

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by Marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets materials, (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Rancho Camulos  
other names/site number Camulos Ranch, Del Valle Ranch, Camulos

**2. Location**

street & number 5164 East Telegraph Rd.  not for publication  
city, town Piru  vicinity  
state California code CA county Ventura code 111 zip code 93040

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>16</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>        </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>        </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>18</u>	<u>        </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register         

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

determined to be eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

other, (explain:): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/Agricultural outbuilding

Domestic/single dwelling

Transportation/rail-related

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

same

same, work in progress

same

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Colonial

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Bungalow/Craftsman

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundations stone, concrete

walls adobe, wood, brick, stucco

roof asphalt, tile, shingle

other wood, metal

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Camulos Ranch is nestled near the eastern boundary of Ventura County in the Santa Clara Valley, directly east of Piru and 47 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The 1,800 acre citrus ranch is bounded by low hills on the north, Piru Creek to the west, the Santa Clara River and the Oak Ridge mountains to the south and the Newhall Ranch on the east. The ranch headquarters complex is located south of State Highway 126, bisecting the ranch from east to west. The former Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way runs roughly parallel and to the north of the highway.

The main ranch headquarters on the south side of Highway 126 is composed of eleven buildings: the Ygnacio del Valle Adobe, Nachito del Valle Adobe, barn, bunkhouse, winery, chapel, schoolhouse, gas station, shed and two garages. Directly across from the ranch, north of Highway 126 and the railroad right-of-way are two railroad-related residences and three farm labor residences. Located to the northeast of these buildings, outside of the boundaries of this nomination, is the del Valle family cemetery.

The **Ygnacio del Valle Adobe** was built in several phases, beginning in 1853 and reaching essentially its present plan by 1880. The first four rooms, built circa 1853, form the southeastern portion of the u-shaped adobe. These original rooms were l-shaped in plan, with porches extending across the northern and southern elevations supported by chamfered wood posts. The medium gable roof was evidently covered originally with wood shingles, but is now covered with asphalt composition shingles. Four doors open onto the porch or *corredor*. The doors have glass panes in the upper portion and recessed panels in the lower half, forming an x-pattern. Two adobe buttresses frame a solitary window at the eastern corner on the south elevation. A small wooden balcony is located at the east end of the south wing. A door opens onto the balcony from below the gable peak. A brick chimney punctuates the roofline.

Between 1861 and 1862, an addition created three rooms adjacent and to the west of the original four rooms. A cellar under this portion of the adobe is accessed through double wood doors below the porch. Steps lead up to a raised porch, presently enclosed with screens. This section of the adobe has a hip roof originally covered with wood shingles, but now covered with asphalt composition shingles. Wood sash windows have six over six lights. At the same time, a free-standing kitchen building was constructed at the northeastern corner of what was to become the patio area.

During the 1870s (an exact date is presently unavailable) a west wing was added on a perpendicular to the 1853 and attached 1861-2 sections. A screened-in *corredor* runs along the western elevation of this section of the adobe creating an l-shaped plan. The *corredor* is supported by square capped posts and has concrete floors. Six entrances located along the *corredor* lead into the bedroom and living areas. The doors are paneled wood, and the four, wood sash windows are six over six paned. The final alteration to the plan of the adobe was made at some time between 1895 and 1923. This hip-roofed, one-room addition to the north end of the west wing was constructed of stone and covered with plaster to read like adobe. The kitchen was eventually connected to the main body of the adobe by means of a breezeway, completing the u-shaped plan.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

agriculture \_\_\_\_\_

1853 to 1943 \_\_\_\_\_

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

social history (Ramona) \_\_\_\_\_

1884 to 1943 (NHL) \_\_\_\_\_

architecture \_\_\_\_\_

1853 to 1880 (NHL) \_\_\_\_\_

exploration/settlement \_\_\_\_\_

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Cultural Affiliation

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Significant Person

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Architect/Builder

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

### Summary

The grouping of buildings at Rancho Camulos, including the Ygnacio del Valle adobe, winery, fountain, bells, and chapel are eligible for listing as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1 because of their exceptional value in interpreting the social and economic history of the California rancho from 1853 to 1880. These ranchos are unique to California, as they exist no where else. For National Historic Landmark eligibility, the period of significance is defined by the beginning construction of the first four rooms of the adobe in 1853, and the completion of the adobe, and death of Ygnacio del Valle, in 1880. During this time the rancho grew from a few hundred head of cattle to a thriving self-contained agricultural operation of 1,290 acres of citrus, vineyards and row crops supporting nearly 200 residents. The additional buildings constructed at Rancho Camulos between 1881 until 1943 are also eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their contributions to the development of agriculture in the Santa Clara Valley.

The Ygnacio del Valle adobe, winery, fountain, bells, and chapel are also eligible for listing as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1 for the exceptional significance they attained as one of three of the nation's most prominent and widely recognized Ramona landmarks, following the publication of Helen Hunt Jackson's book *Ramona* in 1884. This singular event, combined with the arrival of the Southern Pacific railroad at Camulos in 1887, propelled the rancho into a nationwide notoriety that proved key to the romanticizing of the mission and rancho era of California history.

The Ygnacio del Valle adobe, chapel and winery all achieve national significance under NHL Criterion 4 because they embody the characteristics of an architectural type that are exceptionally valuable for their method and type of construction (adobe, wood frame and brick). The Ygnacio del Valle adobe is among the finest extant examples of Californio-era rural vernacular architecture in the nation. In addition, the courtyard, chapel and winery immediately surrounded by the family orchard are especially valuable contributors to the interpretation of this period (1853-1880) of late rancho buildings. California adobe architecture, although regional in derivation, is an important property type because it served as the prototype for the ranch house, a style that flourished throughout the United States from the 1930s onwards. The additional buildings (1881-1930) on the 1,800 acre ranch and within the 40 acre nominated site are eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion C as contributing to the interpretation of the continuing hispanic architectural traditions in California, and as fine representative and unaltered examples of rural agriculture buildings and railroad architecture.

See continuation sheet.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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- Bancroft, Hubert Howe. *History of California, 1542 - 1890*. 7 Vols., San Francisco: The History Co., 1884-1890.
- Banning, Evelyn I. *Helen Hunt Jackson*. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1973.
- Barker, Frances T. "Camulos, A Ranch of Romance." *Sunset Magazine* (December 1925): 65-66.
- Cullimore, Clarence. *Santa Barbara Adobes*. Santa Barbara Book Publishing Co., 1948.
- Davis, Carlyle C. "Ramona: the Ideal and the Real." *Out West* 19 (December 1903): 575-596.
- DeLyser, Dydia Y. *Ramona Memories: Constructing the Landscape of Southern California through a Fictional Text*. Syracuse University Department of Geography, 1996 (unpublished Masters Thesis).
- Del Castillo, Richard Griswold. "The del Valle Family and the Fantasy Heritage." *California History* 59 (1980): 2-15.

See continuation sheet.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # CA/38
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

### Specify repository:

Huntington Library

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## 10. Geographic Data

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Acreage of property 40

### UTM References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

See continuation sheet.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Rancho Camulos is located on both the north and south sides of Hwy. 126, approximately three miles east of Piru. The legal description of the recently created 40 acre parcel is as follows:

See continuation sheet.

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### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is a 40 acre parcel out of the total 1,800 acres of the ranch holdings that encompasses all of the historic buildings of the ranch itself and a portion of the historic setting. This setting includes citrus orchards, windrows, railroad right-of-way and Santa Clara River bottom.

See continuation sheet.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Judy Triem (Historian), Mitch Stone (Preservation Planner)

organization San Buenaventura Research Associates

street & number 627 E. Pleasant Street

city or town Santa Paula

date 6/26/1996

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Description (continued)**

The Ygnacio del Valle Adobe evolved and expanded considerably over a roughly fifty year span, but essentially represents the overall plan and appearance it attained by 1880. The most architecturally intrusive alterations are the addition of large picture windows on the west side of the west wing, and on the north side of the south wing made in the 1950s. The original kitchen in the north wing was remodeled into a garage and servants quarters between 1925 and 1934.

The one and one-half-story brick **winery** was built in 1867. The medium-pitched front facing gable roof of this long, rectangular plan building is covered with wood shingles. The brick building has several large openings: the northern elevation contains large wooden doors with a wood lintel and a radiating arched brick pattern above. The wooden doors have recessed vertical panels. At the south end of the winery, the large wood double doors are accessed by a ramp. The ramp as well as the building's foundation are constructed of stone. Wood sash windows are symmetrically placed below the roofline on all four sides of the building. Additional single wood doors are located on the east and west sides of the building. A shed roofed structure was added to the west side of the building at an unknown date, ca 1935. It is constructed of board and batten siding and is used for farm equipment and automobile storage.

Wines were probably aged in casks in the basement under the winery. Camulos was known for its fine brandies and wines primarily between the 1870s and 1890s. When grapes were no longer grown for commercial purposes, probably after 1900, the building was converted to use as storage. In later years, August Rubel converted the winery building to a museum housing del Valle family artifacts.

The present **chapel** was also constructed circa 1867, although some form of an earlier chapel existed by 1861. The woodframe chapel measures fourteen feet wide by twenty feet in length, with a thirty foot long porch extending off of the eastern end of the building. The building is constructed on wood and brick piers and covered with plaster. The unusual front gabled porch roof contains a barrel vaulted beaded-board wood ceiling similar to the interior ceiling in the chapel. The gable end is covered with board and batten siding and contains a small white wooden cross. The arch extends across the front of the porch and is trimmed with a decorative fleur-de-lis design that is repeated as a pendant at the gable peak. Three concrete steps lead up to the wooden porch partially enclosed by woven latticework sides. Two raised paneled doors open into the small chapel and are surrounded by wood mouldings. Windows are located on the north and south sides. The wood sash window on the north contains a decorative stained glass window in the upper half. The wood sash window on the south contains six over six lights and wood mouldings. Louvered wood shutters are held back by decorative wrought iron stays.

Directly adjacent and to the northwest of the chapel are the **bells**. Three bells hanging from a freestanding wooden frame were features of Camulos since at least the 1870s, and possibly earlier. The largest of the three bells was cast by Russians in Kodiak, Alaska, and was used to call worshipers to morning prayer or mass in the chapel. A second slightly smaller bell was also cast in Kodiak, Alaska in 1796. This bell originally hung at the San Fernando Mission and may have been removed to Camulos by Antonio del Valle when he was administrator at San Fernando. A third, smaller bell is missing.

The **fountain** (and lavatorio) adjacent to the chapel and the south wing of the adobe is a circular brick object about two to three feet in height. The brick at one time had been covered with plaster, but this is now mostly flaked away and the bricks exposed. In the center a tapered raised brick stem supports two, flat plaster and fired clay bowls above the main fountain. Photographs indicate the central stem has been changed from the original, which was more slender and had smaller bowls. The date of the fountain is believed to be 1853 according to a dated sketch located in the Del Valle Collection at the Bancroft Library. The Rubel Family rebuilt the fountain circa 1934.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Description (continued)**

The **barn**, located in the work area of the ranch headquarters near the State Highway, measures 54 by 64 feet. It is rectangular in plan with a high gable roof and knee brackets under the eaves. A gabled vent is located on the ridge line. All of the openings on the barn are cut out of the board and batten siding and swing outward on hinges. Large double doors are centered under the front gable and are highlighted with diagonal stick ornamentation. The barn has a concrete floor. The date of the barn is unknown, but the modest Craftsman-style detailing (brackets, rafters and trim) suggests a circa 1910 date. Planting records indicate that the 1909 to 1916 period is when the largest number of walnuts, apricots and orange trees were planted. These dates might coincide with the construction of the barn, gas and oil house and bunkhouse. A shed roof addition of concrete blocks and board and batten was made to the south side of the barn, probably circa 1950.

The **gas and oil house** was probably built about the same time period, circa 1910. It has similar Craftsman-style detailing. The tiny nine by ten foot rectangular plan building has a low front gable roof with a raised gabled monitor vent across the ridgeline. Exposed beams and rafters are located under the eaves. Wood casement windows are found in threes or singly with plain wood mouldings. The building is covered with board and batten siding and rests on a concrete slab foundation. South of the gas and oil house is a rectangular shaped board and batten clad **shed** with a corrugated metal roof. It is open on the east side and was built circa 1910.

The **bunkhouse**, built circa 1916, is a long rectangular plan building with a low pitched gable roof and exposed rafters and knee brackets under the broad eaves. The recessed front porch at the southeast corner has been enclosed with screens. The Craftsman style bungalow is covered with shingle siding and rests on a concrete slab foundation. Windows are both double hung and casement with wood mouldings. A detached pergola extending along the north side of the bunkhouse is covered with mature wisteria vines. The eastern end of the bunkhouse, once containing the dining room, has been removed. A long rectangular shaped four-car **garage** is located adjacent to the main entrance. It measures 20 by 74 feet and is covered with board and bat siding with corrugated metal siding at the rear and on the roof.

The **Nachito del Valle Adobe** is located near the main road (Highway 126). It was built circa 1920 and has more recently served as the ranch manager's house and office. Built around a courtyard, this Spanish Colonial Revival style residence's northeastern wing contains a recessed arched entry. The flat roof has a raised parapet with several decorative shed roofs covered with clay tiles. A second entrance, in the middle of the building's facade, is recessed and has a tile roof with wood beam and columns. The front door is of wood planks with a small decorative window with a wood grille. The double hung and casement windows are wood frame and recessed. The windows are arranged in groups of threes and fours with stucco pilasters in between each window. The house is constructed of adobe clad with stucco and rests on a concrete perimeter foundation. Internal walls are woodframe covered with lath and plaster. East of the house is a small one car stucco clad **garage** with a flat roof.

The **schoolhouse** was built circa 1930 by the Rubel family to serve their five young children and the bookkeeper's children. It was designed to blend in with the early adobe buildings with its long rectangular plan, low pitched hip roof, plaster siding and long open corridor supported by square posts along the south and east sides of the building. Windows are six over six wood sash with wood mouldings. The front door is of wood planks with heavy iron handles.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Description (continued)**

In addition to the buildings and objects, a large number of mature trees and extensive gardens lend to the historic character of the property. These **landscape features** help divide the working portion of the ranch from the residential sections. Surrounding the Ygnacio del Valle adobe, schoolhouse, chapel and fountain, are well manicured lawns, concrete and brick paths, flower gardens and dozens of mature ornamental trees. A wooden cross from 1880, commemorating the death of Ygnacio del Valle, is located next to the chapel. At the southern end of the formal lawn is the family orchard where dozens of varieties of fruit trees are grown. Additional features include a playground, south of the schoolhouse; an aviary and remnants of a grape arbor; a small swimming pool and fish pond; and a barbecue area with brick ovens. The working area of the ranch headquarters, north of the del Valle adobe, is characterized by compacted dirt, mature California Pepper trees and a Cork Oak tree. At the entrance to the ranch is a row of Eucalyptus trees and a low stucco clad wall with gates. Directly west of the Nachito del Valle adobe is a formal lawn within the wall, several mature ornamental trees, a long arbor with mature wisteria vines and a stone historical marker with a plaque denoting the State Landmark status.

Of special interest is the California black **walnut tree**, the only survivor of four "Black Eagle" seedlings planted by Juventino del Valle circa 1870. The tree has been noted by Maunsell Van Rensselaer in *Trees of Santa Barbara* as the "Camulos Black Walnut," perhaps the largest California Black Walnut (*Juglans Hindsii*) in the Santa Barbara /Ventura County region. When it was measured for this book in 1940, its circumference was eighteen feet, and with a branch spread of 129 feet. Today, the tree's trunk measures approximately twenty-five feet in circumference.

On the north side of the highway, a dirt road leads across the railroad right-of-way to five houses paralleling the location of the former Southern Pacific Railroad. To the east of the road and north of the railroad right-of-way is a woodframe railroad section house, built circa 1887 by the Southern Pacific Railway. A small depot was also located nearby, but has been removed. East of the section house is a duplex, used as a bunkhouse for railroad workers. Its date of construction is estimated at 1887. West of the road are three farm labor houses built by the del Valle family circa 1916.

The **Southern Pacific Railroad Section House**, built in 1887, is one and one-half stories in height with a medium pitched, asymmetrical gable roofline producing a saltbox-house effect. The porch is recessed under the corner of the house and supported by a capped square column. Eaves are closed. A corbelled brick chimney punctuates the roofline. The woodframe double hung windows have multi-panes and wood mouldings. The house is covered with wide horizontal tongue and groove siding and rests on a wood foundation. A **water tower** located to the east of the house is topped by a metal tank. Located at the foot of the water tower is a small woodframe pump house.

The **bunkhouse** (duplex) is rectangular in plan with a medium side-facing gable roof and was built ca 1916. The roof extends over the porch and is supported by wood posts. The broad eaves are open with supporting brackets on the sides. The house is covered with board and batten siding and rests on a concrete perimeter foundation. Two front entrances are symmetrically arranged and flanked by windows on each side. Windows are double hung with wood frames and mouldings.

The three **farmworker's bungalows**, built ca 1916, share similar characteristics. They are primarily rectangular in plan with medium to low gable roofs, exposed rafters under the open eaves, medium clapboard siding, double-hung woodframe windows with wood mouldings and concrete perimeter foundations.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Description (continued)**

Integrity

The integrity of **location** (the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred) for Rancho Camulos is intact; all of the buildings remain on their original sites. The integrity of **design** (the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property) for the site as a whole is almost entirely intact. No new buildings have been constructed since 1930, when the school house was erected. A minor addition to the barn is the only recognizable change to the plan of the ranch complex occurring outside of the period of significance (1853-1945), and this change generally continues the design of the earlier building to which it is attached. Several buildings from the historic period have been demolished, including the railroad depot, a blacksmith shop, post office and a number of barns. The depot was located adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, near the section house. The blacksmith shop was located to the north of the barn, within the ranch complex. The post office was located to the east of the ranch complex, on the south side of the State Highway. A grouping of barns and sheds originally located adjacent to the railroad right-of-way and to the west of the section house have also been removed. Despite these changes, the historic site planning and spatial relationships between the buildings remains apparent.

Although the Ygnacio del Valle Adobe has been expanded considerably over a fifty year period, this is a characteristic it shares with many adobes of its era, and the last major addition occurred within the period of significance (1853-1880). After 1945, the adobe had a large multi-paned steel mullioned window added on the west side of the west wing. The interior of the kitchen in the southeast corner was also remodeled in the 1950s. Minor changes, such as the removal of louvered shutters, has occurred at various times. The roofing materials, apparently originally wood shingles or shakes, have been replaced with asphalt composition shingles. Despite these minor changes, the overall ability of the adobe to visually convey its sense of historic time and place remains excellent.

The integrity of the **setting** (the physical environment of a historic property) for the property is almost completely intact. Aspects of the retained setting are the relationships between the extant buildings and structures, the natural environment (mountains, Santa Clara River) and agricultural landscape. During the period 1920-45, the citrus industry sustained an unprecedented era of expansion, increasing the total volume of production in California nearly 150 percent. This growth engendered the profound transformation of the entire economic, social and physical character of the region to an extent described by McWilliams as "difficult to emphasize sufficiently." The establishment of the verdant "citrus belts" along the foothills helped to firmly establish an almost utopian image of Southern California in the national consciousness. This depiction, although it contrasted decidedly with the natural aridity of the area, became thoroughly integrated into the regional mystique, having been championed tirelessly by development interests and the citrus industry (McWilliams, 1946: 213; Gardner and McKay, 1950: 9).

Post-war urban development trends have almost entirely eradicated the evidence of this landscape of citrus cultivation throughout most of the Southern California region, with the conspicuous exception of the Santa Clara Valley. The setting for Rancho Camulos is particularly notable, in and of itself, as a rare survivor of a virtually intact citrus landscape in Southern California. Some reduction of setting has resulted in the urbanizing fringe of Piru, Fillmore and Santa Paula, but this urban growth has largely remained contiguous with these historic urban areas. The widening of State Highway 126 is also responsible for some loss of the historic setting.

To the extent that the original buildings remain, their integrity of **materials** (the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property) and **workmanship** (the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history or prehistory) are intact. However, it should be noted that the Ygnacio del Valle Adobe in particular exhibits some evidence of ongoing repair and maintenance. These introductions of new materials were undoubtedly necessitated by the fragile nature of adobe construction material and the need for constant upkeep.



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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Description (continued)**

The integrity of **feeling** (a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time) and **association** (the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property) remains particularly strong for this property. The two del Valle adobes, the winery, chapel, gardens and other buildings related to the historic agricultural use of the property are especially evocative of the historic time and place. This feeling of historic place is enhanced considerably by the continuity of use of the property as an active citrus ranching operation and the retention of the rural setting of the Santa Clara Valley.

The January, 1994 earthquake resulted in both structural and cosmetic damage to four of the Rancho Camulos buildings. The Ygnacio del Valle Adobe experienced the total failure of two adobe walls on the southern elevation, and the partial failure of a number of other walls. Brick chimneys toppled to the ground, and both exterior and interior plaster cracked throughout the building. A considerable volume of brick fell from the northern and southern gable ends of the winery building. Two walls on the southern elevation of the Nachito del Valle Adobe failed, and other evidence of damage to the exterior adobe walls of this building is evident. A chimney fell from the schoolhouse. To date, extensive shoring and bracing has occurred on two of the damaged buildings, but the restoration work required to return them to their historic appearance has not commenced.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>
1	Ygnacio del Valle Adobe	1853	NHL
2	winery	1867	NHL
3	chapel	1867	NHL
4	bells	1870	NHL
5	fountain	1867	NHL
6	barn	1910	NRHP
7	gas & oil house	1910	NRHP
8	bunkhouse	1916	NRHP
9	Nachito del Valle Adobe	1920	NRHP
10	schoolhouse	1930	NRHP
11	S.P. Railroad section house	1887	NRHP
12	Water tower	1887	NRHP
13	bunkhouse	1916	NRHP
14	farmworker bungalow	1916	NRHP
15	farmworker bungalow	1916	NRHP
16	farmworker bungalow	1916	NRHP

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The period of significance (1853-1943) for the National Register of Historic Places reflects the development of the working ranch at Camulos, the transition of the regional economy to one heavily dependent on citriculture, the history of an important Californio family, and the era of Ramona-inspired tourism. The period of significance includes all the buildings on the 40 acre nominated parcel constructed between 1853 and 1930. The first building on the property, a four-room adobe, was constructed by Ygnacio del Valle in 1853. When August Rubel purchased the property from the del Valle Family in 1924, he immediately became the careful steward of Camulos. He recognized the great historical and cultural significance of the ranch, the del Valle family and the Ramona myth. While he was alive, Rubel actively promoted the history of the ranch and the preservation of its architectural fabric. The only new building constructed on the property by Rubel, a schoolhouse built in 1930, was designed deliberately to complement the historic architectural flavor and ambiance of the ranch. He established a small museum in the winery to house the del Valle artifacts. Following his death in 1943, his widow began modernizing the property, introducing numerous changes, including the addition of two large picture windows into the Ygnacio del Valle adobe.

Chronological History

The present 1,800 acre Camulos Ranch, established by Ygnacio del Valle in 1853, was carved out of the 48,612 acre Rancho San Francisco, granted in 1839 to Ygnacio's father Antonio del Valle, majordomo and administrator of Mission San Fernando. Camulos was located at the western boundary of the rancho and was originally a Tataviam Indian village known as *Kamulus*. The San Fernando Mission used the area as early as 1804 for raising small animals and crops grown by the Indians, who numbered 416 when visited by William Petty Hartnell, Inspector General of the Missions, in 1839.

Antonio del Valle and his family lived at the eastern edge of the ranch near Castaic in the former San Fernando Mission granary adobe building. After Antonio's death in 1841, the land was divided among his wife and seven children. Ygnacio received the western portion of the ranch known as Camulos and built a corral and stocked it with cattle in 1842, the same year he married Maria de los Angeles in Santa Barbara. Maria died in childbirth in 1847, and Ygnacio married Ysabel Varela in 1852. The following year he had a house built at Camulos.

The four room (thirty by eighty foot) adobe was at first occupied by Ygnacio's majordomo (foreman). Ygnacio and his new wife lived in Los Angeles in an adobe on the Plaza, and Ygnacio continued to work in his new position as Los Angeles County Recorder. In 1852 he was elected a member of the Los Angeles City Council and the California Assembly. Ygnacio resigned from the council in 1857 in order to devote his time to the development of Camulos. The adobe was expanded that year with the addition of three rooms within the attic. Orange tree seedlings, the first to be planted on a large scale in Ventura County, were obtained from the nursery of William Wolfskill in Los Angeles.

Between 1853 and 1861, five children were born to the del Valles. By 1861, after the birth of their fifth child Josefa, the family moved permanently to Camulos. In 1861-62, three new rooms and a basement were added to the original adobe. Many of the Kamulus Indians continued to live and work at the ranch and helped make the adobe blocks and assist in the construction. Some of these Indians are buried in the family cemetery. Between 1862 and 1870, seven more children were born at Camulos, for a total of twelve del Valle children. Only half of the children lived to adulthood. During the 1870s, the west wing was extended to the north.

The drought of the 1860s took its toll on del Valle cattle and crops, forcing the sale of the Rancho San Francisco in 1865 to Thomas Bard, agent for capitalist Thomas Scott. Bard purchased 42,216 acres of the Rancho San Francisco from the del Valle heirs and split off the 1,500 acre Rancho Camulos selling it back to Ygnacio del Valle. In 1868 the acreage was reduced to 1,340 acres and then to 1,290 acres when Ygnacio gave his first born son Juventino fifty acres. Juventino had assumed many of the ranch management duties from Ygnacio in the 1870s.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

By the time of Ygnacio's death in 1880, the ranch had grown from a few hundred head of cattle in the 1840s to a thriving, virtually self-contained ranch of approximately 1,290 acres of citrus, vineyards, almonds, grain, and vegetables supporting close to 200 residents. In addition to the del Valles, a large numbers of Mexicans and Indians were employed on the ranch. The single four room adobe built in 1853 grew into a twenty room adobe surrounded by numerous other buildings – a brick winery, chapel, barn and worker's housing. The isolation of the Santa Clara Valley was broken with the arrival of the stagecoach in 1874 and the railroad in 1887.

In 1886 Ulpiano, the seventh child born to Ygnacio and Ysabel, became ranch manager and introduced horse raising to the ranch. By 1900, mules replaced the horses and Ulpiano began to introduce new crops. Camulos wines and brandies became well known throughout Southern California. After Ygnacio's death in 1880, Ysabel del Valle remained as head of the ranch until her failing health forced her move to Los Angeles in 1900 to live with her daughter.

In 1908 the ranch was incorporated as the del Valle Company by Ulpiano and his remaining brothers and sisters for the purpose of engaging in the raising of crops and livestock, the acquisition of water rights and the development of oil. Eventually, friction within the family and the death of several family members forced the sale of the ranch in 1924 to the August Rubel Family. At the time of the sale, writer Charles Lummis, a close family friend of the Del Valles, appealed to the State of California to purchase Camulos as a historic park. Lummis had long been an active preservationist and is credited, along with the Landmarks Club which he founded, as contributing substantially to preserving the missions. His magazine *Out West*, more than any other, promoted the heritage of Southern California. When the sale to the Rubels was inevitable, Lummis wrote:

It has been forty years since I first visited Camulos. Since that time, it has been like my own home, and its people like my own. The old folks were like parents to me. The romance, the traditions, the customs of Camulos are all familiar and all dear to me – not merely because they are Camulos but because that was the Last Stand of the patriarchal life of Spanish California, which has been so beautiful to the world for more than a century (Smith, 1977: 242).

The *Los Angeles Times* echoed Lummis' sentiment when they wrote:

An era in the history of California closed yesterday. The Del Valles of Camulos bade farewell to the homestead where they have lived in successive generations since Antonio del Valle. It was the passing of the old regime. They are said to be the last of the old Spanish families who held in unbroken succession to the ancestral acres (*Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1924).

The August Rubel Family moved to Camulos in 1925, having purchased the ranch the previous year. August Rubel, a native of Zurich, Switzerland, came to Ventura County in 1922, after graduation from Harvard at the age of twenty-three. He and his wife Mary Colgate McIsaac first lived in Aliso Canyon near Santa Paula, having established the Billiwack Dairy there in 1924. The Rubels raised five children at Camulos Ranch. August Rubel served in the American Field Service in France between 1917 and 1919. He returned to this service during World War II, and was killed in Tunisia in 1943 when an ambulance he was driving hit a German mine. Mrs. Rubel married Edwin Burger in 1946, who continued to live and manage the ranch after Mrs. Rubel's death in 1968.

During the Rubel's tenure, several changes occurred at Camulos. The apricot trees and walnut trees were replaced with orange trees. A school was built in 1930 for the Rubel children and those of their bookkeeper. August Rubel managed the ranch with a foreman and bookkeeper to assist him as well as a number of farm laborers who lived in the bunkhouse and labor housing on the north side of the highway. The family grazed cattle along the Santa Clara River and kept a small number of farm animals – horses, milk cows, chickens and turkeys. An aviary was built in the 1930s to house Mrs. Rubel's tropical birds. Concrete and brick paths were added connecting the main house, the chapel, and the schoolhouse. A play area was established south of the schoolhouse and a small pond was built nearby. Several trees were planted by the Rubel family including the large Dutch elm tree and all the fruit trees in the family orchard at the south end of the lawn. No significant changes were made to any of the existing buildings except the main adobe residence. These changes are addressed under the description section.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Significance of the del Valle Family

Three generations of del Valles served their country through either military service or in responsible governmental positions under the Mexican government and the new government of California. Their lives were closely associated with the most prominent and influential citizens of Mexico and California during the tumultuous years of California's entrance into the United States and its rise from a rural state to one of power and influence.

Antonio del Valle, a native of Compostela, Mexico, played a prominent role in both the Spanish and Mexican colonization of California. He arrived in California in 1819 as a Lieutenant in the San Blas Infantry, responsible for delivering forty men to the Presidio of San Francisco. New troops were called to reinforce the garrisons that had been attacked the previous year by the privateer Bouchard. The Company moved to Monterey and del Valle became commander in 1822. In 1834 he was placed in charge of secularizing the San Fernando Mission and served as majordomo there until 1837. In recognition of his years of military service, he received the 48,612 acre Rancho San Francisco grant in 1839.

Ygnacio del Valle, son of Antonio, began his military service in 1825 as a cadet at the Santa Barbara Presidio. Following his training, he accompanied Comandante General Don Jose Echeandia to San Diego and served as staff adjutant and harbormaster in San Diego until 1832. By 1832 he had attained the rank of second lieutenant and was put in charge of the San Gabriel Mission. The following year he joined the Monterey presidial company and, under Governor Figueroa, was put in charge of the secularization of the Santa Cruz and San Francisco missions. As a trusted officer, del Valle was charged with the Military Command at Monterey during Figueroa's absence. He left the military in 1839. As reward for his services to the government, he was granted Rancho Tejon in 1843.

Continuing in public service, Ygnacio del Valle accepted numerous positions of importance in both the Mexican and American government. During the 1840s he served as a member and secretary of the junta (council), and treasurer of civil government under Governor Pio Pico. In 1850 he was elected alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles and recorder of Los Angeles County. Finally, in 1852, he was elected to the California Legislature. His residence, located on the Plaza (square) in Los Angeles was the center for political meetings. Harris Newmark writes in his book *Sixty Years in Southern California*,

Among the distinguished citizens of Los Angeles whose residences added to the social prestige of the neighborhood was Don Ygnacio del Valle. Until 1861, he resided on the east side of the square, receiving there his intimate friends as well as those who wished to pay him their respects when he was Alcalde, Councilman and member of the State Legislature. In 1861, del Valle moved to his ranch, Camulos (Newmark, 1926: 98).

Ygnacio's son Reginaldo was born in the family home on the Plaza in 1854, the second child born to Ygnacio and Ysabel Varela after their marriage in 1852. Perhaps it was his father's influence and the numerous political meetings held at the house that led Reginaldo into public life. By 1873, he had graduated with honors from the Santa Clara College in San Jose and by 1877 he was admitted to the bar, and elected to the Assembly in 1880; by 1882, at the age of 28, he was the youngest member ever elected as president pro tempore of the State Senate.

Although he lost the 1884 congressional campaign, he continued to work for the Democratic Party as a delegate to numerous state conventions and as elector in almost all presidential elections. Following his campaigning for Grover Cleveland in 1893, he was offered ministries to Chile and Japan. He declined the offers hoping to receive the ministry to Mexico, which never materialized.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

In addition to Democratic politics, Reginaldo del Valle had a great interest in California history and promoted it through preservation efforts, due in large part to the influence of his close friend, Charles Lummis. Together with Lummis, Reginaldo was a founding member of the Landmarks Club of Southern California, formed in 1887 to advocate for the restoration of the missions. He was one of the forty founding members of the Southern California Historical Society and spearheaded the committee to restore the San Fernando Mission and to mark the El Camino Real with bells. He was also a strong promoter of John Steven McGroarty's *Mission Play*. His daughter Lucretia del Valle Grady performed the role of Ysabel Yorba in the *Mission Play*.

In 1913 Reginaldo was appointed by Woodrow Wilson as his personal representative to Mexico, and in 1914 he was appointed president of the Los Angeles Public Service Board, later known as the Water and Power Board, and was a close friend of William Mulholland.

Agricultural Development

Throughout its long history, Rancho Camulos has been owned by only two families, both of whom have successfully adapted to the changing role of agriculture. Through each period the ranch managed to sustain itself and to adapt to new crops and methods as they were introduced. During the first phase of agricultural development, from 1842 until 1856, the land was used primarily for livestock grazing. Ygnacio del Valle built a corral in 1842 for the cattle he brought to the ranch, but his cattle brand was not registered until 1851. No doubt the Indians who lived there at the time in brush huts were enlisted to care for the cattle. By 1853, a small four room adobe was built to house Ygnacio's majordomo, Jose Antonio Salazar, overseer at the ranch.

By 1857, land title issues involving Rancho San Francisco and Camulos were finally settled, and Ygnacio del Valle purchased the 13,339 acre Rancho Temescal adjacent to Rancho Camulos on the north. He moved his livestock operation onto the new land and was now able to open Camulos to the second phase of agricultural development. This phase involved the planting of citrus, wine grapes and almonds.

Ygnacio Del Valle planted the first citrus seedlings in 1857. He acquired them from his friend William Wolfskill. Wolfskill was the first person to grow and market citrus trees in Los Angeles, obtaining his stock from the San Gabriel Mission in 1841. Rancho Camulos became the first ranch in what is now Ventura County to plant citrus for commercial development, although on a small scale, as the lack of railroads required the fruit to be hauled by wagon to Los Angeles. At this time only one road wended through the Santa Clara Valley, and this route, the original El Camino Real, passed through the del Valle land and connected the San Buenaventura Mission with the San Fernando Mission. The first oranges grown and shipped commercially from Ventura County were from the Camulos Ranch in 1876. By 1876, the Southern Pacific railroad passed through Saugus 17 miles to the east, thus providing a relatively nearby shipping point for Camulos agricultural products.

It was the wine grape that brought the first real commercial success for the del Valle family. Camulos wines and brandies enjoyed a good reputation throughout Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. During the 1860s, ninety acres of wine grapes were planted, a brick winery built and a license obtained for brandy distilling. The federal industrial census for 1870 records Camulos Ranch winery as the largest of the four vintners in the San Buenaventura Township of Santa Barbara County, with 45 tons of Mission grapes resulting in 6,000 gallons of wine and 800 gallons of brandy. In addition to the citrus, almond trees and grape vines, a vast amount of wheat, corn and barley were grown annually.

Ygnacio's son, Juventino, served as ranch manager from 1862 to 1886, when Ulpiano took over the management of the ranch at the age of 21, just two years after his graduation from Santa Clara College. Ulpiano brought "blooded" horses to the ranch and began to raise them for racing purposes.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

By 1889, Ventura County's orange shipments totaled 10,886 boxes, primarily from Camulos and Santa Paula. In 1891, when Yda Storke visited the ranch to collect material for her book, she wrote,

The rancho is divided about equally into farming and grazing land. The pastures raise horses, horned cattle, sheep and hogs. ... Here are grown excellent crops of wheat, in quality very superior, also bountiful crops of barley, rye, oats, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, melons and all kinds of vegetables...

The vineyard here is of 50,000 vines, which for many years have yielded 10,000 to 20,000 gallons of wine per year. From an orange grove of 2,000 trees, 1,200 boxes of fruit were shipped last season. The returns are handsome from 500 walnut trees, as also from the oil and pickled olives from a fine grove of 1,000 olive trees. Almost every kind of fruit grown in the United States is raised here (Storke, 1891: 225).

By 1900, Camulos was entering into its third phase of agricultural development. At this time, Ulpiano began to increase the size of the citrus orchards and add new crops and livestock. The oranges were marketed under the *Home of Ramona Brand* trademark, and handled by the Piru Citrus Association at their packing house in Piru. Between 1908 and 1917, on land that had formally been used for grazing livestock, Ulpiano added 175 acres of apricots and walnuts plus 44 acres of Valencia oranges. Between 1920 and 1923, an additional 31 acres were planted of oranges. With the addition of the large apricot acreage, an apricot shed was built and a track installed.

Water for irrigation came from the Santa Clara River. Ditches were used to bring the water by gravity flow from the river southeast of the ranch headquarters. Later, wells were drilled on the property. At the time the property was sold in 1924, an open canal continued to bring water from the dam to the property by gravity flow. Two electric pump houses pumped the water from the Santa Clara River below the property. Today, four wells are used in addition to river water.

By the time the ranch was sold to the August Rubel family in 1924, apricots, oranges and walnuts had replaced the wine grapes and almonds planted during the early 1900s. The Rubels eventually replaced the walnuts and apricots with more oranges. The present-day acreage includes a total of 600 acres under cultivation, including 500 acres of Valencia oranges, forty acres of lemons, thirty acres of grapefruit, twenty acres of navel oranges, and ten acres of avocados.

Ramona and the Cult of Southern California Romanticism

Although Rancho Camulos became well known among Californians for the accomplishments of three generations of del Valles in both the political and agricultural history of the state, it perhaps is best recognized at the national level as the "home of Ramona." When Helen Hunt Jackson published her best-selling novel *Ramona* in 1884, it was her intention to supply the general reader with an appreciation of the California Indian's plight as illustrated by the trials and tribulations of the fictional Indian girl, Ramona. Disappointed in having *A Century of Dishonor*, her earlier book reciting the past injustices of the Indians receive so little notice, she wrote *Ramona* hoping to elicit popular support for the Indians, much as her acquaintance Harriet Beecher Stowe had done with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The setting and characters in Jackson's book *Ramona* are apparently composites drawn from places Jackson visited and people she met in her travels throughout Southern California during the early 1880s. Various portions of the novel were drawn from her visits to California Indian reservations, missions and ranchos. It appears likely that Jackson chose Camulos as the setting for a portion of her novel upon the advice of her close friends, Antonio and Mariana Coronel. In the opinion of the Coronels, Camulos was one of the few remaining ranches still reflecting its colonial origins. Antonio Coronel assisted Jackson in the preparation of an itinerary of ranches and missions (Banning, 1973: 165-166). Jackson heeded their advice, briefly visiting Camulos on the morning of January 23, 1882 (Smith, 1977: 180). In her novel published two years later, *Ramona's* fictional home on the "Moreno Ranch" was located "... midway in the valley [between lands] to the east and west, which had once belonged to the Missions of San Fernando and San Bonaventura [sic]." This geographical location, and the description of the setting recounted in the novel, accurately matched Camulos:

The house was of adobe, low, with a wide veranda on the three sides of the inner court, and a still broader one across the entire front, which looked to the south. ... The two westernmost rooms had been added on, and made four steps higher than the others... Between the veranda and the river meadows, out on which it looked, all was garden, orange grove, and almond orchard..." (Jackson, 1912: 16-17)

Additional features of Camulos accurately referenced in Jackson's novel were all unmistakably part of the ranch setting: the wooden cross on the hill, the chapel, the bells and the fountain and courtyard. Among the earliest articles recognizing Camulos as the setting for the fictitious Moreno Ranch was a *San Francisco Chronicle* article by Edwards Roberts, published after his visit to Camulos on April 27, 1886, just prior to the completion of the railroad line through the Santa Clara Valley.

Jackson's novel was serialized in the *Christian Union* and quickly became a best seller, and eventually an American classic, with over 135 printings, three motion pictures, and a pageant performed annually since 1923. Railroad promoters, writers and photographers all became drawn into the burgeoning *Ramona* craze, publishing hundreds of articles in books, magazines and newspapers touting the *Ramona* connection.

The book was ultimately to have an entirely unanticipated, but profound cultural effect. Its publication in 1884 and remarkable popularity almost perfectly coincided with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in Ventura County in 1887. The romantic story of Spanish California coupled with the vivid descriptions of the setting brought literally thousands of curiosity seekers to view the "home of *Ramona*" on the "Moreno Ranch," happily overlooking its fictitious origins.

*Ramona* became so phenomenally popular that schools, streets and even towns were named in honor of the novel's fictional heroine. With the huge influx of tourists and homeseekers flooding into California during the 1880s and 1890s on the newly established railroads, many communities claimed *Ramona* for their own in order to profit from the vast tourism bandwagon. Writers such as George Wharton James and others visited Rancho Guajome and the Estudillo house in San Diego to photograph and research the conflicting claims for the setting of the novel, a controversy made possible by the death of Helen Hunt Jackson in 1885. James, in his 1909 book *Through Ramona's Country* expressed the opinion that Camulos was still the "avowed and accepted home of the heroine." According to James, Camulos had changed little from the time of Edwards Roberts' first article in 1886. Charles Lummis, editor of *Out West Magazine* and founder of the Landmarks Club, became a close friend of the del Valle Family upon his arrival in Los Angeles in 1884. In 1888 Lummis published a promotional booklet filled with photographs he had taken at the ranch, proclaiming Camulos as the home of *Ramona*.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The immense popularity of the novel, and the commercially lucrative derivatives it generated, spawned an abundance of Ramona-related claims. As Carey McWilliams describes in his popular history *Southern California Country*,

Picture postcards, by the tens of thousands, were published showing “the schools attended by Ramona,” “the original of Ramona,” “the place where Ramona was married,” and various shots of the “Ramona Country.” Since the local chambers of commerce could not, or would not, agree upon the locale of the novel – one school of thought insisted that the Camulos rancho was the scene of the more poignant passages while still another school insisted that the Hacienda Guajome was the authentic locale – it was not long before the scenic postcards depicting the Ramona Country had come to embrace all of Southern California. (McWilliams, 1946: 73)

Camulos was widely photographed and painted by many of the professional photographers and artists of the day. C.C. Pierce, well known Los Angeles photographer, developed a portfolio of Camulos photographs in 1887 in conjunction with writer George Wharton James. Pasadena photographer Adam Clark Vroman illustrated Camulos in the Little, Brown and Company’s 1912 edition of *Ramona*. Famed artists Henry Chapman Ford and Alexander Harmer painted Camulos, and the well-known eastern illustrator Henry Sandham, who accompanied Jackson on her tour of the missions and Indian reservations, made many sketches and paintings of Camulos.

In 1887 Ventura photographer John Calvin Brewster photographed Camulos, recreating scenes from *Ramona* which eventually were published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Del Valle family members and friends posed for these scenes and others that depicted the romance between Alessandro and Ramona. Occasionally the family complained about the excursion trains that stopped at the ranch and the avalanche of tourists that descended upon the ranch demanding to see Ramona, and invading the orchards and house. Reginaldo del Valle even considered at one time building a hotel to accommodate tourists, when he thought his mother’s gracious hospitality was becoming a burden in her later years and the cost of accommodating so many guests was getting out of hand. The del Valle family also capitalized on *Ramona* by establishing the *Home of Ramona Brand* trademark for their oranges.

Camulos continued to receive tourists at the ranch even after the Southern Pacific Railroad relocated its main line to the south through the Santa Susanna Pass in 1903. Two daily trains continued to make trips down the Santa Clara Valley in the 1920s until passenger service was discontinued in the 1940s. Throughout this period, Camulos continued as a scheduled stop.

D.W. Griffith’s silent motion-picture version of *Ramona*, starring Mary Pickford, was filmed at Camulos and Piru during a two-day shoot on April 1 and 2, 1910. At the time this one-reeler was made, it was billed as the Biograph Company’s “most elaborate and artistic movie yet filmed.” The chapel, the adobe and patio and the nearby mountains were all used as backdrops.

An article in *Sunset Magazine* for December, 1925 indicated that Camulos was still welcoming visitors. By this time the Rubel Family owned the property. August Rubel eventually established a small museum in the winery for the del Valle ranch artifacts. Occasional visitors, whom the Rubels referred to as “Ramona-seekers,” visited the ranch and small school groups from Piru arrived on occasional field trips. Nevertheless, the Rubel Family let it be known that the ranch was private and did not encourage visitors.



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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Carey McWilliams characterized Helen Hunt Jackson and her influence on Southern California:

“H. H.” as she was known to every resident of Southern California, was almost solely responsible for the evocation of its Mission past, and it was she who catapulted the lowly Digger Indian of Southern California into the empyrean. ... She had originally been sent to Southern California by Century magazine to write some stories about the Missions. ... In Southern California she became ..enamored of the Missions, then in a state of general disrepair and neglect ... In the sunny, delicious, winterless California air, these crumbling ruins, with their walled gardens and broken bells ... exerted a potent romantic influence on Mrs. Jackson’s ... nature. Out of these brief visits to Southern California came *Ramona*, the first novel written about the region, which became one of the most widely read American novels of the time. It was this novel which firmly established the Mission legend in Southern California (McWilliams, 1946: 72-73).

The *Ramona* myth played a central role in fashioning a regional identity for Southern California at a time when the West was struggling to establish an historical and cultural legitimacy separate but comparable with the East. Colonial history and architecture received a tremendous boost in the public consciousness during and after the United States Centennial of 1876, and for a time, the southwestern United States freely borrowed the colonial architectural imagery of the East Coast.

As early as the 1870s, however, artists and photographers began to recognize and document the romantic ruins of the California missions. By the 1880s, the colonial architecture of the Southwest had been introduced into the national imagination, first sparking a local preservation movement directed towards the restoration of the mission churches, and later a revival of the mission architectural style itself. Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona* served to integrate the imagery of a physical place, as captured by artists and photographers, and a people into a cohesive, if highly romanticized, whole. This rediscovery of California’s picturesque colonial history coincided with the great railroad-inspired boom of 1886-87, providing convenient promotional fodder for real estate developers, railroad companies and regional boosters. The remarkable effectiveness of this campaign is evidenced by the mass migration of tourists and land buyers into Southern California during this era.

As one of the most widely recognized settings for Jackson’s novel, Rancho Camulos became not only a tourist Mecca in and of itself, but also emblematic of California’s colonial past in both reality and in fiction. It is a tribute to the power and influence of Jackson’s novel that her popular fiction achieved a capacity to fire the collective imagination of the American public to an extent that the more prosaic reality of colonial California might never have equalled. It was in large part this brand of fictionalization and romantic invention that induced Americans to move in vast numbers from east to west, with expectations of discovering the fabled land of *Ramona*.

Architectural Significance

The 10,000 square foot u-shaped del Valle adobe, with its two-foot thick walls and long *corredores* is an outstanding and rare example of the rural domestic vernacular style of Spanish-Mexican Colonial architecture. Set in the Santa Clara Valley between two mountain ranges, with the Santa Clara River on the south, the 1,800 acre site is surrounded by citrus orchards and bisected by the two-lane state highway. The ranch complex is defined by the windrows of Eucalypus trees on the east and west, delineating the cluster of buildings.

As a working, self-sustaining ranch, the Camulos headquarters complex is unique for the large number of original buildings that remain in their historic settings. These include the Ygnacio del Valle adobe, chapel, winery, barn, schoolhouse, bunkhouse, oil and gas house, and fountain. Across the highway from the ranch headquarters, are the Southern Pacific Railroad section house and bunkhouse and three farmworker’s residences. The entire 1,800 acre ranch located at the far eastern edge of Ventura County reflects the rural late nineteenth century historic setting with uninterrupted views of orchards and mountains.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The Ygnacio del Valle Adobe, begun in 1853, represents a mature expression of the Mexican-Spanish Colonial Rural Vernacular style, exhibiting only a few and relatively minor concessions to the Yankee-influenced style of adobe architecture then taking hold in California. The adobe evolved in a typically organic fashion, responding equally to the needs of a growing family, financial constraints and traditional hispanic building customs. The original l-shaped four room section, connected by an exterior *corredor*, expanded over the subsequent fifty years, evolving into a one-story, u-shaped plan organized around a central courtyard or *patio*. In typical Mexican and Spanish Colonial fashion, the rooms communicated primarily with the patio, providing only minimal internal circulation. Comparable properties in California include the adobes at Rancho Las Flores in San Diego County (1868), Rancho Los Alamos in Santa Barbara County (circa 1840), and Rancho Guajome, near Oceanside (1852). All three of these properties have been designated as National Historic Landmarks on the basis of their historical and architectural significance.

Considering the lateness of the construction of the adobe relative to the Mexican Colonial period (1822-1850), and the highly urbane station of the family, the Ygnacio del Valle Adobe is remarkably traditional in its design and construction. During the immediate post-statehood period, the characteristically two-story Monterey style of adobe architecture was in its ascendancy. Although the sources of the Monterey architectural style remain a matter of some controversy, it was clearly favored by American immigrants to California, and was at least partially a response to the imposition of Yankee tastes and preferences onto the earlier Spanish-Mexican Colonial style. The two-story Monterey style adobes, constructed primarily after 1840, particularly in Santa Barbara, Monterey and in scattered rural coastal locations, often incorporated neoclassical and other architectural elements borrowed from the coincident period revival styles. Circulation was increasingly directed internally, with inside hallways replacing external *corredores*.

By contrast, the del Valle adobe was planned and constructed almost entirely as a pre-Monterey style dwelling. The *corredor* and *patio* serve as the central organizing elements, and circulation between rooms is minimized in the traditionally hispanic fashion. The gable roof system is characteristic of adobes constructed in Southern California after 1850, when milled lumber became sufficiently available to replace the flat-roofed construction techniques characteristic of many Southern California pueblos, including Los Angeles. Contemporary millwork is also evident in the use of six-over-six sash windows, a detail probably more reflective of the availability of suitable modern building materials than of any pretensions towards the Federal style. While construction innovations were pragmatically borrowed from non-hispanic sources, the overall architectural intent is firmly embedded in the Spanish-Mexican Colonial vernacular tradition.

The architectural style typified by the del Valle Adobe ultimately influenced, or became a direct precedent for, several phases of architectural design emanating from the Western United States, particularly the Mission Revival and post-war Ranch styles. Both drew form and inspiration from the Spanish-Mexican colonial rural vernacular style, and each are important for the ways in which they responded to both the image and environment of California and contemporary needs and tastes. These styles also, in their own ways, provided a focus for the promotion of a lifestyle which was nurtured within, and unique to California. Further, each style was popularized during a Southern California building boom, amplifying and extending their appeal – enabling them to be widely broadcast throughout the West and the United States as a whole.

The Mission Revival style (circa 1890-1915) represents the first attempt to capitalize on Southwestern imagery and to adapt the native regional architecture to contemporary design issues. Although derived primarily from ecclesiastical architectural sources, and amalgamated freely with Mediterranean elements, the Mission Revival proved adaptable to a wide variety of domestic, commercial and institutional applications. By the mid-1890s, the Mission Revival style began to be widely accepted as a “legitimate” and distinct regional architectural image.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The California Ranch House, particularly as it was championed by the Los Angeles architect Cliff May, was profoundly influenced by the Spanish-Mexican Colonial style of the rural vernacular architecture. May, in his connection with *Sunset Magazine* through the 1940s and 50s advocated not only for an architectural style which he argued was indigenous to California, but for an entirely distinct way of life. He posited that life is inherently different in California, and that, "families ... [come] west with the idea that their homes should make the most of the climate they had come to enjoy... [and] that the house should provide a closer relationship between outdoors and in, a more intimate association with the garden..." (May, 1958: 7)

In order to accomplish this, he drew upon his understanding of rancho life in Alta California, suggesting through his designs that the rambling informality and plan of early California houses expanded useful space and brought the outdoors inside in ways that could be applied to modern living. May's was a free, rather than historical, interpretation of the hispanic tradition. He was more interested in the organizational advantages of planning living space around an internal *corredor* than any particular vocabulary of architectural details.

There were notable benefits to this solution. The use of a u- or l-shaped plan, with its back to the street, while rooted in Spanish-Mexican tradition, lent itself to modern requirements. The resultant rear or internal orientation addressed itself directly to a desire to create an "urban retreat," psychologically distant from the distractions of modern city life. To the rear of the house, indoor living could be extended to the outdoors, isolated from disruptive outside influences. The externalization of circulation via a *corredor* furthered this end. May also viewed the winged, "modular" design of the California Ranch House as being similar in principal to the expandable hispanic dwelling, while at the same time expressing the Western conception of limitless space.

May can be viewed as more than an architect, but as a promoter of a uniquely Californian life style. He was greatly abetted in this end by virtue of his long association with *Sunset Magazine*, an important taste-maker of the forties and fifties and exporter of California style to the rest of the country. It is no accident that *Sunset* referred to itself as "The Magazine of Western Living," and its books of May's house plans were subtitled "Western solutions to Western Problems." May, in his 1958 house plan book *Western Ranch Houses*, specifically cites the del Valle Adobe as one example of the quintessential Californio ranch house. According to May, the typical Spanish arrangement of the Camulos adobe "provided wonderfully free circulation because of the *corredor* and the patio. Any room in the house was freely accessible to every other room." (May, 1958: 20)

Among the other Spanish-Mexican colonial period residences referenced in the building plan books published by *Sunset* include Rancho Las Flores, Rancho Los Cerritos and Rancho Guajome. All of these properties, amongst others, provided the inspiration for the modern ranch style, and all are currently designated as National Historic Landmarks.

May's conception of the California Ranch House can be seen as the flip-side of those of the pure "rational" modernists, who decried all historical references in architecture. May's designs were, however, fully modern, addressing themselves to contemporary needs, and in the final analysis, it seems that May's approach to modernism enjoyed a level of popular acceptance that avant garde did not. According to Esther McCoy,

May's Los Angeles houses were enormously successful, due mainly to his ability to work unselfconsciously from memory rather than any effort to revive a past style. ... he did not hesitate to introduce purely pictorial features, but his selection was governed by the appropriateness to the ranch houses of the 1840s. ... May had caught some of the innocence and sincerity of the original, which carried the ranch house tradition into the present (McCoy, 1983: 89).

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Comparison with other National Historic Landmarks

**Significance Based on the Themes of Rancho Culture and Economics**

Rancho Camulos shares significant historical themes prevalent during the rancho era with the four ranchos already designated as National Historic Landmarks: Rancho Guajome (1852) and Rancho Las Flores in San Diego County (1868), Ranchos Los Cerritos in Long Beach (1844) and Los Alamos Adobe in Los Alamos (1829-44?). The following discussion will detail the similarities and differences between these four National Historic Landmarks and Rancho Camulos (1853).

In a recent rewrite of the original Las Flores Adobe nomination, a lengthy historic context section discussed the important rancho-era themes of economics, culture and society that defined rancho life. This nomination states, "...the rancho economy and the rancho culture were mainstays in Mexican California during the 1830s and 1840s and remained dominant forces in American Southern California until the early 1880s. The rancho culture is an aspect of California history which achieves national significance because it is a unique aspect of American social history, simply because it is not replicated elsewhere in the nation." (Mikesell and Wee, 1991: Sec. 8, 29)

The shared characteristics between these adobes (Guajome, Las Flores, Los Alamos, Los Cerritos) and Camulos include the following:

- They were all part of large ranchos that included thousands of acres granted to their owners by the Mexican government between 1839 and 1850.
- Their economy was originally based on cattle, but with the droughts of the 1860s and 1870s, diversified to include viticulture, tree crops and row crops.
- The rancheros, rewarded for their service to the Mexican Government, were members of the elite class; they were the influential and prominent citizens of the day. In the case of Las Flores, Guajome and Los Cerritos, the owners were Americans who had married into the elite Californio families and been accepted in their own right, whereas Camulos and Los Alamos were established by prominent Californio families — the del Valles (Camulos) and the de la Guerras (Los Alamos).

Las Flores, built for John Forster's son Marcus, is distantly associated with Pio Pico, former governor of California, and John Forster, Pico's son-in-law and prominent merchant and large landowner. Guajome was built by Cave Coutts, a Tennessee native and graduate of West Point who attained the rank of colonel. He married Ysadora Bandini, daughter of Juan Bandini, distinguished political and social leader of San Diego. Los Cerritos Rancho was established by Jonathan Temple, a native of Massachusetts, who married Rafaela Cota. Temple was a trader and Los Angeles pioneer. Temple Street in Los Angeles was named to commemorate him.

Of the five adobes, only Camulos and Los Alamos were fully associated with Californio families. The 48,803 acre Los Alamos Rancho was granted to Jose Antonio de la Guerra in 1839. Jose was the son of Don Jose de la Guerra y Noriega, commandant of the Presidio of Santa Barbara from 1815 to 1843. Concepcion Ortega, who married Jose and came to live at the adobe, was the granddaughter of Captain Jose Francisco Ortega, one of the founders of the Presidio of Santa Barbara.

Rancho Camulos was built at the western edge of the original 48,612 acre Rancho San Francisco, granted in 1839 to Antonio del Valle, majordomo and administrator of Mission San Fernando. Ygnacio del Valle, Antonio's son, inherited 1,800 acres of the grant in 1842 and stocked it with cattle. Both Ygnacio and Antonio served in prominent positions in the Mexican military. Ygnacio went on to serve in the American government as the first alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles and recorder of Los Angeles County, and in 1852 he was elected to the California legislature.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

**Significance Based on the Ramona Myth Theme**

The argument for the significance of Rancho Camulos based upon the Ramona Myth, as described in detail in Section 8, pages 10-13, parallels the argument for the significance of rancho culture, that “it is an aspect of California history which achieves national significance because it is a unique aspect of American social history, simply because it is not replicated elsewhere in the nation.” The writing, and subsequent popularity, of Jackson’s novel proved to be a defining event in the history of Southern California, in that it fixed a specific and well defined romantic image of the region into the nation’s consciousness.

Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona* sold more copies than perhaps any other book of its time. It was republished in dozens of editions, and several films were made of the novel. A play based on Jackson’s tale continues to run to this day. Its impact on the culture and history of Southern California has been phenomenal, and can be recognized as one of the principle defining events in the state’s history. In her recently completed thesis, *Ramona Memories: Constructing the Landscape of Southern California Through a Fictional Text*, Dydia Yvonne DeLyser states:

In her novel, Jackson altered southern California’s history: she portrayed the missions as places of song and pious devotion (rather than as sites of death and severe oppression), the Americans as the only villains (rather than as the last in a lineage of oppressors which included the Franciscan Padres themselves, the Spanish government, its representatives, Spanish citizens in California in general, the Mexican government and its representatives, and the Mexican population of California as well), and Indians at best as picturesque noble savages. (DeLyser, 1996: 2-3)

John Ogden Pohlman, another scholar commenting on Jackson’s influence, wrote in his doctoral dissertation *California’s Mission Myth* (1974),

The desire for “history” and tradition has been one of the more notable aspects of American civilization, especially in those regions not blessed by either... More than anyone else, Helen Hunt Jackson initiated a major shift toward an idealized romantic conception of the Franciscan missions. Historians generally credit her novel *Ramona* (1884) with reversing the prevailing interpretation in California which had heretofore dismissed the six-and-a-half decades of Franciscan missionary activity as an ignominious failure, an irrelevant and worthless cultural heritage— Sentimental readers accepted *Ramona* as a picture of idyllic “Spanish” culture (Pohlman, 1974: 8, 335; as cited in Dylser, 1996: 9).

The main body of DeLyser’s thesis is devoted to examining the Ramona-identified places that became meaningful destinations on tourist itineraries, and were frequently cited in travel guidebooks. “Even as places represented in a work of fiction became factual in the landscape of southern California, so a host of other places and businesses chose to associate themselves with the novel. Towns, subdivisions, and roadways of various sizes were all named for the novel’s heroine (Ramona) and her martyred spouse (Alessandro). Likewise, businesses of all kinds took the names of these characters as their own... The novel was even used in that ever-so-Californian of attractions, the theme park, of which “Ramona Village” [near Hollywood, 1928] may have been the first.” (DeLyser, 1996: 3-4) DeLyser examines the national spread of Ramona-inspired mythology through photographs, postcards, magazines, newspapers, films plays, songs, advertising and commercial products. The breadth and abundance of Ramona-related materials assembled in an extensive (35-page) bibliography compiled by DeLyser attests to the widespread popularity of Jackson’s novel, and its remarkably widespread and complex national influence.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

All of these forms of commercial promotion, many of which were considered innovative at the time, coincided with the great Southern California land rush of the late 1880s. When the flood of immigrants to the region abruptly subsided, and a deep recession set in during the early 1890s, Ramona mythology fed directly into efforts of regional boosters to counteract the economic doldrums.

One of the most important and influential boosters of this era was Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*. As founder of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Otis and the other powerful board members tirelessly promoted Southern California, particularly targeting Midwesterners, and often enlisting Ramona mythology in the effort. The *Times* ran numerous Ramona stories, featuring the locations and characters from the novel. One story appeared in the January 13, 1887 issue of the *Times* under the headline "Camulos: The Real Home of Helen Hunt Jackson's Ramona." (DeLyser, 1996: 68-70)

Only a very limited number of properties can be seen to be closely associated with the Ramona phenomenon. These are the places that Jackson visited in preparation for writing the novel, the places she clearly used in fragments for the setting of the story, the places that the contemporary public perceived as being Ramona-associated, and those they consequently sought out in large numbers, transforming sleepy backwaters into major tourist destinations. Only three properties in the nation potentially meet all of these criteria: Rancho Guajome, the Estudillo House, and Rancho Camulos.

Rancho Guajome's own claim to the "Home of Ramona" title was established in 1894, when an article entitled, "Rancho Guajome: the Real Home of Ramona" appeared in the November issue of *Rural Californian*. The unnamed author of this article declared that, "now that there is no doubt as to the true place, tens of thousands of tourists will throng there yearly to visit the scenes that so inspired Helen Hunt Jackson." DeLyser comments, "while the statement that tourists would come by the 'tens of thousands' was surely an exaggeration, like Camulos, Rancho Guajome became a destination for Ramona-seekers." (DeLyser, 1996: 104)

Rancho Guajome meets all of the stated criteria for association with the Ramona phenomenon. Though accounts vary in the details, Jackson is thought to have been a houseguest of the Coutts family in 1882, the same year she visited Camulos. Geographical references to the relationship of the fictional Moreno Rancho relative to San Diego and Mission San Luis Rey, and some key site details, particularly the south veranda of the adobe and the chapel described in Jackson's book, match Guajome and therefore serve as important evidence supporting a Ramona claim.

Rancho Guajome also became a major tourist destination, though this aspect of its Ramona association appears to have occurred only subsequent to the publication of the 1894 *Rural Californian* article, and some years after the Camulos connection to the novel had been popularly identified. The cause of this time lag is uncertain, but speculation centers around the relationship between Jackson and Señora Coutts, which was reported by her son many years later to have become strained during her visit to the ranch. The Coutts family apparently also did not show the interest in capitalizing on the Ramona connection so clearly expressed by the del Valles of Camulos. Guajome was also located some four miles distant from the Santa Fe Railroad station at Oceanside, limiting tourist access to the site, and by the 1890s the adobe had fallen into a deteriorated state. (DeLyser, 1996: 96-108)

The Estudillo House in San Diego is the third property frequently cited for its Ramona associations. The logic of the Estudillo adobe's Ramona connection is unclear, as no evidence presently exists to indicate that Jackson visited the adobe during her travels in Southern California, nor is the building or site clearly identified as a setting for the novel; only an ambiguous mention of a "...long, low adobe building which had served no mean purpose in the old Presidio days, but was now fallen in decay; and all its rooms, except those occupied by the Father [Gaspara], had been long uninhabited," and Jackson's various references to old town San Diego as the location of Ramona's marriage (Jackson, 1912: 270-71).

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Though considerably less specific in its geographical and architectural particulars than Jackson's references to either Camulos or Guajome, this evidence provided a sufficient basis of a Ramona connection for the *San Diego Union*, in an 1887 front-page article, to declare the Estudillo House to be "Ramona's Marriage Place." Regarding this claim, DeLyser explains, "[m]ore accurately, however, it was the site where Ramona and Alessandro's names were entered into Father Gaspara's marriage records. The actual ceremony, though it is not described in the novel, was performed in the chapel. Such details aside, it was the Estudillo adobe which earned the title 'Ramona's Marriage Place' and which, in turn, led to several decades of tourist promotion of the building in this role." (DeLyser, 1996: 110)

The Estudillo adobe was unique amongst the early Ramona places, in that it was perhaps the first site to become entirely devoted to exploiting the commercial possibilities offered by Ramona-inspired tourism. The caretaker for the adobe hired by Salvador R. Estudillo in 1887 before his move to Los Angeles, soon began selling off portions of the house to tourists seeking Ramona reliquary. The adobe was in a seriously dilapidated state, due at least in part to tourist vandalism, when it was purchased in 1906 by Nat Titus, who sold it the following year to the San Diego Electric Railway Company, owned by real estate tycoon John D. Spreckels. Under Spreckels' ownership, the Estudillo adobe began its new life as a deliberately fashioned tourist destination.

Spreckels hired architect Hazel Wood Waterman to plan the restoration of the house. Waterman's rather loose interpretation of the site appears to have been inspired in no small part by the novel itself, with architectural and site features added and deleted from the adobe, and the floor plan altered, at least in part based upon suggestions from Jackson's book. Upon the completion of this transformation in 1910, the Estudillo adobe was reopened to the public as a full-fledged Ramona tourist attraction. It proved enormously successful in this role, drawing as many as 1,632 visitors on one day in 1940 (DeLyser, 1996: 114-122).

Of these three properties, Rancho Guajome and Rancho Camulos make perhaps the strongest claims for direct associations with the Ramona phenomenon. Both properties were visited by Jackson during the preparations for her book in 1882, and both quite clearly and significantly inspired the fictionalized setting of her tale, and can be identified by both architectural and geographic references in the novel. In turn, both places were actively promoted by regional boosters, and transformed into magnets for tourists from across the country. Of the two, Camulos was arguably the more popular, as a consequence of its location on the Southern Pacific main line, and the proactive efforts of the del Valles to capitalize on the association.

Although Camulos appears to have been granted a "head start" on Guajome, both of these sites ultimately came to fully embody the romantic, though largely invented, image of Southern California's colonial past then being impressed into the consciousness of the nation. The Estudillo adobe is distinct from these two, in that it appears to have become the most fully realized as a tourist attraction, particularly after 1910 when it was redesigned and utilized solely for this purpose.

In time, other Ramona inspired or associated landmarks emerged as well, although they were clearly of secondary importance, were not visited by Jackson, or derived from settings described in the novel.

These secondary landmarks include "Ramona's Birthplace," a small adobe in San Gabriel near the Mission San Gabriel, which also housed a gift shop and was at one time enveloped by a large and photogenic grapevine. This is one of the least known of the Ramona landmarks, but is located near the more popular Mission Playhouse established by booster John Stephen McGroarty, who authored the Mission Play recounting the life of Father Serra. Another secondary Ramona landmark is the gravesite of the Cahuilla Indian, Ramona Lubo. Of the several women who portrayed themselves as the "genuine" Ramona of Jackson's novel, only Lubo could claim events in her own life which closely paralleled that of the fictitious character. Lubo died in 1922, but it was not until 1938 that a special monument was erected to her on the Cahuilla Indian reservation. The Ramona Pageant site in the Ramona bowl amphitheater in Hemet continues to be a popular tourist destination, with a stage re-enactment of Jackson's novel occurring there annually since 1923. Surrounding the small town of Hemet are other towns that have borrowed their names of the characters from the novel: Moreno, Alessandro and Ramona Hot Springs.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

It should be noted that both the Estudillo House and Rancho Guajome have been listed as National Historic Landmarks, although not necessarily for their connections to the Ramona myth. Of these, DeLyser states the following of Camulos,

Camulos, more than any other place, had come to symbolize Ramona in the minds of the public. While few now make the pilgrimage on account of the novel, during the period of the myth's greatest popularity (from the late 1880s to the early 1950s) Camulos was the Home of Ramona, and as such, it was the key landmark for Ramona-seekers. In 1893 Olive Percival compiled a booklet which she titled *The Home of Ramona*. In later years she described her work as a "souvenir booklet made by me (young pilgrim not yet 25)." In it can be found a photograph of Camulos, quotes from the novel written in Percival's hand and pressed flowers and plants, presumably obtained from the grounds of the Rancho (Oliver Percival papers, UCLA Department of Special Collections). ... Beyond the plights of profits of the del Valles and the Rubels, Camulos had symbolic meaning to the public. Created in fiction, the Home of Ramona was reflected back in popular culture pursuits such as the sending of postcards, the purchase of photographs, the compilation of souvenir albums, the customizing of one's own edition of the novel, or the ever-popular pilgrimage to those hallowed halls. Rancho Camulos became the Home of Ramona (DeLyser, 1996: 95).

Architectural Comparison between Rancho Camulos and Other Ranchos that have Been Designated National Historic Landmarks

Rancho Camulos shares architectural characteristics with four other ranchos in Southern California that have been declared National Historic Landmarks: Las Flores Adobe, Rancho Los Cerritos, Rancho Guajome and Rancho Los Alamos. Of the six designated National Historic Landmark adobes in Southern California, only these four adobes were the principal dwellings on Spanish or Mexican land grants, or portions of the land grants handed down to the descendants of the original grantees, and therefore can be seen to have participated directly in the rancho economy.

The Rancho Guajome adobe in San Diego County and the Los Alamos adobe in Santa Barbara County are both Mexican-Spanish Colonial Rural Vernacular style (or Hacienda style, as it is sometimes called), one-story adobes. Of these two, Guajome and Camulos are the most closely related, both in architectural design and setting. Both were begun in 1852-53, with significant later additions occurring as late as the 1880s. Both had chapel buildings constructed during the 1860s. The most notable difference between the two adobes architecturally is in their site plans. Camulos eventually attained the u-shaped plan typically associated with the Mexican-Spanish Rural Vernacular style, organized around a central courtyard, with the rooms opening directly onto a corredor. Guajome is organized around a double courtyard, with both enclosed on all sides. Rooms open out onto the corredors running along the inside of the courtyard. The easterly courtyard is defined by buildings that reflect the working functions of the rancho. Surrounding this courtyard are a carriage shed, harness room, box stalls, blacksmith shop, a jail and rooms for employees.

The Los Alamos adobe, believed to have been constructed between 1829 and 1844, is stylistically similar to the Ygancio del Valle adobe. Los Alamos was a one-story, three-room Mexican vernacular style adobe when first constructed, and was gradually expanded at both ends to form a sprawling, irregular plan. The rooms open out onto corredors extending the length of the house on both the northern and southern elevations. The Los Alamos adobe is a somewhat atypical example of the style, in that it never attained the well-defined, enclosed u-plan usually associated with the Mexican-Spanish Colonial Rural Vernacular.

Both the Rancho Las Flores (1868) and Rancho Los Cerritos (1844) adobes are closely related in architectural style, as they combine elements of the Monterey style with the Mexican-Spanish Colonial Rural Vernacular (Hacienda) style. Monterey style adobes are two stories in height, and covered with a hipped or gable roof and typically feature a cantilevered second-floor balconies or porches supported by wood posts. While the one-story elements of both the Rancho Las Flores and Los Cerritos adobes, with their corredors, u-shaped plans, externalized circulation and courtyards, are very similar in appearance to the Ygnacio del Valle adobe at Camulos, the del Valley adobe is distinct from these adobes in that it exhibits few Monterey style influences. A more detailed discussion of the Monterey style, and the long-standing controversy surrounding its relationship to the Mexican-Spanish Rural Vernacular style, is contained in Section 8, Pages 13-15 of this nomination.



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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Construction of the Ygnacio del Valle adobe at Camulos began in 1853, with the original four-room adobe expanded to eventually produce a u-shaped plan. The original l-shaped four room section, connected by an exterior corredor, expanded over the subsequent fifty years, evolving into a one-story, u-shaped plan organized around a central courtyard or patio. The rooms communicated primarily with the patio, providing only minimal internal circulation. The del Valle adobe was planned and constructed almost entirely as a pre-Monterey style dwelling; the corredor and patio serve as the central organizing elements, and circulation between rooms is minimized. The gable roof system is characteristic of adobes constructed in Southern California after 1850, when milled lumber became sufficiently available to replace the flat-roofed construction techniques characteristic of many Southern California pueblos, including Los Angeles. Period millwork is also evident in the use of six-over-six sash windows.

The number of extant, Mexican-Spanish Colonial Rural Vernacular style dwellings in California is extremely small, and it is therefore inappropriate to attempt to attribute greater architectural significance to one over another member of this class of buildings. Rather, the scarcity of the type argues for considering each example as singularly important in its own right. All of the properties in the small class of buildings which are comparable to the Ygnacio del Valle adobe at Camulos (Los Cerritos, Las Flores, Los Alamos and Guajome) are already listed as National Historic Landmarks.

Design Integrity Comparison

The design integrity for the buildings and sites representing the remaining examples of the Mexican-Spanish Rural Vernacular style varies considerably. The original outer court of the Los Cerritos adobe once housed the barns, sheds, granary and hen houses. These uses were all removed during the 1930s when the adobe was remodeled by the Bixby Family, who had purchased the ranch from John Temple in 1866. Llewellyn Bixby III purchased 4.7 acres from the Jotham Bixby Company, and hired Long Beach architect Kenneth Wing to refurbish the adobe in 1930-31. Although retaining the original footprint of the adobe, the building was completely remodeled in the Spanish Colonial Revival style popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Many additions were made, walls moved or added, doors made into windows, and new casement windows added. Much of the original fabric was retained, but the house was, on a whole, completely modernized. (Historic Structures Report, Rancho Los Cerritos)

The Los Alamos adobe is considerably altered. An attached, board and batten garage was added to the western elevation of the adobe during in the 1950s, and a stucco over woodframe kitchen and dining room addition was made within the last twenty years. If historic-era outbuildings were located on the property, they no longer remain today. A second residence was built in 1969 adjacent to the main adobe. The new building was designed to complement the adobe using a similar roofline and building materials.

Alterations to the Las Flores adobe and site include the removal of a second-story veranda, and the partial enclosure of another. All of the outbuildings associated with the agricultural heritage of the site are no longer extant. In their stead are new buildings, including a trading post, pump house and a restroom, designed to blend with the adobe. The original carriage house forming the northern end of the courtyard was extensively remodeled in 1974, including structural alterations, re-roofing, the replacement of doors and windows, and the removal of portions of the corredor.

The most significant alterations to the Guajome adobe include a small, second story woodframe Victorian-style addition added at the western end of the adobe during the 1880s. During the 1920s, a Mission Revival style arcade was added to the southern elevation of the adobe.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The most significant alteration to the del Valle adobe is the addition of two large picture windows during the 1950s, including a multi-paned steel mullioned window added on the west side of the west wing. The original kitchen in the north wing was remodeled into a garage and servants quarters between 1925 and 1934. A portion of an outside wall, and at least one interior wall, were removed for this alteration. The interior of the kitchen in the southeast corner of the adobe was also remodeled during the 1950s. Minor changes, such as the removal of louvered shutters, have occurred at various times. The roofing materials, apparently originally wood shingles or shakes, have been replaced with asphalt composition shingles.

All of these adobes were once the central element of ranchos that covered thousands of acres, and were economically self-sufficient units that either raised or produced much of what was needed to sustain large families, their relatives and Indian workers. The ranch headquarters generally included the family adobe and numerous outbuildings related to agricultural production and the maintenance of equipment. Typically, these buildings included barns, sheds, blacksmith shops, carriage houses, worker's dwellings and offices. In addition, some ranchos maintained a school and a chapel, though in some cases portions of the family adobe were used for these functions; in others, separate buildings were constructed.

In many cases, family gardens (some more formal than others) and orchards, fountains and walkways were established in the area immediately surrounding the family adobe. The remaining acreage was, during the early stages of agriculture, devoted to stock raising, cultivated fields and vineyards. By the 1850s, citrus was introduced and fruit orchards established. These tree crops were followed by walnuts, apricots and finally large scale citrus raising, depending on the location and climate found at each rancho. Some ranchos retained their livestock, raising grain and other row crops.

Of all the adobes being examined, only Guajome and Camulos have retained outbuildings reflecting the nature of the agricultural economy which created and sustained rancho life. At Guajome, an historic adobe chapel remains, as do the work-related buildings within the courtyard. The remaining outbuildings that reflect the agricultural heritage of Rancho Camulos include: a winery, barn, worker's housing and office and chapel. None of the Black Walnut trees originally planted at Rancho Guajome remain, but a huge specimen remains at Rancho Camulos, perhaps the largest tree of its kind in the region. In addition, the Southern Pacific Railroad section house and railroad right-of-way remains on the Camulos site, across the highway from the adobe. These transportation-related buildings assist in interpreting the second and third phases of agricultural development at Camulos.

This discussion of design integrity for these five properties suggests that the Los Alamos and Los Cerritos adobes are the most severely altered examples of the style and period. The design integrity exhibited by the Las Flores adobe is somewhat more intact than either the Los Alamos or Los Cerritos adobes, but less than either the Guajome or del Valle adobes, particularly due to the loss of significant architectural fabric and all of its related agricultural outbuildings. In comparing the Guajome and del Valle adobes, it appears that the former is a relatively somewhat more altered example of the style and period, particularly as a result of its two, visually prominent and stylistically dissimilar additions.

Setting Integrity Comparison

Rancho Los Cerritos has very nearly lost its entire setting, as the adobe is now surrounded by the heavily urbanized city of Long Beach. Though the rancho itself is reduced from its original 49,000 acres to its present 100 acres, the Los Alamos adobe has retained its rural setting to a considerable degree. The hillsides in the immediate vicinity remain in agricultural use, principally cattle grazing and horse raising. The village of Los Alamos, located nearby to the south, has not expanded substantially beyond its historic townsite.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

The setting for the Las Flores adobe is largely intact. The adobe, located on a 11.5 acre site, is surrounded by chaparral-covered, rolling hillsides, and is now incorporated into the Marine Headquarters at Camp Pendleton. During its productive years, the rancho raised cattle and lima beans, but these agricultural activities are no longer in evidence.

The development of Rancho Guajome followed an agricultural succession pattern similar to Rancho Camulos, with cattle and dry farming followed by vineyards, fruit trees and citrus crops. No evidence of the agricultural activity that once existed at Guajome remains today—the adobe is now incorporated into a 565 acre county park and is currently surrounded by open grasslands and a few scattered trees. Recent suburban tract development is much in evidence, impinging on the site from the surrounding ridgelines. A nearby site is now used as a farm implement museum, and contain recently constructed buildings and sheds.

The 1400 acres of Rancho Camulos are presently planted in citrus, including some of the original fruit tree stock set out by the del Valles in 1857. Undeveloped foothills and mountains enclose the setting on both the north and south, with citrus crops cultivated on the lower elevations, and cattle ranching taking place on the steeper hillsides. The nearest urban development to the adobe is located in the village of Piru, roughly two miles to the west of the site. The City of Santa Clarita is located roughly eight miles to the east, across the Los Angeles County line. With the exception of the village of Piru, and the cities of Fillmore and Santa Paula to the west, the Santa Clara Valley setting for Rancho Camulos is an uninterrupted citriculture landscape extending from the Los Angeles County line to the City of Ventura, an area roughly thirty-five miles in length and three to five miles in width.

All of these five sites, with the exception of the Los Cerritos adobe, retain some aspects of their historic settings intact. The Las Flores and Guajome adobes are somewhat compromised by the loss of evidence of agricultural activities, and particularly in the case of the latter, nearby urban development. Both the Los Alamos and Camulos (del Valle) adobes retain their historic settings essentially uncompromised.

Integrity of Association

Of these five sites, only the Los Alamos and del Valle adobes are currently used for activities which are related to the historic agricultural use of the properties, and therefore provide visual evidence of this historic use. Both the Los Cerritos and Guajome adobes are presently managed as house museums. The Las Flores adobe is vacant, though the immediate vicinity is used by the Boys Scouts of America as a recreational area. The presence of historically-related activities at the Los Alamos and Camulos adobes assists in providing a direct link (association) between the historic activities and the significance of these historic properties.

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Significance (continued)**

Summary

1. With respect to social and economic history, the Ygnacio del Valle adobe is equally significant relative to the other sites for its strong identification with the early settlement and development of California by the Californios. In addition, the number of buildings reflecting this economic history are far greater at Camulos than at any other equivalent rancho that has been previously designated as a National Historic Landmark.
2. Rancho Camulos is one of only three properties in the nation to become widely recognized for its association with Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel, *Ramona*, having not only played a role in inspiring the writing of this highly influential book, but also by becoming an important tourist attraction on that account. Rancho Camulos can therefore be regarded as a key player in the invention and broadcasting of the romanticized image of California that was to become ingrained in the national consciousness for several generations.
3. Rancho Camulos (Ygnacio del Valle) adobe exhibits the outstanding and unique features of the indigenous Mexican-Spanish Rural Vernacular (Hacienda) style of architecture to an extent at least equivalent to all of the previously designated National Historic Landmark adobes.
4. The Ygnacio del Valle adobe exhibits stronger integrity of design in comparison to the Los Alamos and the Rancho Los Cerritos adobes, and at least equivalent design integrity compared to the Guajome and Las Flores adobes. The integrity of setting for Rancho Camulos is greater than all but two of the comparable adobes (Los Alamos and Las Flores, with which it is at least equal), and its integrity of association is stronger than all but one other property (Los Alamos, with which it is at least equal).

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**Rancho Camulos: Ventura County, CA Verbal Boundary Description (continued)**

Commencing at a 1 1/2" iron pipe shown as set on the westerly line of said Rancho San Francisco on the map filed in the office of said County Recorder in Book 4, Page 52 of Record of Surveys; thence, North 15°06'37" West 1710.19 feet to a 1 1/2" iron pipe shown as set on the westerly line of said Rancho San Francisco on said map; thence, North 15°06'37" West 1401.17 feet to a 4" iron pipe shown as Corner No. "SF 13" on said map and on the map recorded in Book 125, Page 55 of Miscellaneous Records in the office of said County Recorder; thence, South 80°53'17" East 10,100.57 feet to the True Point of Beginning; thence,

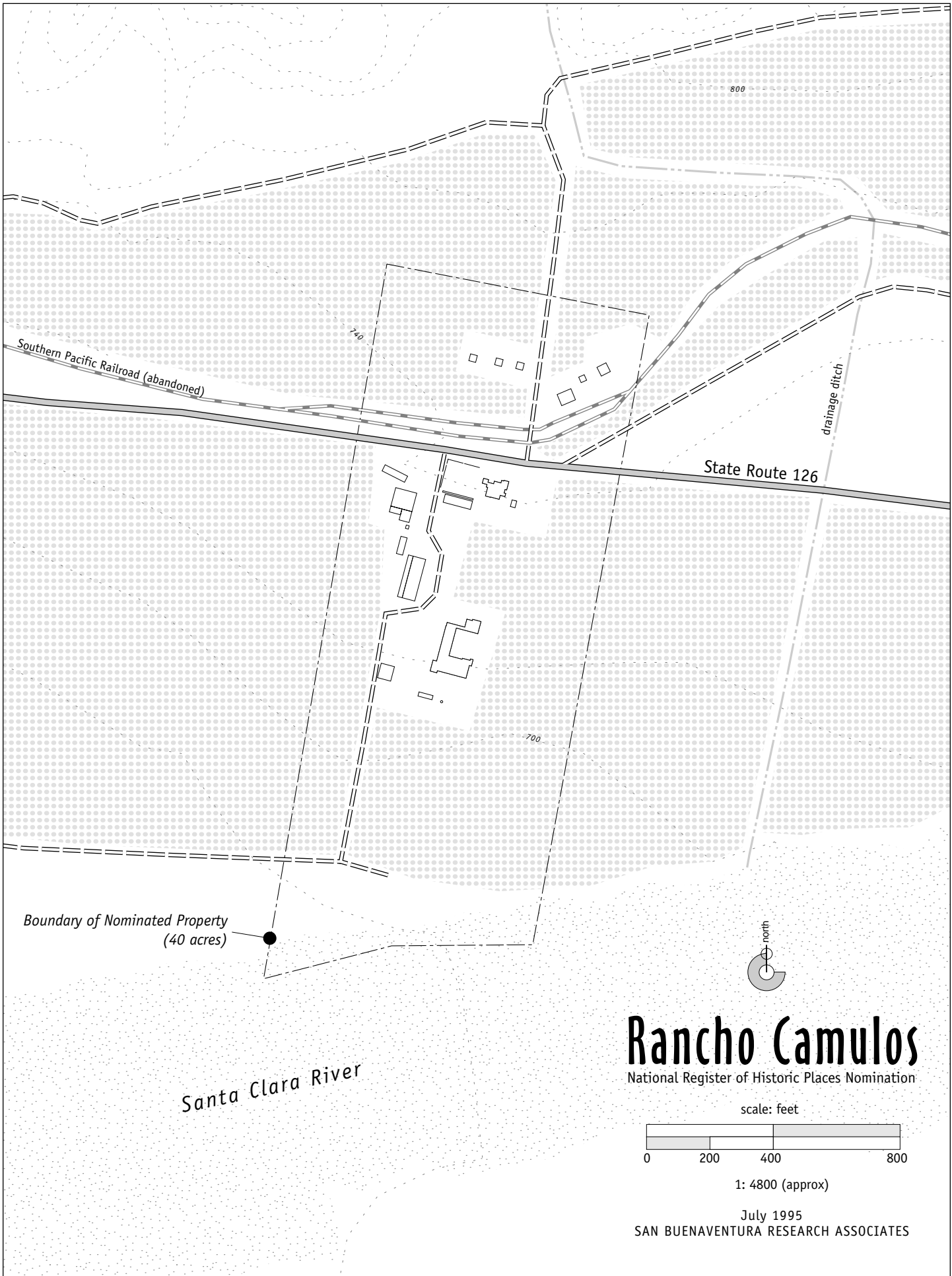
1st South 79°19'40" East 852.00 feet; thence,

2nd South 10°40'20" West 1938.65 feet: thence

3rd North 89°48'16" West 465.22 feet: thence,

4th South 74°40'44" West 438.93 feet: thence,

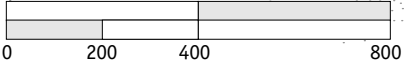
5th North 10°40'20" East 2215.61 feet to the True Point of Beginning.



# Rancho Camulos

National Register of Historic Places Nomination

scale: feet



1: 4800 (approx)

July 1995  
SAN BUENAVENTURA RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



