picnic parties "to be careful in walking or laying about carelessly in the grass on account of rattlesnakes." Poisonous snakes were not the only danger on Brushy Peak. The locale developed a rowdy reputation over the years, when numerous fights and downright drunken brawls had to be broken up. Young people even dared to flaunt their early-20th-century form of "dirty dancing" that was constantly scrutinized by the floor managers, such as Vasco farmer Andrew Fragulia. In the heyday of ragtime rhythms, advertisements for a dance on Brushy Peak in 1912 laid down the law, admonishing dancers that "contrary to reports no 'ragging' will be tolerated." Saturday night dances at Brushy Peak were eventually shut down due to the increase of such "anti-social" behavior.

Rituals of Solidarity. A group of picnickers gathers in one of the caves at Brushy Peak around 1900. *(Courtesy Brentwood Museum.)*

Rituals of Togetherness: Birthday Parties, Anniversaries, Barn Dances, and Reunions

Rituals of togetherness tend to be of a more private nature, conducted between family members and close friends. These occasions facilitate family bonding and reinforce close interpersonal ties between members of a group. They also afford an opportunity to have fun together enjoying the good things in life. In Los Vaqueros, families socialized together, surprised each other with birthday parties, hosted home dances, dinners, anniversary parties, and other commemorative and celebratory events such as family reunions, holiday celebrations and religious rites.

Naturally, some folks were more gregarious than others and entertained more often. The Bordes home was the site of some of the most memorable barn dances and wonderful parties on the Vasco. The sturdy wooden floor of the Bordes granary made an excellent dance floor after it had been swept clean. Music was usually furnished by local people who played instruments, mostly accordion, guitar, violin, and banjo. Lucy Bordes Rooney and the Christensen brothers, Hans and Pete, were always on hand to stir up a dance tune. The popular dances of the day were always in order, such as the foxtrot and the polka.[56]

Midnight suppers and dances on the Vasco were a well-loved tradition and always of interest to local reporters covering on the Los Vaqueros social scene. In 1907 one of the famous Bordes barn dances was the subject of reportage: “Nearly 100 young people were present, among them a large number of the prettiest girls in the valley. Dancing was enjoyed ‘till daylight and a substantial repast was served.” Folks on the Vasco were pretty isolated before the advent of good roads and the availability of motorized vehicular transportation. People generally couldn’t just “pop over” for a drink and a

Rituals of Togetherness. The Fragulias host a picnic for friends and family. *(Courtesy Paul Fragulia and Marie Bignone [née Fragulia].)*

chat, then run home. Parties usually lasted all night with a large meal served at midnight and a big breakfast to see the guests home in the morning. One had to have a great deal of party stamina in those days.

Everyone loves birthday parties, and the Vasco folks cooked up some splendid birthday celebrations that drew attention from surveyors of the social scene. Bachelor farmer P. Labordette was happily surprised by a party thrown for him by his friends in the community. Mary and Bertie Bordes were there, as well as Joe Armstrong, Willie and John Kelso, the Grueninger boys, Pete Pitau, and Tillio Morchio. "The evening was spent in dancing, singing, games and partaking of refreshments." A pleasant surprise was also tendered for H.P. Christensen at his home on the Vasco grant. "More than a hundred guests were in attendance. A fine supper was served at midnight. The evening was most enjoyably spent." Joe Jason, known for his terrific dance-calling up on Brushy Peak, was also pleasantly surprised when Vasco friends turned up to help him celebrate his birthday in 1910. "Delightful music was furnished by Miss Bertie Bordes and Rasmus Christensen. A fine supper was served at midnight. There were about 30 people present."

When "well-known Vasco farmer" Sylvain Bordes reached his 66th birthday in 1911, a large crowd of well-wishers were in attendance. In keeping with the Vasco custom, a midnight supper was served and people danced until dawn. Joanna Grueninger hosted her own party when she turned 78 in 1929. She cooked a 35-pound turkey and decorated the long dinner table with Shasta daisies "that presented a most attractive appearance." Among the gifts she received was a set of silver tableware and a lovely handbag that contained a 10-dollar gold piece.

For those Vasco couples who weathered the long years of married life together, wedding anniversaries provided friends and family with the opportunity to celebrate the longevity of their union. One memorable celebration was the silver wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Morchio at their home on the Vasco grant. The double parlor doors were thrown open for dancing in the dining room. "At midnight a splendid repast was served, and many toasts were offered by happy participants." Guests included many local families. Among them was a bevy of lovely young ladies from the Vasco, a country "noted for its pretty girls . . . this fact was emphasized more than ever on this occasion." This ritual of togetherness started 25 years before with their wedding, a rite of passage.

All in All. . .

Members of the Los Vaqueros community were no different than other members of the human family in their need for appropriate celebrations and ceremonies. Nor were they immune to the irrepressible human need for fun. They kicked up their heels, worked, celebrated, and mourned together. Social events in Los Vaqueros were colored by the cultural diversity of the community and were a reflection of the times in which they lived. Economic conditions, isolation, and the vicissitudes of world events did not diminish their communal spirit. They participated fully in the weddings and funerals, picnics and parties, round-ups, barn dances, and masquerade balls, that were all expressions of communal life shared by folks on the Vasco.

ALL ABOUT ARTIFACTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ROSES' STREAM AND THE CONNOLLYS' CELLAR

When families moved away from the Vasco, they left bits and pieces of their lives behind, fragments that Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists excavated and analyzed in 1994 and 1995.[57] Joseph and Antone Rose leased 300 acres of valley farmland beginning in 1896. After a decade of hard work, around 1907, Joseph and his family accumulated enough money to buy their own ranch down the road near Livermore. Antone and his family stayed behind, but the Joseph Roses cleared out their Los Vaqueros cupboards and closets and threw the unwanted goods in the creek before they left.

Owen and Anna Connolly never lived on the Vasco year-round; they owned their own house in Livermore, and leased 160 acres of hilly terrain at Los Vaqueros, which they farmed beginning in the mid-1880s. When Owen died in 1899, Anna and her eight children brought in another harvest or two, then closed up the Vasco house around 1902. She already had a fully stocked house in Livermore, so she left many of her household goods behind. After the Connollys left the Vasco, their ranch was incorporated into the sheep operation of Theo Redin, and everything in the abandoned house eventually ended up in the empty cellar hole.

For very different reasons, neither of these families wanted to take all of their old housewares with them. While the Roses may have seen themselves as moving up in the world, Anna Connolly was settling down to a single-home retirement in San Francisco. Many of the artifacts left behind when the Roses and the Connollys moved were small and prosaic, but they are remarkably eloquent about how they got there, and what sort of people left them.

The Roses Clean House

The banks of the little stream that flows through the site of the Roses' old farmstead are lined here and there with rock walls. Beneath one of these walls, mostly on the side facing the stream, archaeologists found the place where the Joseph Roses dumped their unwanted household goods, presumably when they left the Vasco around 1907.

The refuse had been thrown into a shallow trough next to the stream—a little ditch that was either dug to help drainage or was itself an earlier creek channel. The dishes, bottles, and metal that

Archaeology of the Roses' Refuse. A careful look reveals the small artifacts among the rocks and roots in this archaeological trench excavated next to a small creek on the Rose site. Silt from the stream buried these artifacts in heavy soil, but protected them from weathering.

the Roses threw away here got mixed up over the years with stream silt, so that by the time the archaeologists excavated it, the artifacts were contained in a foot of dark gray clay.

Dates of manufacture and the condition of the artifacts are what tell us that the Roses threw their household goods away all at once, and that they were probably cleaning old things out of the house when they did. Most of the artifacts are in big pieces and the bones show very few signs of having been gnawed by rodents or exposed to weathering, which suggests that the refuse was covered up with dirt rather quickly. Also, two plain white ceramic dinner plates manufactured by the same company sometime after 1906 were at both the top and the bottom of the pile.[58] This tells us that nothing in the pile could have been put there before 1906, but it provides strong evidence that all those artifacts in between—regardless of when they were manufactured—were *probably* discarded around the same time.

The dates of those artifacts provide some of the most powerful evidence that Joseph and Mary Rose went through their closets and their storage areas to throw away old household goods that they did not want to take with them. While we know that these artifacts could not have been thrown away any earlier than 1906, many of them were manufactured much earlier, some as early as the 1870s. For example, there were two white glass liners for canning jars that had been manufactured by the Consolidated Fruit Jar Company of New York between 1870 and 1882. There were also pieces of two old quart-size Budweiser beer bottles that were made by Carl Conrad and Company, which filed for bankruptcy in 1883. These bottles had a U.S. patent embossed on them as well, which was registered in 1878.[59]

The composition of the Roses' garbage heap was relatively limited, with most of the items coming from their house, and only a few coming from a storage shed or barn. Most of the artifacts were domestic items related to food preparation and consumption. There were commercial food bottles in addition to several canning jars and pottery containers that were used for food storage. The Roses also threw away a wide variety of kitchen- and tablewares—almost every type of vessel you might expect to find in a family's cabinet. There were plates, cups, saucers, soup plates, a serving platter, a ewer, glass tumblers, a glass bowl, and a few pieces of cutlery. Some kitchen garbage also found its way into the stream: butchered bones of cow, sheep, and pig were present. Most of these were butchered with a handsaw, which was standard practice in the late 19th century. There was a distinct prevalence of family-sized pieces of meat (roasts and soup bones) and only a few steak bones—not surprising considering that the Rose household contained two families.

Medicines, alcoholic beverages, and a few clothing fasteners were part of the collection as well. Treatments for intestinal disorders included bitters, J.J. Mack sarsaparilla, J.A. Folger Essence of Ginger, and a "Worm Confection." Chest and other ailments were assuaged with Dr. Boschee's German Syrup, Ayer's Pectoral, and Davis' Vegetable Pain Killer. These were all over-the-counter remedies called proprietary medicines. Quite popular in the late 19th century, these mostly alcohol-based concoctions were claimed by their manufacturers to have amazing curative powers. The Roses also had some prescription medicines. One of these came from the Langley & Michaels Co. of San Francisco, while the other was from McKesson & Robbins, an East Coast pharmaceutical firm.[60]

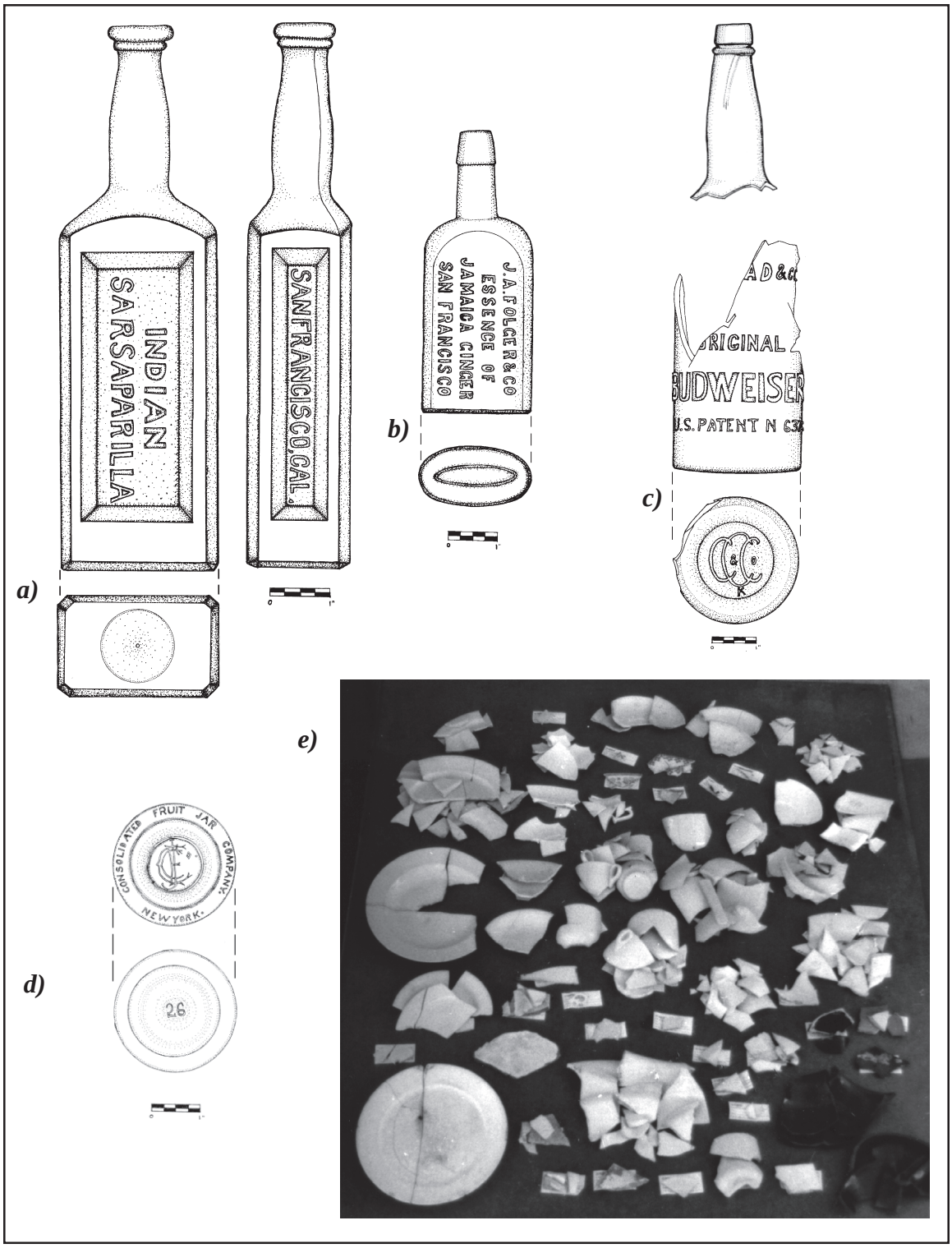
Two of the children's porcelain dolls did not make it to the new house, probably because they were broken. One of these was a large, glazed head with unpainted molded hair that fell in ringlets around the ears. The other doll was represented by a small unglazed arm. The Roses also threw away a few things that had collected in a shed or a workshop: there were nails, some window glass, house and wagon hardware, and harnesses and horseshoes.

The ceramics in the refuse heap give us a clue as to how the Roses decided what should get thrown away. Almost all of them were very plain and would have seemed old-fashioned by the beginning of the 20th century; only a few of the pieces had any decoration at all. By 1907 fashionable dinnerware was light and decorated in multicolored, intricate cut-out designs that were applied to ceramics in a process called decalcomania. Plain white china was still available, but not as desirable, as reflected in declining prices. Mail-order catalogs from the turn of the 19th century are filled with decorated wares—molded rims, transferprints, and decals—and the plain white sets are advertised as durable, rather than fashionable, and suitable for corporate-style tables such as hotels and restaurants.[61]

Joseph Rose's acquisition of his own 220-acre ranch outside of Livermore was certainly an upwardly mobile change, both socially and economically. His family became one of Livermore's more important "early" families; they were even pictured in the local church history, posed in an open carriage in front of their beautiful and bountiful new farm. Perhaps when the Joseph Roses made their move they discarded the old-fashioned, somewhat tattered trappings of the decidedly less-than-middle-class household that they shared with Joseph's younger brother's family.

Anna Connolly's Cellar

A small depression, a sparse scatter of small artifacts, and a piece of metal protruding from the



Rose Family Artifacts. Sarsaparilla *(a)*, essence of ginger *(b)*, and Budweiser *(c)* were some of the product-bottles that the Roses threw away in 1907, along with lid liners from canning jars *(d)* and numerous ceramics *(e)*. *(Drawings by A. Richard Wolter.)*

ground led Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists to the Connollys' cellar in 1994. The 12-foot square hole was just 3 feet deep—big enough to store perishables—but over the course of the 90-odd years since Mrs. Connolly walked away from her house it had filled up with dirt and fragments of the things she left behind. The cellar was dug into the native ground and lined with horizontal wood planks held in place by vertical posts. The floor of the cellar was set with stone pavers to make a nice smooth surface on which to set her goods.

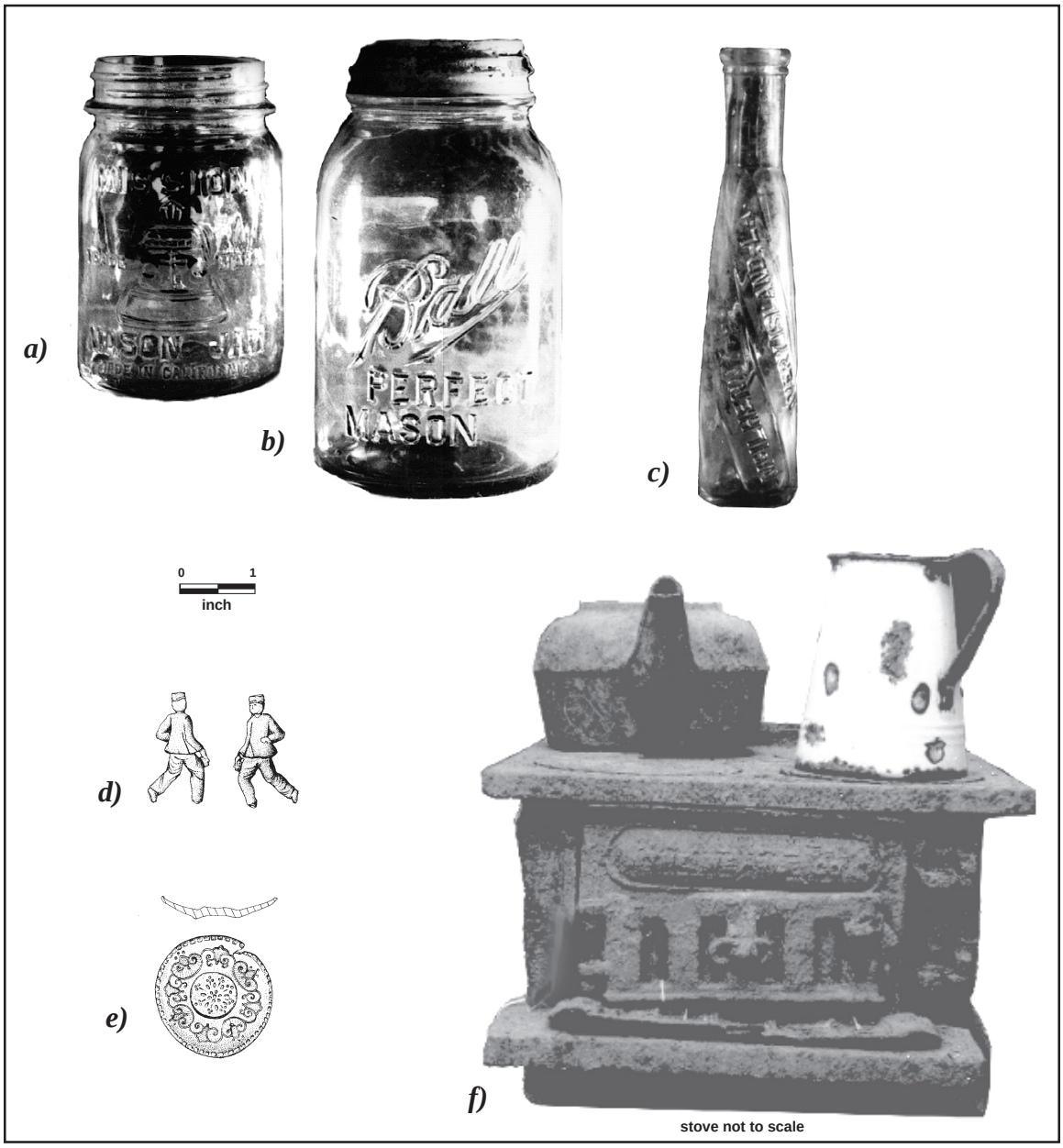
Like the refuse heap in the Roses' stream, the manufacture dates of the items in Anna Connolly's cellar hole tell a story about what happened there. Although the dates of most of the items bearing manufacture marks cluster around the turn of the century (including a 1900 dime), two items were manufactured after 1925. Therefore, the cellar hole could not have been filled until at least 23 years after the Connollys left; but since no one lived at the site after around 1902, most of the refuse must have belonged to the Connollys. The best explanation is that the household debris sat around for a number of years—perhaps was even spread around the yard where it mixed with items dropped there later—before it got pushed into the cellar.

The composition of the artifact collection in Anna Connolly's cellar was very different from that of the Roses' refuse heap, another clue to its origins. By far the largest group of items was material related to the structure itself—hundreds of nails, fragments of window glass, doorknobs, screw hooks, and hinges. Two of the hinges match: they are decorated cast iron and are advertised in the 1897 Sears, Roebuck catalog as "Door Butts; Loose pin, iron butts, plain finish." Domestic and personal items were also present in the cellar hole, but in much smaller proportions. In general, the artifacts in Anna Connolly's cellar were much more varied, as the following discussion shows.

There were a wide variety of tools in the cellar hole assemblage, all of which were relatively generic items that might be found in any farmer's tool kit. Then there were harness parts, a number of spent cartridges and shells, and pencils, slates, and an ink bottle. Agricultural items included a bottle of Watkins stock dip, advertised "for killing lice, ticks, mites, and vermin, . . ." and pieces of farm machinery, mostly hay-mower parts.

A wide array of domestic items was excavated from the cellar hole even though they represent only a small percentage of the whole collection. Unlike the Roses' refuse, though, there were very few ceramic tablewares—just two cups and a plate. More common were artifacts pertaining to food storage and preparation, such as a Tabasco sauce bottle, an impressive cast-iron kettle, several graniteware pots and pans, cutlery, canning jars, tin cans, and barrel

Archaeology of the Connollys' Cellar Hole. The artifacts were a little more obvious at the Connolly site *(left),* and the cellar hole that they filled *(right)* was quite formal. Note the paved floor and the wood cribbing visible beneath the sign board in the upper right.



Connolly Family Artifacts. Food jars *(a, b, c)*, toys *(d, e)*, and an entire cast-iron stove *(e)* were among the many artifacts archaeologists recovered from the Connolly's cellar hole. *(Drawings by Christina Savitsky.)*

hoops. A handleless sad iron, furniture hardware, lamp chimneys, and lantern parts rounded out the collection of housewares. One of the chimneys came from a Cold Blast Storm Lantern sold for $.85 by Sears, Roebuck and Co. in 1897. Advertised as "very desirable for places where there are strong drafts of wind," this lantern suited the weather conditions on the Vasco.

Most remarkable of all, however, was the nearly intact cast-iron stove that the Connollys abandoned. The compact, coal-burning stove had four cook holes on top and a moderate-sized oven with a side-opening door in front. Almost all of its parts were found as well: hole covers, center plates, oven door, vented firebox grate, and a cast-iron kettle that nestles comfortably in one of the cook holes (the same kettle

mentioned above). The identity of the stove is impressed on its firebox door: "7-14 RURAL SSC/ THE WEHRLE CO/NEWARK OHIO." The Wehrle family entered the stove and range business in the 1860s and from 1898 they manufactured stoves for Sears, Roebuck and Co. in addition to marketing their wares through their own catalogs.[62] Anna Connolly may have left her stove behind because it was too heavy, too small, or too outmoded to justify the expense of moving it.

Personal artifacts were well represented in Anna Connolly's cellar, with toiletry items, watches, and even a mouth harp. Her children had probably outgrown the toys that were left behind: a lead enameled figure of a train conductor, probably used as a game piece or part of a model train set; a white clay marble; and a pewter doll's dish. For the adults, there was plenty of alcohol (which may have been added to the refuse after the Connollys left), including bottles of beer, whiskey, and wine or champagne.

A lot of clothing fasteners and shoes were discarded in the cellar. All of the boots were three hooks high—a style that gained in popularity around 1910—and were probably left by Theo Redin and his sheepherders long after the Connollys departed. Two of the boots are a man's size 9 and have similar wear patterns that are usually associated with a bow-legged person. One of these boots has a large straight cut in the upper, extending from near the sole to the tongue. The boot would have been unrepairable after such damage was inflicted; the cut appears to be intentional and may have been worn on an injured, swollen foot.

The bones in Anna Connolly's cellar also provide some clues for interpreting the fill. There was a much wider variety of animals represented here than at the Roses' house. In addition to cow, sheep, and pig, there were bones from fish and shellfish, chickens, pigeons, rats, cats, rabbits, squirrels, gophers, mice, weasels, badgers, and skunk. Not all of these were eaten: there were butchering marks only on chicken, rabbit, cat, sheep, cow, and pig bones.

This is not a typical assemblage of animal bone for a domestic site. It more closely resembles a barn- or farmyard, with its combination of domestic, introduced, and wild animals and its paucity of butchered bone. Furthermore, many of the skeletons in Anna Connolly's cellar are surprisingly complete. This is particularly true for the sheep, suggesting that the animals probably lived and died nearby—probably part of Theo Redin's herd.

The wide variety of artifacts in Anna Connolly's cellar corroborates the scenario suggested by the disparate dates: that is, that the refuse accumulated over a long period of time, beginning when Anna Connolly moved away. Before everything was buried in the cellar hole, the Connollys' abandoned household items were gradually spread around the yard and mixed with all manner of things that were brought in later. Pieces of the house itself even got into the mix.

No Longer of Value

The Connollys' cellar and the Roses' stream were filled at different times and under somewhat different circumstances. But they share the distinction of containing all the things that the Connolly and Rose families no longer valued when they left the Vasco. Anna Connolly cleared out most of her china, but left much of her kitchen, including her heavy stove, behind. The Roses were more thorough, probably because the house they left was still occupied by the Antone Roses. Instead of just walking away, they cleared out their cabinets and threw everything they no longer wanted in the creek. What the Roses mostly chose to discard were old-fashioned dishes and unusable bottles that might clutter their new lives.

A one-time Vasco resident, Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger), remembered what her mother did in the early years of the 20th century: "My mother, when she built that next new house, she threw away a lot of her old things, in the creek. She wanted to get something new."[63] Such was apparently the case for the Roses: their move up in the world was something to be heralded with new purchases for a new, and hopefully better, life. Anna Connolly's move was somewhat more bittersweet; she was leaving behind a big part of the life she had shared with her husband for the past 15 years or so. It seems that she grabbed the most portable goods—her china—and left the rest behind for someone else to clean up.

CHAPTER 4
FULL CIRCLE: LOS VAQUEROS FROM 1929 TO THE PRESENT

Within the first decades of the 20th century, agricultural land at Los Vaqueros had become marginal. Without irrigation it could not support specialty crops or orchards, and the hilly terrain precluded widespread mechanization. The subsistence-based mixed farms that had developed on the Vasco and in the Black Hills were beginning to be anachronistic, and it became clear that the most efficient use of the land was for grazing. Gradually, many of the Los Vaqueros farm families packed up their belongings and moved on—some to nearby towns, and some to ranches of their own. On the Vasco, tenant arrangements under Mary Crocker and Kate Dillon had been generous, so attrition was slower, but change was inevitable in the volatile economy of the first half of the 20th century. By the late 1980s, when the Contra Costa Water District began acquiring the lands of the watershed, much of the old rancho and adjoining property was once more sparsely settled and given over to livestock grazing.

LAND SALES

The nationwide economic depression that began with the stock-market crash of 1929 had a grave effect on agriculture in California. Crop prices fell dramatically, and cereal growers needed at least 400 harvested acres to support a family—double the amount of land they had needed at the beginning of the century. New Deal crop-subsidy programs inadvertently favored large farms over small interests by basing awards on the absolute size of the operation as opposed to proportional needs of families. In addition, the subsidies allowed many small farmers to get by without improving their operations, thereby hampering their ability to remain competitive after the crisis had passed.[1]

The effects of the depression were felt at Los Vaqueros. Falling crop prices would have been felt more immediately by tenants than landowners, particularly where leases were on cash terms. Reflecting these difficulties, tenancy rates in Contra Costa and Alameda counties fell significantly in 1930. Rather than signaling a shift to land ownership, these statistics probably represent families who had to drop out of farming and seek wage work.

The tragic death of Mary Crocker less than two months after the stock-market crash sealed the fate of the Vasco farming community. Her heirs held the property together for nearly six years, but finally began to divide and sell in 1935. Much of the property in the Kellogg Creek Valley and the low hills surrounding it—almost 8,000 acres—was sold to Oscar Starr.[2] Starr did not continue any lease agreements, nor did he live on the property. He did, however, build a large residential complex near the site of the old Vasco Adobe and he allowed other ranch complexes to fall into ruins. Louis Souza purchased more than 6,500 acres in the eastern portion of Starr's ranch between 1944 and 1947, which he used to raise sheep. In 1948 Mrs. Edith Ordway bought the western portion of the Starr Ranch, which included the old Suñol place.

Land at the south and east edges of the old rancho was sold to Charles and Sue Nissen, who had acquired about 3,500 acres by 1940. Some of the tenant ranches were preserved under the

Vaqueros Farms. Louis and Josephine (née Pimentel) Souza pose with their children, Ann and Louis, at the entrance of their Rancho Cañada de los Vaqueros, around 1945. The ranch, located both within and at the edge of the original land grant, is now called Vaquero Farms. *(Courtesy Josephine Souza [née Pimentel].)*

Nissens' tenure: they bought the land as an investment and continued to lease to some of Crocker's tenants, making improvements where necessary. They themselves continued to reside in Livermore, where they had a hay-and-grain business. Some of their properties at the Vasco were leased as grazing land, and Charles Nissen later farmed some of the property through the early 1950s. The Nissens sold to the Jacksons in the early 1950s.

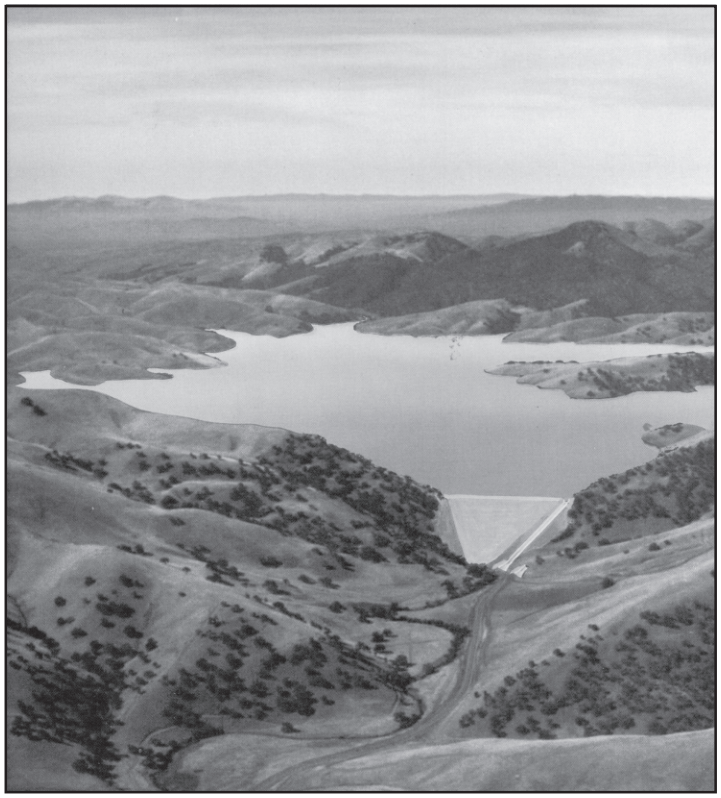
At the north end of the valley, much of the land was eventually consolidated under the ownership of the Grueninger family, who by 1940 had acquired a full 640 acres. The Grueningers farmed the land well into the 1930s but gradually purchased stock and turned the place from a farm to a ranch. The acreage passed down through the family until it was sold to Kaiser Construction Company in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

Ownership in the Black Hills was more complex and varied from ranch-to-ranch. Several families, such as the Cardozas and the Gleeses, held onto land well into the 1960s, using it mostly for grazing purposes.

CONTRA COSTA WATER DISTRICT

The modern fate of the Los Vaqueros watershed has everything to do with the formation by popular vote, in 1936, of the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD).[3] CCWD was charged with contracting, purchasing, and distributing the water provided by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which, after the construction of the Contra Costa Canal in 1948, was a straightforward matter. But by 1960 water customers began to demand better-tasting water, and the idea of a new intake and a backup reservoir was born.

The largely undeveloped canyons and grazing land along Kellogg Creek were a natural choice for the reservoir site, although the first area examined was actually north of the current



Los Vaqueros Reservoir Imagined. This is how CCWD envisioned the reservoir when planning began in earnest in the 1980s. Although the design of the dam has changed slightly, this is probably a fair approximation of how the landscape will look. *(Reproduced from CCWD 1989.)*

project area, in the next canyon downstream. By 1968 the focus of geological studies had shifted to the south in what became known as the Los Vaqueros Project.

The pace of the project was painfully slow as feasibility studies and funding negotiations continued at a snail's pace through the 1970s. CCWD was hoping to establish a three-way cost-sharing arrangement between the federal government, the state, and the water district, but events precluded waiting for the necessary approval. Levee failure in 1972 and a severe drought in 1976-1977 demonstrated the pressing need for the project, but it was not until the possibility of development became a real threat in 1985 that CCWD was forced into action. When the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors approved the "Bankhead" subdivision within the Los Vaqueros watershed, CCWD's time was at hand. They increased the pace of studies and sought voter approval to purchase the lands of the watershed. A funding measure was approved in 1988, and land acquisition got underway.

It has taken CCWD almost a decade to purchase all of the land within the Los Vaqueros watershed, and they have continued to lease many pieces of it to the previous owners. Most of the property has been used as range land while the environmental and engineering investigations have been ongoing. The hills in the southeast part of the watershed have been developed over the years as windfarms, harnessing the powerful natural resource that plagued inhabitants of Los Vaqueros for centuries.

TIME'S CYCLE

Until recently the rural feel of Los Vaqueros has been preserved. In the early 1980s, when cultural resources investigations began, much of the land was still privately owned and used for livestock grazing. Surveying for archaeological sites meant climbing over barbed-wire fences, braving bull pens, scattering herds of grazing cattle, and *always* watching your feet for rattlesnakes hidden in the tall grass. Even after CCWD began to acquire the land, they continued to lease it out to ranchers, and although all of the buildings were eventually abandoned, the watershed was alive with activity. Archaeologists excavating some of the old ranches had to be mindful of cattle gates, step out of the way of cattle drives and bull herding, and *never*—as one rancher cautioned—try to rescue young calves left alone in the pasture by their foraging mothers.

Standing on Louis Peres's sandstone patio, watching the sun rise over the eastern hills as the fog recedes toward the west, it is hard to grasp how much Los Vaqueros has changed in the 150 years since the Alvisos obtained their land grant. The early-morning quiet is complete, and the view is unobstructed by the hand of man. But then a line of commuters passes on distant Vasco Road, and the steel wind machines on the southern hills start up, adding an industrial sound to the rustling of the leaves. Soon the realization dawns that this patio will imminently be under 170 feet of water, and the spell is broken.

The lives of the early ranchers and farm families who shaped the Valley of the Cowboys are over—their time has passed. But the tangible nature of historical archaeology helps brings them back, in a way, and makes the place seemingly come alive. We expose the very stones that they carefully placed in walls and patios, reexcavate the holes that they dug, and examine the plates and bottles that they touched and used. We have the satisfaction of feeling that we are bringing time full circle. Just as Los Vaqueros faces its biggest change ever, when the hills and valleys themselves will be altered beyond recognition, we are plunging into its past to make sure that the stories of its inhabitants are brought into the present.

Excavating the Vasco Adobe. The architectural remains of the Vasco Adobe were so well preserved, and the landscape around them so untouched, that it was easy to imagine life at Los Vaqueros in the last century.

CATERPILLARS AND COWS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OSCAR STARR

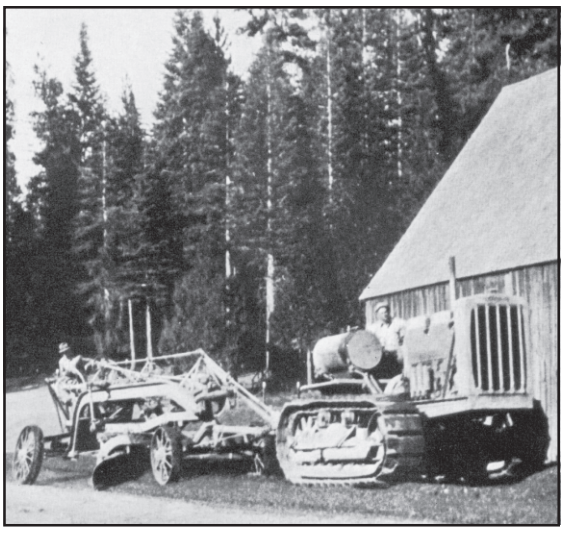
The sweeping vistas of the Vasco bring to mind stereotypes of the days of old: cowboys and Indians, cattle and sheep, and maybe even a bandit or two. Does one immediately think of important developments in technology? Hardly. Yet the Starr Ranch, located near the site of the old Vasco Adobe, played a part in the development of the diesel Caterpillar Tractor. Oscar Starr used his ranch, from 1935 to 1948, to develop and test his experimental engines and tractors. Although little known outside of the industry, Starr was recognized as "one of the West's leading production engineers and manufacturing experts" and "a prime mover in adapting the diesel engine to crawler trailers."[4] Starr was a driving force in the development of the Caterpillar Tractor Company, one of the most important companies to develop in Alameda County in the first half of the 20th century.

Stealing Starr

Born in San Francisco in 1885, Starr began his career with Union Iron Works, a manufacturer of steam engines and boats. He later built gas engines for Gorham Engineering Company in Alameda, where "the first gas self-propelled fire engine with turbine pump" was built. A keen inventor, Starr jointly developed with Bill Gorham a new type of aircraft—a two-cylinder radial airplane engine—in 1910. According to the local press, the engine was said to be "the only one of its kind" and was "expected to herald an advance in aviation." As Starr recalled, "It flew, but we got orders from Gorham's father to stop before we killed ourselves. The engine was sold to Stanley Hillar, father of the Helicopter name of today." Shortly thereafter, Starr went to work for Holt Manufacturing Company, which had developed the "track-laying" tractor, subsequently dubbed a "Caterpillar." Starr's task was to put into production the Auroa gasoline engine for the early Holt Caterpillars.

While the Holt Manufacturing Company was developing tractors in Stockton, the Best Gas Tractor Company—the other leading pioneer in tractor development—was busy with tractor experiments in San Leandro. There was a keen and intense rivalry between the two great pioneering firms. In their fight to dominate the tractor market, the two companies went to "war" to get the services of Starr, who had gained a reputation for production efficiency while working for Holt. Starr went to work as a manager for Best in 1913. During World War I, Holt's Caterpillar became the standard artillery and supply tractor for the United States and its allies, and Holt contacted Starr for help to increase tractor production. Starr's response: "I'm ambitious; make it enough money and I'll come out and help." Presumably Holt's office was generous because Starr returned to work for them and dramatically increased tractor production. Best wanted Starr back at any cost. Starr returned to work for Best with the distinction of being "the man who drew more salary than the president." Although he was expensive, he was worth it. The company had been struggling, but with Starr as a vice president it soon prospered.

Pursuant to the axiom "if you can't beat them, join them," Holt and Best decided to merge and became the Caterpillar Tractor Company in 1925. It



Caterpillar Diesel Tractor No. 1. Built in 1931, this was the first diesel Caterpillar Tractor. In this picture, taken between 1931 and 1936, it is pulling a "blade grader." *(Reproduced from Caterpillar Tractor Company n.d.; courtesy Dave Smith, Secretary/Treasurer, Antique Caterpillar Machinery Owners Club.)*

Oscar Starr's Machine Shop. Starr built and used this steel-frame shop to experiment with Caterpillar-tractor technology. Clad with corrugated-iron sheets on the wall and roof, it must have gotten rather warm in the summer and noisy during the wet winter months. *(Courtesy Dell Upton.)*

would save money because much of their research and development was duplicative. It would also save them the cost and bother of "stealing" Starr from each other. Starr became a director and vice president of the new company and headed all research activities.

Under Starr's direction, the Caterpillar Tractor Company invested heavily in the development of diesel power. It took decades of research to overcome numerous technological hurdles, but Starr successfully developed and marketed the diesel tractor.

"A Model Institution"

Starr used his ranch on the Vasco to test and further develop his tractors and other inventions. Although his primary residence was near Mission San Jose and he only used the ranch for an occasional weekend, Starr built an entire complex at the ranch. His building campaign included two houses in the Spanish Revival style, a machine shop, shed, silo, bunkhouse, "cowboy house," chicken coop, a garage, and possibly the barn. In the machine shop, Starr perfected a couple of engines. Starr had also purchased the ranch as a place to relax with his wife, Hazel Wagness, and to be a farmer. He raised hay and grain and had about 25 horses and 500 Herefords. He was quite the "gentleman rancher"; he did not want the cowboys to rope the calves because it "was too rough." Instead they used a calf chute for branding, castrating, and earmarking. It was probably during Starr's tenure at the ranch that the fenceline through the old Vasco Adobe was erected and the east end of the structure was inadvertently demolished.

Starr sold his ranch in 1948. After 49 years with Caterpillar and its predecessors, he retired in 1961. Although Starr is long gone and much of his ranch is in disrepair, he is not entirely forgotten. According to the county history of the era:

> Starr's cattle ranch on the Vasco is a model institution, equipped with caterpillar tractors and other modern farm machinery. Home buildings of Spanish architecture and landscaped grounds, spacious fireproof storage sheds with concrete floors, generating power plant and water system are but a few of the features of the 8,000 acre establishment that is conducted on an efficient business basis.[5]

More importantly, he should be remembered for his contributions to the Caterpillar Tractor Company, one of the most important companies to have developed in Alameda County.

EDITH ORDWAY, "A REAL COWGIRL"

In community history there are always a few men who are remembered as larger-than-life characters. It is rare for a woman to be recalled in this fashion, but former Vasco rancher Edith Ordway certainly "stands tall" in local memory and legend. Her exploits, in fact, rival those of American folktale heroines, Calamity Jane and Sloughfoot Sue, at least in the memories of old Vasco area families.[6]

Mrs. Ordway, a wealthy San Franciscan, purchased a large portion of the Starr Ranch in 1948. Unlike Oscar Starr, Edith and Ken Ordway apparently lived year-round at the ranch headquarters in the Vasco and they quickly put their stamp on the place. They made additions to the main house, changed the course of the driveway, and installed a swimming pool in the front yard. Mrs. Ordway was enamored with California's Hispanic heritage and had one of her employees build an "adobe" wall around the house and guest house. The remains of the Vasco Adobe—a good 600 feet west of her house—were no more than a grass-covered mound in her era, so it is uncertain how aware she was of the grant's early Spanish and Basque history.

The Ordways also built a split-log cabin, probably from a prefabricated kit, out at the "corrals" (the old Suñol place). This former tenant ranch had served for many years as a picnic grounds, and the Ordways used it as a site for barbecues. Ken Ordway continued the tradition of serving "Mountain Oysters," following the branding and castration of calves. Edith kept an odd assortment of exotic pets at her ranch, including monkeys and doves.

Some said that one socialized with the couple at some risk to life and limb. Edith Ordway in particular is remembered with awe as a real "cowgirl" who could "out-drink [and] out-fight . . . the guys." It has been said that, although charming and gracious when sober, she was a real hellcat when she drank and she would take a shot at *anybody*, without provocation. A neighbor recalled that he often drove guests to town who had been hit by buckshot. On one occasion Mrs. Ordway reportedly fired at a Chinese cook who in terror ran up into the Black Hills. No trace of him was ever found.

According to local ranchers, Mrs. Ordway's wealth allowed her the privilege of this reckless lifestyle. "She could shoot you and get by with it." She is described as tough and dangerous, but also as "great," and certainly a character worth remembering.

Pet Grave. Archaeologists uncovered this small burial next to the old Vasco Adobe on Edith Ordway's ranch. The animal was interred on its back, feet sticking straight into the air. Specialists have identified this as a toothless raccoon, apparently of a domesticated variety; it was probably one of the strange pets that Ordway kept.

GRAHAM NISSEN: INNOVATION VERSUS TRADITION

The year was 1942, Franklin Roosevelt was President, short skirts were the fashion, big bands were popular, and television had not yet been introduced to the public. The bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of the previous year had thrust America into a second World War, and the San Francisco Bay Area was rimmed with shipyards that turned out "Liberty Ships" for the war effort. Amid this cacophony of progress and urbanism, farmers in the Vasco—just 40 miles southeast of San Francisco—continued to use horses to work their land.

As early as 1900 the Golden State was agriculturally more specialized and commercialized than any other state in the Union. Yet in 1942 when U.C. Davis-educated Graham Nissen began to farm his family's holdings in the Vasco, he harnessed up teams of Belgium horses to work the land. The steep terrain, the power of tradition, and a lack of capital made the early adoption of tractors and other mechanized farm equipment almost prohibitive for farmers in the Vasco.

Graham Nissen did buy a T-20 International tractor in 1934 when he first returned from college. Like all good self-reliant farmers he tinkered on his own, first with a mower that he could attach to the tractor and later with a hay buncher that he invented. All local farm families were testing out their own ideas or ordering custom work from Livermore machine shops because the factory-made equipment could not handle the rough work and steep hills of the area.[7] It was common, however, for farmers to flip tractors over as they tried to maneuver a turn on the hills. And so, horses remained in use for harvesting, mowing, and hay pressings long after they were only a memory in other parts of California.

Mr. Nissen's parents, Charles and Sue Nissen, were grain merchants in Livermore. In 1936 they purchased 2,394 acres of the Los Vaqueros land grant near the Contra Costa-Alameda County line. They had previously bought the former Elliott Estate, which included Brushy Peak, in 1917.

The County Line Ranch, investigated by Los Vaqueros Project archaeologists in 1993, was where Graham Nissen built a small storage shed and worked on some of his farm equipment. Here, on a stone pavement probably laid down in the 1880s, Graham parked his hay mower, his grain drill, and his gasoline-powered tractor and replaced mower sections, drag-chain links, and sparkplugs.[8] Graham does not remember the pavement, so it was probably silted over by the time he used the nice firm ground it provided for his outdoor work area.

Graham recalls that much of his family's land "was so steep [but] we still tried farming a lot of things we shouldn't do. And don't do it now." The Nissens grew hay and grain, including red oat hay for the racehorse Sea Biscuit. They sold hay to Italians in South San Francisco and shipped double five-wire bales to feed army mules in the Philippines. The Nissens raised shorthorn cattle year-round and in summer they moved their band of sheep up to the Vasco from their Patterson Pass ranch. The Highway Patrol had to stop traffic along I-580 so that the sheep and shepherds could cross in safety.

Between 1948 and 1952 the last farmers in the area finally made a switch to machine labor, and Graham reluctantly sold his beautiful Belgiums. He had always been for change, "for new things," as traditional farming was hard on men and hard on the horses. Still the transition was not without a sense of loss. "Yes I did miss the horses. I had some special ones, just like friends. And some almost you'd think they understood what you were saying."[9]

Flagstone Surface at the Nissen Ranch. The stones of this surface were buried under just a couple inches of soil, so they probably provided a patch of solid ground in wet weather. Artifacts left there by Graham Nissen, including some gasoline-powered tractor parts, suggest that he used it to park or service equipment. The surface is very similar to barn floors found elsewhere at Los Vaqueros, and may have been built for that purpose in the 1880s.

THE EVOLUTION OF A ROAD

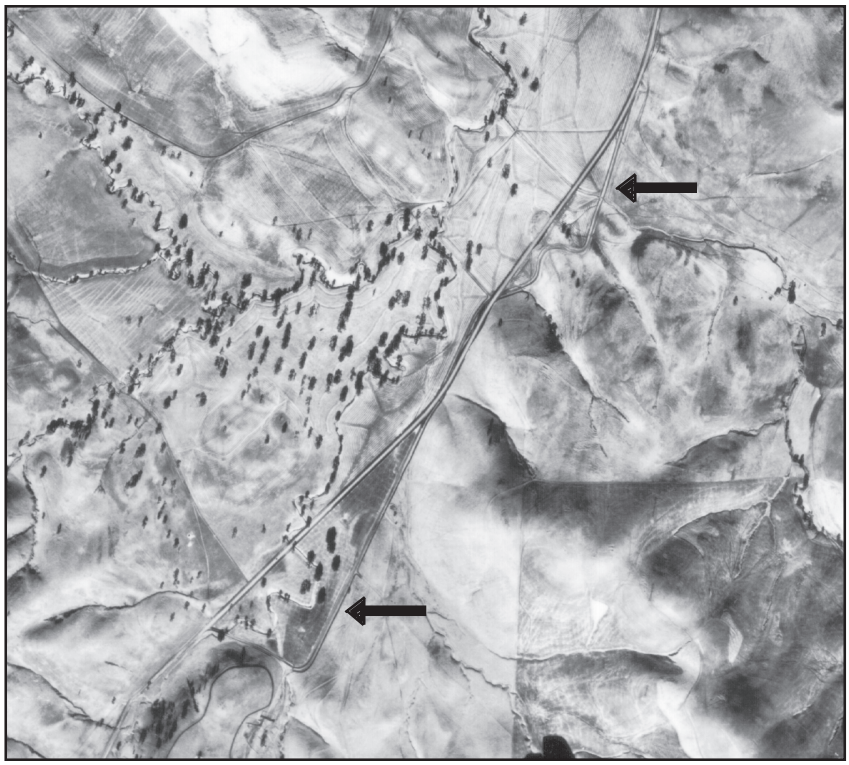
"Vasco" is a picturesque name for a road that is now three-lanes wide in places and moves 13,000 cars a day from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to the Livermore Valley. The road, which originally cut right through the middle of the Los Vaqueros land grant and followed the route of Kellogg Creek across the valley floor, has become a major commute corridor for suburbanites in the Delta to their jobs in the semi-urban areas of the Livermore Valley. Vasco Road has kept pace with changes in Contra Costa County, and, over the years, has been paved, straightened, widened, and finally moved to accommodate the ever-increasing flow of traffic.

"El Camino"

The first passage through the Los Vaqueros land grant was probably a small footpath that followed the ravines between hilltops and meandered alongside the course of Kellogg Creek. We don't know when the road was first built, but a *camino* is dotted on the 1840s *diseño* of Cañada de Los Vaqueros. The course of the *camino* departs from the *Arroyo de Los Vaqueros* about midway through the grant, but there are not enough details on the map to be sure precisely where this was.

By the 1870s, when the Basques had moved to Nevada and Louis Peres was overseeing the ranch, the roadway was well established. Not yet officially called Vasco Road, the dotted line on the 1873 California Geological Survey map shows the road closely following *Arroyo del Poso* ("Canyon of the Spring," now Kellogg Creek) through the land grant, then diverging to the east. Soon after that, when much of the ranch was divided into tenant farms, the road through the grant grew many branches. In 1879 it was dubbed Vaqueros Ranch Road.

For the rest of the 19th century, though, the road remained a local route, meandering from ranch to ranch. It wasn't until 1918 that the road became an



Ghosts of Vasco Road Past. A careful look reveals some of the old twists and turns of Vasco Road in this aerial photo taken in 1950.

official transportation corridor between Byron and Livermore.[10] The *Livermore Herald* proudly proclaimed that "The Vasco road from Byron to Livermore is now open. . . . and will open up a new trade territory for both sections." Four years later graveling operations began with a call to local farmers who might want to supplement their incomes by hauling the material for the roadworks.

But Vasco Road in the early years of the 20th century became a symbol of the technological conservatism that had seized Los Vaqueros. One-time residents remember it as a cranky old road.[11] Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger) recalled her school days at the turn of the 19th century:

> And oh, that road used to get so muddy. The horse could hardly pull us through that dirt road. Now they have that blacktop. Now why couldn't they have had that when we went to school!

Frances Cabral (née Bonfante) remembered an adventure on the muddy and rutted Vasco Road of the early 1920s:

> At 12 years old. I was driving that [laughs]. I always remember those hills, you know in the Vasco. Course now they cut the Vasco but there was a hill going down like this one time, and of course I was a kid. I stood up on the brakes to put my feet like this cause I was in the rut. The thing was sliding. I thought I was going up the other side! Ohh. I never forget that. . .

Every so often the roadway was graded by teams of horses, but the twisting route and surface conditions made it a slow road that, in those years, was never a thoroughfare. It was a friendly, local route used by Los Vaqueros farmers to get to town for their weekly or monthly supplies, and by their children to get to school. Mrs. Crosslin said they

The Oldest Vasco Road. The narrow shelf on the side of the hill in the center of the photograph is what remains of a portion of an early Vasco Road. The Los Vaqueros watershed has plenty of these old road remnants that provide clues to the locations of abandoned farmsteads.

knew everybody who passed by the house on Vasco Road.

God's Country

Ambitious plans were laid in the economic boom times of the 1920s to make Vasco Road something grand. Starting with a call to pave the route between Byron and the county line, by 1927 the papers were reporting plans to construct a whole new highway that would connect Oakland to Stockton via the Vasco and Byron. The proposed road—somewhat north of current I-580—was to enter Los Vaqueros over the Black Hills and join up with the north-bound alignment of Vasco Road about midway through the grant. Promoters claimed, "There are thousands of acres in the magnificent Vasco country, between Byron and Livermore, in beautiful dales and oak-covered hills, that would make ideal country homes with the finest soil, marvelous climate, and within a short run of the bay cities."

The unexpected economic downturn in 1929 squelched all such ambitions, but Vasco Road got much-needed repair work on account of the media spotlight. It was back in the news a decade later when editorial after editorial called for major road improvements that would include widening and straightening. Hailed as a shortcut between Livermore and Byron, it was nonetheless defamed in the press: "the road at almost any time of the year discourages frequent use, and during winter months is practically impassable." Finally, in 1939, the project to improve the road by realigning portions of it, minimizing grades, widening the right-of-way, and oiling the surface was underway in Alameda County. Funds for the Contra Costa County segment were likewise appropriated, but construction was delayed by the war effort, and the improvements were not completed until the early 1950s.

Vasco Road, which had once traced the natural topography, curving its way around steep hills, was finally straightened and widened along its entire length, and the much-touted thoroughfare was ready for heavy traffic. Pieces of the old road became just memories and subtle scars on the hillsides.

New Vasco Road. More of a commuters thoroughfare than the friendly, local route it started out as, the new Vasco Road skirts the site of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir. *(Courtesy CCWD.)*

The "new" road was fast and dangerous; daredevil drivers routinely caused tragic head-on collisions. From 1981 to 1996 there were 450 accidents on the road, 22 of which involved fatalities. In the morning commute hours the road became a steady stream of traffic heading south. A minor mishap along the way could easily cause a 5-mile backup on the two-lane roadway.

But the country that the road passed through remained much the same, and the old barns and sheds acquired an almost mythic status as icons of lost America to the harried commuters. "I truly believe that area is God's country" said one driver in a recent newspaper article.[12] Another commented: "When I drive there, I almost forget that there are hundreds of thousands of people living on either end of the road."

The most recent incarnation of Vasco Road was begun as soon as the ground was broken for the new Los Vaqueros Dam. The old road along Kellogg Creek's valley floor will be inundated by the new reservoir, so a new 12.8-mile segment was built in the hills to the east of the watershed. "With softer curves, passing lanes, and emergency stopping areas, it is a significantly safer road."[13] Safer, perhaps, but not really Vasco Road any longer.

NOTES

Chapter 1. An Introduction to Los Vaqueros

1. See Fentress 1996; Fredrickson, Stewart, and Ziesing 1997; and Meyer and Rosenthal 1996. In addition, Meyer and Rosenthal 1997 documents excavations at prehistoric sites within the watershed.

2. Much of the information about the natural environment at Los Vaqueros comes from Contra Costa Water District 1989, pp. 19-20; Simons 1982.

3. More detailed information about this early period at Los Vaqueros can be found in Fredrickson, Stewart, and Ziesing 1997. See that volume for specific references regarding facts cited above.

4. Or so it was claimed by Sibrian and Welch in *Blum v. Suñol* et al. 1881, pp. 305, 311.

5. King, Hickman, and Berg 1977, p. 86. This assessment might be unduly harsh as much good archaeology was done for the River Basin Salvage Program, and it set the stage for the development of new programs and research.

6. Fredrickson 1984.

7. The National Park Service actually initiated cultural resources studies for the Los Vaqueros watershed in 1964, but it was not until after 1979 that more intensive archaeological work began. The 1979 study is documented in Russo and McBride 1979.

8. Researchers who focus on this period of history are called Ethnohistorians because their studies are a hybrid of traditional history and ethnography (which describes living cultures). In California, early-20th-century ethnographers interviewed Native American elders, some of whom remembered their tribal lifestyles or recounted stories they had heard from their parents and grandparents. Ethnohistorians use these narratives—in conjunction with accounts by early Spanish explorers and records of baptisms, marriages, and deaths kept by the Mission fathers—to try and reconstruct the history and lifeways of this critical era. The results of most of this research for the Los Vaqueros area are presented in Fredrickson, Stewart, and Ziesing 1997.

9. Rooney 1996.

10. There is some disagreement among project scholars regarding the language group of the Ssaoam. Randall Milliken considers them to be Costanoan speakers while Catherine Callaghan believes the Ssaoam were bilingual Costanoan and Miwok speakers. Details of their arguments can be found in Fredrickson, Stewart, and Ziesing 1997.

11. Thompson 1978, p. 2. Other useful sources on oral history or its relationship to historical archaeology include Glassie 1977; Frisch 1990.

Chapter 2. Disputed Range

1. There is an enormous body of literature regarding early patterns of land ownership in California. Some of the sources relied on for the following paragraphs include Gates 1967, 1991; Jelinek 1979; Lavender 1976; Liebman 1983; Pisani 1984, 1991.

2. Palizadas were easily constructed log buildings chinked with mud and tules.

3. Wilkes 1845, p. 173 (with reference to the year 1841).

4. This information is from testimony during the land confirmation hearings in the 1850s; see *Livermore v. United States* 1852-1855.

5. Information about California's changing range land has been taken from several sources, including: Burcham 1957; Gates 1967; Liebman 1983.

6. These figures come from Gates 1967, pp. 22-23; Jelinek 1974, p. 27.

7. The cases were *Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1866; *Dupuy v. Suñol* 1868.

8. Contra Costa Gazette, May 18, 1867.

9. A summary of the Altubes Nevada ranching enterprise can be found in Patterson, Ulph, and Goodwin 1969, pp. 387-389.

Chapter 2—*Continued*

10. Figures were taken from census records: United States Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census) 1860b, 1880a.

11. This quote is from Pitt 1966, p. 2, an excellent source of information regarding the Spanish and Mexican heritage in California.

12. This information and other birth and marriage data in this chapter are based on mission-record research conducted by project ethnohistorian Randall Milliken.

13. José María Amador in *Blum v. Suñol* et al. 1881, p. 137. Other information about the Amadors, Alvisos, and Mirandas was taken from testimony of Francisco Alviso in *Blum v. Suñol et al*. 1881, p. 91; Amador 1877; Hoover et al. 1990, p. 10.

14. Testimony of Francisco Alviso in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, p. 107. Other information in this paragraph from Bancroft 1964, p. 186; Purcell 1940, p. 147.

15. Pitt 1966, pp. 2, 3.

16. Proceedings of the land confirmation process for Los Vaqueros are recorded in *Livermore v. United States* 1852-1855.

17. Davis 1889, p. 46; Milliken 1994, p. 59.

18. As presented in his testimony in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, pp. 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65.

19. DeNier 1926, p. 53.

20. Information in this paragraph comes from DeNier 1926, p. 50; *Livermore v. United States* 1852-1855, p. 7; testimony of Valentine Amador in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, pp. 54, 60, 68, 144, 152, 470-471.

21. Testimony of Josefa Alviso in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, pp. 78, 86, 272-273.

22. This essay is based on information contained in three California Supreme Court opinions (*Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1883; *Peres v. Crocker et al.* 1897; *Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1870) and court records from both the trial and appellate levels.

Court records from Alameda County include *Hamilton and Kirkpatrick v. Peres et al.* 1893; *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1890. Court records from Contra Costa County include *Alviso et al. v. Cockerton et al.* 1869; *Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1866; *Dupuy v. Suñol* 1868. Court records from the California Supreme Court include *Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1869; *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895; *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, 1884, 1887.

23. Juan Suñol had once owned the share that the Bascos purchased. Both the Bascos and Juan's brother, Lorenzo, purchased their interests in the rancho on the same day, and both groups also had interests in Calaveras County. The disintegrating relationship between the Suñols and the Bascos was manifested in the lawsuit, *People v. Garat* 1858.

24. *Blum v. Suñol* was tried primarily on depositions. If the case had originally been tried primarily on oral testimony, the second judge would not have interfered with the first decision no matter how much he disagreed with it, unless it had been wholly unsupported by the evidence. He would not have granted a motion for a new trial when there was a conflict in the evidence as in the case at bar. Because the trial court based its decision on depositions, however, the second judge applied the concept of "same lights" (i.e., when looking at the same written testimony, neither judge has the ability to observe the demeanor of the witnesses and evaluate their credibility on that basis). Previous to *Blum v. Suñol et al.*, the "same lights" concept had only been applied at the appellate level. The second judge applied the "same lights" concept for the first time at the trial court level. By doing so, he was in essence able to "overrule" another trial court judge with whom he disagreed—a highly unusual (and questionable) situation. See Judge Hunt's Opinion (1883, pp. 20-22) in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881.

25. *Hamilton and Kirkpatrick v. Peres et al.* 1893.

26. Good summaries of the fence laws and their effects on California landholding can be found in Duncan 1962; Ludeke 1980.

27. Testimony of Rufus Green and Louis Peres in *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895, p. 138, 143.

28. Hendry and Bowman 1940, pp. 541-542.

29. From testimonies of Welch and Sibrian in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, pp. 31, 305; and other testimony in *Dupuy v. Suñol* 1868; *Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1869.

Chapter 2—*Continued*

30. Information in this paragraph was taken from testimony in *Angulo v. Suñol and Suñol* 1859, p. 15.

31. From Contra Costa County Tax Assessment Rolls 1859, pp. 29, 36.

32. These figures were taken from U.S. Census 1860a. The Contra Costa County Tax Assessment for that year credited him with only the 900-some acres reported the year before and $3,440 in personal property.

33. Hattersley-Drayton 1993, p. 12.

34. As testified by Manuel Miranda in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, pp. 59-63, 65.

35. For information on Hispanic women and their roles in the 19th-century family see McEwan 1991; Jensen 1988, pp. 103-104, 107.

36. All of the details of Maria's life and the quotes included in these paragraphs have been taken from court testimony in the lawsuit she eventually brought against the Suñol brothers: *Angulo v. Suñol and Suñol* 1859.

37. These items were found in refuse pits filled with artifacts dating to the 1860s. Details of the archaeological excavation are presented in Ziesing 1997b.

38. Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society 1860, p. 2.

39. Jensen 1988, p. 107.

40. McMurry 1988, pp. 90-91.

41. Mintz and Kellogg 1988, pp. 49, 53-59.

42. Unless otherwise cited, most of the information in the following paragraphs about the Basques that does not deal specifically with Los Vaqueros was compiled by Carol Hovey, a direct descendant of Pedro Altube, and presented in Hovey 1990.

43. Property acquisitions and transfers described here and in the following paragraphs are recorded in Calaveras and Contra Costa counties Deeds books.

44. Testimony of Louis Peres in *Peres v. Crocker et al.* 1895, p. 166.

45. Beck and Haase 1974, p. 69.

46. Patterson, Ulph, and Goodwin 1969, pp. 387-389.

47. Patterson, Ulph, and Goodwin 1969, p. 390.

48. The history of the Vasco Adobe and its inhabitants has been gathered from archaeological data and numerous primary documents including Contra Costa County Deeds, Mortgages, and Tax Assessments, in addition to U.S. Census schedules, historical maps, and court testimony. The history and physical appearance of the Adobe are summarized here from a more detailed presentation in Ziesing 1997b.

49. Harold Kirker has written extensively on the history of architecture in California. Three of his works, in particular, were consulted: Kirker 1957, 1986, 1991.

50. As a rule, adobe houses predating 1835 did not have fireplaces; Richard Henry Dana, on his travels through Monterey in that year noted that "[t]hey have no chimneys or fireplaces in the houses. and all their cooking is done in a small kitchen, separated from the house." Kirker cites a 1928 survey of extant adobes in Los Angeles, which reported that only one-third were fitted with fireplaces. He claims a "Spanish prejudice against interior fires" and cites Sanchez's observation that fires were considered weakening to one's health. The California adobes of the pre-American era were generally equipped with a separate kitchen building in which all the cooking was done. (Dana was quoted in Kneass 1961, p. 2; Sanchez was cited in Kirker 1957, p 91.)

51. The whereabouts of Louis Peres are reconstructed from Righter 1878; testimony of Albert Weymouth in *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895; U.S. Census 1880b.

52. This was a case first filed by Simon Blum in 1862 in an effort to invalidate the chain of title that the Basques, and subsequently Peres, had bought into. *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881 is discussed in the "Battle Royale" essay in this volume; a comprehensive summary of the case can be found in Praetzellis, Stewart, and Ziesing 1997.

53. Two lines of evidence, in particular, suggest that these improvements were made after Peres lost the

Chapter 2—*Continued*

property. First, the pipe, which ran under Peres's paved yard, was laid after the stones had been put in place, creating a visible disturbance in the pavement. Second, the well itself was fitted with a pump housing manufactured by the Woodin and Little firm of San Francisco, a business that first appeared in the city directories in 1882, a year after Peres signed his land over to McLaughlin.

Although the kitchen plumbing was certainly an improvement to the Adobe, the system was still primitive by modern standards. There was no drainage for the water supply; the sink was just a basin that had to be emptied by hand into the yard.

54. This was how the Vasco Adobe was first officially recorded by Hendry and Bowman 1940, p. 541.

55. This is not to suggest that domed bake ovens are not part of the Old World Basque tradition, which, indeed, they are. In fact, ovens in the Basque provinces are variously housed under wooden sheds standing apart from the house or attached to the house but enclosed under their own roof. The most remarkable examples protrude from a second-story wall and are supported by a braced and roofed wooden balcony. But these may be more recent additions to Basque cookery. Bake ovens are most commonly associated with wheat-based breads, and corn, once introduced to the Basque regions from the Americas, took the place of the more expensive grain and became a central part of the diet. Until recently wheat bread was an unaccustomed luxury, and farmers came to prefer corn to wheat bread. The two types of corn breads that are made were not traditionally baked in an oven. *Talo* is a corn flour patty cooked on an open grill and *arto* is unleavened corn meal bread that was traditionally baked in a pan beneath hot coals. Only recently have ovens replaced the hot-coal method for baking arto. Therefore, the oven at the Vasco Adobe may not have been considered a necessary accoutrement of a traditional Basque kitchen so much as a luxury in which wheat bread could be prepared.

The association between free-standing ovens and wheat-based breads has been proposed by Kniffen 1960. Information about traditional Basque cookery was taken from Isusi 1983. Extensive data regarding the use, construction, and lore of bread ovens was gathered by researchers in Quebec and reported in Boily and Blanchette 1979.

56. The history of the early Vasco Adobe residents has been reconstructed from several key sources, including Hovey 1990; Contra Costa County Tax Assessment Rolls various dates; U.S. Census 1860b.

57. All information about the kinds of food eaten at the Adobe and the tableware on which it was served is derived from archaeological excavation of three refuse pits filled at the end of the 1860s. The data are presented in detail in Ziesing 1997b.

58. All bone was analyzed by a zooarchaeologist, Sherri M. Gust. Her results are included in Ziesing 1997b.

59. Dates and locations for this essay were derived from the Oakland City Directory; San Francisco City Directory; U.S. Census populations schedules; court transcripts (*Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881; *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895); recorded real estate documents (Contra Costa County Mortgages Vol. 13, Chattel Mortgages Vol. 2, Deeds Book 15; Alameda County Deeds Book 109).

60. After a series of lawsuits and years in litigation, the court ruled in 1870 that Juan Suñol's title was invalid and he lost all claim to the rancho (*Peres et al. v. Suñol* 1866, 1870; *Dupuy v. Suñol* 1868). After that year, Suñol disappears from both the Contra Costa County and Calaveras County Tax Assessment Rolls.

61. Testimony of Hoffman in *Peres v. Crocker et al.* 1895, p. 469.

62. Hovey 1990, p. 98; Olmsted et al. 1981, pp. 118-119.

63. M.A. Peres filed a Lis Pendens against L. Peres, which referenced another case to "obtain a decree of divorce from the bonds of matrimony existing between plaintiff and defendant aforesaid: that all the property belonging to the community should be set aside to plaintiff, and that the property in the County of Contra Costa affected thereby is that certain tract known as the 'Rancho de los Vaqueros'." No further official record could be found on the Peres divorce; if it had been filed in San Francisco as was the initial Lis Pendens, it would have been destroyed in the fire of 1906. A letter has survived, however, describing the settlement: on January 8, 1878, Minnie Barnes wrote to her mother, "He [Sylvain Bordes] says Mrs. Antonia

Chapter 2—*Continued*

Paris [sic] is living in Oakland. If you call on her you may make her something for Mr. Paris pays her $2,000 a year for the last two years and two years more."; Mrs. Antonia Peres visited Mrs. Barnes, who saved her elegant calling card.

64. Hovey 1990, pp. 132-134.

65. Archaeological excavation is the source of information regarding physical improvements to the Adobe. The sequence of events was determined based on site stratigraphy, while dates were derived from associated artifacts. That Peres made these changes is more than likely; that he did so in preparation for his new wife's tenure at the adobe is conjecture. Details of the excavations are presented in Ziesing 1997b.

66. To date, four tenant ranches have been excavated at Los Vaqueros, and all have evidence of similar stone surfaces. At two of these sites, the Weymouth/Rose site and the Perata/Bonfante site, these surfaces have been positively identified as barn floors. Only the Weymouth/Rose site was recorded as a tenant ranch on the 1880 census, so the buildings at the other sites may not have been constructed by Peres, although he did not sell out to McLaughlin until 1881. The site reports that document these stone surfaces are Praetzellis et al. 1995; Ziesing 1997a.

67. Although he was born in France, Simon Blum's surname shows that was an Ashkanazi—an eastern European Jew, possibly of German/Prussian descent. In contrast, the name Peres suggests ancestors from Spain or North Africa; Peres was almost certainly a Sephardic Jew. In 19th-century North America—as today—the Sephardim and Ashknazim were far from being a homogeneous ethnic group. They practiced distinct, historically rooted variations on the basic Jewish rituals, and maintained separate religious and social institutions.

68. Testimony of Charles Peers in *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895, p. 440.

69. Quotations in the following paragraph are taken from *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895.

70. Hovey 1990, p. 135.

71. Information in these paragraphs was taken from Slocum & Co. 1882, p. 510; Daggett's Scraps n.d., p. 170; Contra Costa County Tax Assessment Roll 1864; S. Blum & Co. n.d.; Pioneer Records 1947, 1972.

72. Slocum & Co. 1882, p. 510.

73. Testimony of Amador and Higuera in Blum v. Suñol et al. 1881, pp. 155, 262.

74. *People v. Simon Blum* 1865.

75. Contra Costa County Probate Court, Simon Blum's Probate, "Final Account" (filed January 26, 1914) and "Decree Settling Final Account and of Distribution" (filed June 22, 1914).

76. These are second-hand accounts. Sylvain Bordes's comment is reported by his great-nephew Franklyn Silva (1991, p. 4). Joseph Cardoza is quoted by his daughter Ida Taylor (1996, p. 3).

77. Jackson 1939, p. 16.

78. As suggested by Jackson 1939, p. 17. See Dame Shirley 1970 for text of anecdote.

79. Jackson 1939, p. 12.

80. For an excellent overview of Hispanic-Anglo relations in 19th-century California see Pitt 1966. Contemporary local and state histories often recount the Joaquin legend as historical fact. See, for example, Monroy 1990, pp. 211-213; Hoover et al. 1990, pp. 88-89. A populist retelling of the Joaquin Murieta legend is included in Lee 1974, pp. 51-55. For literature on the outlaw hero tradition see Hobsbawm 1969; Meyer 1980, pp. 93-124; Roberts 1981, pp. 315-328.

81. Slatta 1990, p. 68.

82. Testimony of George Swain in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, p. 366.

83. Testimony of William Welch in *Blum v. Suñol et al.* 1881, p. 314.

84. Barnes 1878 (letter to her sister, Sarah, on March 8, 1878).

85. Testimony in *People v. Garat* 1858.

86. Information for this section was derived from oral-history interviews with one-time residents of the Vasco.

Chapter 3. Parceling the Land

1. Slocum & Co. 1882. Several secondary sources were consulted for information about the development of agriculture in California. They include Gates 1967; Jelinek 1979; Liebman 1983; Pisani 1984; Reed 1946.

2. Research on public land policies was reported in Praetzellis, Praetzellis, and Stewart 1985, pp. 123-125.

3. Contra Costa County Patents 1870 (Vol. 1), pp. 237-251.

4. The Vasco was the subject of major articles in several annual special editions of the Byron Times. The authors extolled the beauty of the place, but urged its development. For example: "When it is realized that water may be obtained almost anywhere on the Vasco rancho in quantity necessary for irrigation and domestic uses, the value of these rich lands under intensive cultivation may better be appreciated (*Byron Times* 1922-1923, p. 72); or "Placed under a modern system of operation, hundreds of these rich acres could be diverted into highly productive fruit orchards and vineyards. There are no limits, in fact, as to what might be accomplished in the favored Vasco country" (*Byron Times* 1924-1925, p. 108).

5. As recorded in court testimony, *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895, pp. 55-56.

6. *Byron Times*, June 14, 1912, p. 8; Byron Times, May 2, 1923, p. 1.

7. Praise for McLaughlin's lease agreements was recorded in testimony in *Peres v. Crocker and Dillon* 1895, p. 543; Bordes 1993; Fragulia and Bignone 1993.

8. Details of everyday life at Los Vaqueros were recorded in oral-history interviews and reported in Hattersley-Drayton 1993.

9. Information in the following two paragraphs comes from *Byron Times* 1908-1909, 1912 (p. 106), 1916 (pp. 60-61, 93), 1918 (p. 58), 1922-1923 (p. 72).

10. Rodman 1988, p. 1; Steffen 1979, p. 54-55.

11. Bainer 1955.

12. A number of oral history interviews were used for this essay: Fragulia and Bignone 1993; Mourterot 1993; Vallerga and Sod 1995; Gleese 1995.

13. Both of these sites were subject to field investigation, the results of which are reported in detail in Praetzellis et al. 1995 (Cabral sheep camp); Ziesing 1997a (stone sheep shelter).

14. Gleese 1995.

15. Pitt 1966, p. 309. For a useful essay in understanding the "ideal" culture and values of early Californios see Miranda 1988.

16. Pitt 1966.

17. Monroy 1990, p. 271.

18. Hargraves 1995. Ann Homan, a local historian and retired high-school teacher, graciously shared her research on families who lived along the Morgan Territory Road. As an example, it is through her diligence that we have a copy of the guardianship document drawn up between Miguel Palomares and Francisco Alviso.

19. A variety of primary source materials was used to compile these biographies, including oral histories, newspaper articles, census and tax records. Former ranchers/farmers who remembered and spoke about these two included Mourterot 1993; Gleese 1995; Vallerga and Sod 1995; Crosslin and Santos 1993; Gomez 1993.

20. For information on Swedish immigrants see Ljungmark 1979; Carlsson 1988.

21. Information on Charles McLaughlin's involvement in railroad contracting comes from an unpublished manuscript, Williams 1977. McLaughlin's huge landholdings are documented in Liebman 1983, p. 23.

22. Reports of the murder appeared in local newspapers; the following excerpts are taken from the *San Francisco Call*, December 14, 1883, pp. 3, 5.

23. Summaries of the court decisions are from Williams 1977, pp. 208-209; Mr. Williams cites the *Oakland Tribune* December 12, 1891, and the *San Francisco Call* October 5, 1886.

Chapter 3—*Continued*

24. Williams 1977, p. 13.

25. The notion of cultural landscapes and their appropriateness as the subject of historical, anthropological, and geographical study is what guides this essay. Inspiration came from Jackson 1977; McClelland et al. n.d.

26. Excellent discussions of barn forms and their geographical variability can be found in Francaviligia 1972; Hubka 1984; Noble 1984.

27. Details of the Perata/Bonfante barn were synthesized from a variety of sources including oral history interviews with two of the Bonfantes and archaeological investigations conducted in 1995.

28. Hattersley-Drayton 1980.

29. Extensive stonework and stone pavements have been found at all historical sites investigated archaeologically at Los Vaqueros. While some of these features are clearly floors and/or foundations, many are haphazard concentrations of cobbles and small stone slabs apparently set in high-traffic areas.

30. Details about this curious structure are included in Ziesing 1997a.

31. The interviews used in this essay are Vallerga and Cabral 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b.

32. Mourterot 1993. A variety of primary-source materials has been used to construct these four family biographies. Emelia Crosslin (née Grueninger), 98 at the time, and her son Pyron Crosslin provided information about the Grueningers and other farming families in the area (Crosslin 1993). Paul Fragulia, born in 1904, was interviewed on three occasions (Fragulia 1993, 1994; Fragulia and Bignone 1993). His daughter, Marie Bignone (née Fragulia) also contributed to our knowledge of the Fragulia family, and to Vasco social history in general. The family photo collection was copied, and these personal mementos helped to document farm labor and equipment, family and social events at the ranch.

The history of the Cabrals was helped along by several interviews with daughter-in-law Frances Cabral (née Bonfante; Vallerga and Cabral 1992, 1993), and through the memories of other local ranchers. The materials available to write a family history for the Bordes was the richest of all. In addition to interviews with Sylvain Bordes III (a Bordes grandson; Bordes 1993) and Sylvain Terence Rooney (a great-grandson; Rooney 1996), project historians had access to family letters, photos, and records compiled by both Mr. Rooney and his cousin Franklyn Silva.

Newspaper articles from the *Byron Times* and the *Livermore Herald*, census records for all available years, and tax assessments also helped to provide context and a chronology for settlement patterns and agrarian production for these and other farmers.

33. For a good discussion of this immigrant group see Bohme 1956.

34. Leighton 1992.

35. Pioneer Records 1948.

36. *The Argonaut*, April 8, 1889, p. 11.

37. Mary Crocker's personal possessions were inventoried as part of her probate: San Francisco Superior Court 1929-1935, p. 57.

38. The accident that took Mary Crocker's life was reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 27, 1929, p. 1; June 28, 1929, p. 2; August 3, 1929, p. 3.

39. *Byron Times*, June 6, 1929, p. 2.

40. Much of the information in this essay comes from oral-history research, and, unless otherwise noted, direct quotes were taken from transcripts of interviews. Interviews include Vallerga and Cabral 1992, 1993; Crosslin 1993; Schwartzler 1996; Vallerga and Sod 1995.

41. Silva 1991, p. 4.

42. Archaeologists uncovered a stone cellar at the Bonfante site that was full of refuse apparently left behind when the Bonfantes moved to Livermore in the late 1920s. There were numerous tin cans, bottles, ceramic dishes, and some animal bone. Many of the dishes were decorated with a rose pattern popular in the 1910s and 1920s. These were interesting because there were at least four slightly different rose patterns on different vessels. Mrs. Bonfante probably mixed and matched pieces, filling in gaps in her set of china with

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whatever was available at the time she needed it. While this did not produce an actual set of matching china, her table at least appeared somewhat uniform. Excavations at the Bonfante site are reported in detail in Ziesing 1997a.

43. Hatch 1979, p. 33.

44. The archaeology of the Bonfante's blacksmith shop is fully reported in Ziesing 1997a.

45. Blacksmith shop activity areas and layout have been identified and reported by Light 1984.

46. The interviews consulted for this essay were: Fragulia 1993; Vallerga and Cabral 1995b; Vallerga and Sod 1995.

47. Or so the story goes, as reported by Denham 1995.

48. One way to find out how these tools were used is to look at trade manuals of the period. For example: International Correspondence Schools, *Blacksmith Shop & Iron Forging*.

49. An excellent summary of historical recycling practices can be found in Busch 1991.

50. The academic literature on the topics of ethnicity and immigration is extensive. A few references that have helped to frame this very brief discussion include Barth 1969; Conzen et al. 1992; di Leonardo 1984; Fischer 1986; Sanchez 1993; Sollors 1991; Tonkin, McDonald, and Chapman 1989.

51. Oral-history interviews used in this essay include Fragulia 1993; Fragulia and Bignone 1993; Crosslin 1993.

52. Foodways as a private yet persistent expression of identity and ethnicity is discussed in Bronner 1986.

53. For additional information about Portuguese-Americans and the festival of the Holy Ghost see Bohme 1956; Salvador 1981. For first-person reminiscences about the Livermore festa see St. Michael's Church 1978, pp. 33-35; Basso 1996.

54. No culture is completely without communal beliefs and practices, both secular and religious. The need for these practices is universal although the content and expression of them vary according to the culture of which they are a part. The study of these rituals of transition, solidarity, and togetherness is a large part of what anthropologists do. A couple of good introductions to this subject are Harris 1971; Van Gennep 1960.

55. Most of the events described in this essay were reported in the local newspapers. Articles consulted include the following:

"Was First Wedding in the Vasco - Alice M. Coats Becomes Bride of Edward McIntyre – One of the Most Popular Young Ladies in the Grant," *Byron Times* (February 14, 1908, p. 1, col. 3);

"Marriage Epidemic Taking Away the Pretty Girls," *Byron Times* (December 6, 1907, p. 1, col. 6);

"Pretty Wedding Ceremony: Miss Eda Morchio the Bride of Paul Volponi," *Byron Times* (December 24, 1909, p. 1, col. 2);

"Taken at Monterey: Minnie Bordes on Her Way Home to Parents," *Oakland Inquirer* (June 21, 1897);

"Patrick Gleese, Well-Known Valley Pioneer Passes Away," *Livermore Herald* (1903, p. 1, cols. 1-2);

"Notes of Local Interest," *Livermore Herald* (February 26, 1910, p. 5, col. 3);

"Pioneer's Dying Wish is Respected," *Livermore Herald* (October 21, 1911, p. 1, col. 1);

"Terrible Accident: S. Morchio Jr. Killed, J. Santos Jr. Injured in Crash," *Byron Times* (November 2, 1928, p. 5, col. 5);

"Death of Infant Child of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Armstrong," *Byron Times* (April 28, 1911, p. 1, col. 2; p. 2, col. 2);

"List of Those Who Were in Costume at the Great Masked Ball of the Native Sons," *Byron Times* (February 14, 1908, p. 8, col. 2);

"Mask Ball Glorious Success," *Byron Times* (February 13, 1914, p. 1, col. 5);

"Mask Ball Fine Success," *Byron Times* (February 8, 1929, p. 2, col. 2);

"Swell Dance is Held at Marsh Creek," *Byron Times* (February 21, 1908, p. 1, col. 6);

"Picnic at Brushy Peak," *Byron Times* (April 15, 1880, p. 3, col. 4);

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"Picnic at Brushy Peak," *Livermore Herald* (August 22, 1908, p. 5, col. 2);
"Bohemians Hold Annual Outing on Brushy Peak," *Livermore Herald* (May 1, 1909, p. 7, col. 2);
"Picnic at Brushy Peak," *Livermore Herald* (September 23, 1910, p. 8, col. 2);
"Delightful Dance," *Byron Times* (September 13, 1907, p. 1, col. 5);
"A Pleasant Surprise Party," *Byron Times* (April 10, 1908, p. 8, col. 3);
"Surprise Party," *Byron Times* (September 17, 1909, p. 1, col. 2);
"A Pleasant Surprise Birthday Party," *Byron Times* (February 18, 1910, p. 2, col. 8);
"Birthday Celebration," *Byron Times* (May 26, 1911, p. 8, col. 2);
"Loved Woman Celebrates Seventy-Eighth Birthday," *Byron Times* (June 14, 1929).

56. Bordes 1993.

57. The technical reports that document these excavations are Praetzellis et al. 1995 (the Connolly site); Ziesing 1997a (the Rose site).

58. The plates have manufacturer's marks that identify them has having been produced by John Maddock & Sons of Burslem, England. Ceramic marks have been well researched and often provide some of the most reliable dates for 19th-century archaeological deposits. One of the most useful reference books, and the one from which we got the Maddock date, is Godden 1991, p. 406.

59. Dates for these items were found in Toulouse 1969, p. 136, 1971, pp. 116-117. Additional information on the Budweiser bottles was obtained from Brown 1995.

60. There are a number of sources for information about medicinal and toiletry products. One of the most thorough is Fike 1987.

61. One of the best sources for understanding what kinds of consumer goods were available at a given time is the mail-order catalogs of the day, many of which have been reprinted. Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward were the major national catalogs in the late 19th century; the catalogs used to look at the Roses' ceramics were Sears, Roebuck and Co. 1897, 1900, 1902. Information about changing ceramic styles can be found in Majewski and O'Brien 1987; Wetherbee 1980.

62. Information about the Wehrle stove and the company that made it was taken from Sears, Roebuck and Co. 1908, pp. 626-639; Dickman 1994.

63. Crosslin 1993.

Chapter 4. Full Circle

1. Hatch 1975; Jelinek 1979.

2. Information about land transfers was taken from official land documents such as Contra Costa County Official Records and county histories such as Purcell 1940.

3. The following history of the Contra Costa Water District was taken from their publication, CCWD 1989.

4. This essay is based on Starr 1952, v.d.; Higgins n.d.; Gomez 1993; *San Francisco Chronicle* January 14, 1967, p. 25; *San Francisco Examiner* January 13, 1967, p. 46.

5. Purcell 1940, p. 198.

6. The Ordway's tenure in the Vasco is constructed through tax records and oral-history interviews: Gomez 1993; Crosslin and Santos 1993; Wheeler 1992; Souza 1996.

7. A common assumption about rural life is that farmers are merely passive receptors of innovative ideas that have been forged at the "top." In fact, evidence from this study points to another model for change. Although the local farm bureau may have had some influence, state and county fairs, farm catalogs, and traveling salesmen apparently played a minor role in the dissemination of new ideas. Instead, farmers more readily absorbed technology through a bottom-up communal process in which neighbors worked together to craft a new piece of equipment or sent their ideas to town to be constructed at local machine shops. Ideas

Chapter 4—*Continued*

were only cautiously accepted from the "outside." Although ultimately corporate culture did come to dominate farming in this area, it arrived late.

8. These are all artifacts found during the archaeological excavation of the stone surface. The surface itself is remarkably similar to the barn floors at the Rose and Bonfante sites and may have been laid for that purpose. An account of excavations at the site is included in Praetzellis et al. 1995.

9. Nissen 1992, 1993.

10. The following *Livermore Herald* articles were consulted to reconstruct the history of Vasco Road:
"Byron Road Via Vasco Grant is Now Open," July 5, 1913, p. 4;
"Will Start Graveling Roads," September 21, 1918, p. 8;
"To Improve Byron Highway," September 3, 1921, p. 3;
"Vasco Country Would be Opened by Road," November 25, 1927, p. 3;
"Vasco Road Put in Shape for Winter," December 23, 1927, p. 4;
"Improvement of Vasco Road Urged," September 17, 1937, p. 4;
"Favor Improvement of Vasco Road," December 2, 1938, p. 1;
"Urge Improvement of Vasco Road," February 10, 1939, p. 2;
"Vasco Road Work Will Start Soon," February 24, 1939, p. 1;
"Complete Vasco Road Negotiations," June 9, 1939, p. 1;
"Reconstruction of Vasco Road Starts," September 8, 1939, p. 1;
"Splendid Job on Vasco Road," November 10, 1939, p. 1;
"Endorses Vasco Road Improvement," November 23, 1945, p. 5;
"Contra Costa Vasco Road Work Starting," September 16, 1949, p. 1.

11. The following quotations are from Crosslin 1992; Vallerga and Cabral 1995a.

12. "Closing of Old Vasco Signals End to Rural Life," Valley Times April 22, 1996, p. 1.

13. CCWD 1996.

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Oral History Interviews

Unless otherwise noted, the interviews listed below were conducted by Karana Hattersley-Drayton and were recorded on tape. Transcripts, summaries, and indexes are on file at the ASC, SSUAF, Rohnert Park, California.

Basso, Ernie
1996 Son of Steve and Emma (née Rose) Basso, former Vasco residents (CA-CCO-445H). Interviewed on February 19, 1996.
Bordes, Sylvain, III
1993 Grandson of Sylvain and Mary (née Barnes) Bordes, former Vasco residents. Interviewed on August 23, 1993, Antioch, California.
Crosslin, Emelia (née Grueninger)
1993 Former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-537H). Interviewed on January 23, 1993, Santa Cruz, California.
Crosslin, Pyron, and Jess Santos
1993 Crosslin is a former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-535H); Santos is a former Vasco ranchhand. Interviewed on February 5, 1993, Byron, California.
Fragulia, Paul
1993 Former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-448H). Interviewed on October 29, 1993, Alameda, California.
1994 Former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-448H). Interviewed on December 22, 1994, Alameda, California.
Fragulia, Paul, and Marie Bignone (née Fragulia)
1993 Fragulia is a former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-448H); Bignone is the daughter of Paul Fraguila. Interviewed on December 21, 1993, Alameda, California.
Gleese, Jack, Jr.
1995 Former Black Hills rancher. Interviewed on September 9, 1995, Pollock Pines, California.
Gomez, Ed
1993 Foreman for Starr Ranch (CA-CCO-470H), 1943-1946. Interviewed on March 24, 1993, Escalon, California.
Hargraves, Juanita (née Robles)
1995 Former Black Hills resident and daughter of Tomaseno and Elizabeth (née Palomares) Robles. Interviewed on November 9, 1995, by Karana Hattersley-Drayton and Anne Homan, Livermore, California.
Leighton, Kathy Armstrong
1992 Former Los Vaqueros resident (CA-CCO-629H). Interviewed on January 14, 1992, Byron, California.
Mourterot, Bernard (Fred)
1993 Former Vasco ranchhand for the Sylvain Bordes family, ca. 1917-1919. Interviewed on January 29, 1993, Livermore, California.

Nissen, Graham
1992 Former Vasco rancher (CA-CCO-426H, CCO-569H, ALA-536H) and son of Charles and Sue Nissen. Interviewed on April 28, 1992, Livermore, California.
1993 Former Vasco rancher (CA-CCO-426H, CCO-569H, ALA-536H) and son of Charles and Sue Nissen. Interviewed on April 11, 1993, Livermore, California.

Rooney, Terry
1996 Grandson of Lucy Rooney (née Bordes) and great grandson of Sylvain and Minnie Bordes, former Vasco residents. Interviewed on May 31, 1996, Livermore, California.

Souza, Josephine (née Pimentel)
1996 Former Vasco resident. Interviewed on November 25, 1996, Stockton, California.

Schwartzler, Elizabeth (née Dario)
1996 Daughter of Pete Dario and grandaughter of Louis and Josephine, former Vasco ranchers. Interviewed on May 31, 1996.

Taylor, Ida (née Cardoza)
1996 Daughter of Joseph Cardoza, former Black Hills rancher. Interviewed July 12, 1996, Livermore, California by Karana Hattersley-Drayton for East Bay Regional Park District.

Vallerga, John, and Evelyn Sod (née Bonfante)
1995 Vallerga is a former Vasco resident and the son of Mary Vallerga (née Bonfante); Sod is a former Vasco resident (CA-CCO-427H) and daughter of John and Angela Bonfante. Interviewed on August 15, 1995, Richmond, California.

Vallerga (née Bonfante), Mary, and Frances Cabral (née Bonfante)
1992 Former Vasco residents (CA-CCO-427H) and daughters of John and Angela Bonfante. Interviewed on April 28, 1992, Castro Valley, California.
1993 Former Vasco residents (CA-CCO-427H) and daughters of John and Angela Bonfante. Interviewed on February 10, 1993, Castro Valley, California.
1995a Former Vasco residents (CA-CCO-427H) and daughters of John and Angela Bonfante. Interviewed on May 2, 1995, Castro Valley, California.
1995b Former Vasco residents (CA-CCO-427H) and daughters of John and Angela Bonfante. Interviewed on June 20, 1995, Castro Valley, California.

Wheeler, Mark
1992 Former Vasco tenant (CA-CCO-470H). Notes on visit to the Starr Ranch site on February 20, 1992.

Los Vaqueros Project Final Report Series

Anthropological Studies Center,
Sonoma State University Academic Foundation, Inc.
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1. *The Los Vaqueros Watershed: A Working History*. Prepared by Mary Praetzellis, Suzanne B. Stewart, and Grace H. Ziesing. 1997.

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3. *Investigations of Three Historic Archaeological Sites, CA-CCO-447/H, CA-CCO-445H, and CA-CCO-427H, for the Los Vaqueros Project, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California.* Prepared by Grace H. Ziesing. 1996.

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