

Irvine Ranch Agricultural Headquarters,  
Carrillo Tenant House  
4000 feet southwest of the intersection of the  
southbound San Diego Freeway (Highway 405)  
and the southbound Santa Ana Freeway  
(Highway 5)

Irvine  
Orange County  
California

HABS No. CA-2275-A

HABS  
CAL,  
30-IRV,  
1-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HABS  
CAL  
30-IRV,  
1-A-

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

**IRVINE RANCH AGRICULTURAL HEADQUARTERS,  
CARRILLO TENANT HOUSE  
HABS NO. CA-2275-A**

**Location:** Approximately 1 mile southeast of the confluence of the I-5 and I-405 Interstate Highways in Orange County, and approximately 750' southeast of Valencia Avenue along a dirt lane [see Location Map, page 9].

U.S.G.S El Toro Quadrangle, 1968, photorevised 1982  
UTM Coordinates: 11 431060 3721695  
11 431180 3721650  
11 431180 3721740  
11 431095 3721740

**Present Owner:** The Irvine Company  
Agricultural Headquarters  
13042 SW Myford Road  
Irvine, California 92714

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1915

**Builder(s):** The Irvine Company

**Present Occupant:** Western Marketing Company & A.G. Kawamura

**Present Use:** Office, Worker Housing, and Farm Station for Lessees

**Significance:** The Carrillo Tenant House was associated with the operation of Irvine Ranch during the early 20th century, when James Irvine Jr. embarked on expanding agricultural production through the use of tenant farmers. It is one of a handful of extant tenant houses that are outliers to the Irvine Agricultural Headquarters Complex, which was determined eligible for the National Register on February 2, 1982. The Headquarters Complex is located at the intersection of Myford Road and Irvine Boulevard, and the Carrillo Tenant House is approximately 7.5 miles southeast of there [see Vicinity Map, page 8].

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**Date:** February 15, 1990

## I. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This single-story, circa 1915 farm house shows the lack of stylistic detailing common in rural, Craftsman-inspired folk houses of the early 20th century. It is of rectangular plan with an irregular addition to the rear. The building rests on a foundation of wood post construction and measures 54'6" x 24' on the longest sides [see page 12]. The front gable roof is covered with asbestos shingles and has moderate eave overhangs with exposed rafters. It is of single-wall, board-and-batten construction. Small shed roof extensions protect two stoops, one located center front and the other along the east side toward the rear of the house, off the kitchen. The front entry, a wood-paneled door, is placed off-center and has 1 light/1 light, double-hung wood sash windows arranged on either side of it. Windows on the east and west sides are of varying dimensions and asymmetrically spaced; some windows are paired.

The house has undergone a number of changes, and most of them appear to have been made in the 1960s. The original hoard-and-batten walls have been covered with asbestos panels which are light green in color. John Poh, a farm tenant who lived in the house from 1952 through 1958, has stated that the new cladding was added after he left the place in 1958. Also after 1958 the length of the house was extended approximately 10-12 feet to the rear. This extension expanded the square footage of the kitchen as well as the back bedroom and created two new rooms: a rear storage room and a second bathroom. The rear storage room is in the location of the original back porch. The present-day rear door, which is now situated on the east side of the house, may have been moved at this time. The alterations also involved relocating the southernmost window on the west side. No doubt, the louvered aluminum frame windows in the kitchen were added at this time. On the exterior, these alterations can be seen where the flat roof of the addition abuts the original gable roof line. The west side of the addition is clad in asbestos panels, while the plywood siding of both the south and east elevations has been painted. Fenestration here consists of sliding metal casement windows.

The interior reveals several other changes, though, surprisingly, a number of the original architectural features remain. Those components still intact include the 3" tongue and groove pine flooring in the living and bedroom areas, much of the wall molding, several five-paneled wood doors, and many of the original sash windows. It appears that much of the interior remodeling to the house also occurred after 1958, when, according to John Poh, it was wired for electricity. The kitchen has been modernized with new cabinets and counters, and the changes are typical of kitchens of that era; the renovations most likely were made by 1965. In the living room, the ceiling has been sprayed with acoustical insulation, another indication of post-1958 renovation. In addition, there is evidence that rooms have been repartitioned. The original bathroom has also been modernized with a shower stall and new plumbing.

The grounds around the house are landscaped with several varieties of trees and shrubs: loquat, pepper, olive, palm, apricot, bottle brush, lilac, hibiscus, and orange. A playhouse and a barbecue pit are located at the rear of the yard, which is enclosed with wood fence.

Outbuildings associated with the house include a 24'x18' board-and-batten garage located east of the house. A hougainvillea-covered trellis is anchored to both the house and the garage, creating a shaded vehicle parking space. East of the garage is located an octagonal concrete footing, which once supported a water tank. East of the concrete footing is located a 6'x6' well house. North of the garage approximately 62' is situated a 100'x30' machine shed of pole construction with corrugated metal roof and walls. Approximately 190' east-northeast of the garage is situated a U-shaped concrete structure that functioned (it is no longer in use) as a combination retaining wall and loading platform. The center section measures 55' long with a

36' wing on one side and a 48'6" wing on the other side. This structure contains an earthen berm that was used as a vehicle ramp.

Although the Carrillo House has been substantially altered, it appears to have been typical of housing the Irvine Company built for its tenants. In 1982, LSA Associates, Inc. surveyed extant structures on the Irvine Ranch within the limits of the City of Irvine. This study found that out of a potential 273 ranch structures depicted on six U.S.G.S. topographic maps dating from 1894 to 1930, 59 major historic structures were extant at that time. Since LSA's study also found that it was not uncommon for buildings to have been moved and relocated on the ranch, the total building count of 273 may have included several structures that would have appeared at more than one location on old maps. In addition, LSA's survey indicated that most of the older ranch structures were gone by the 1930s, with many of the 59 then-extant structures representing construction that took place between 1900 and 1930, the years during which the tenant farming operations of the ranch were fully developed [LSA 1983:12-20].

A review of LSA's photographs and survey data indicates that most of the tenant houses associated with the Irvine Ranch probably were built between 1910 and World War I. All of the houses extant as of 1982 were one-story cottages, vernacular in design and construction. Most of them embodied architectural elements influenced by the Craftsman style. Gable roofs predominated, usually with an overhanging eave and exposed rafters or angle braces. Several of these cottages were built with an open front porch, usually covered with a shed or gable roof and supported by plain 4x4 porch posts. Exterior wall cladding varied: some cottages were sheathed with clapboard, some with board-and-batten, and some with asbestos panels. Windows typically were 1 light/1 light wood sash, sometimes paired. Foundation systems invariably consisted of wood posts supporting a wood balloon frame structural system and allowing a minimal crawl space.

While tenant and employee residences displayed a great many similarities -- utilitarian design, lack of ornamentation, and constructed of ordinary materials -- they also reflected enough individuality to indicate that they were built as needed by more than one builder. It is obvious that they were not built from one or two standard house plans, since the size and configuration varied from one cottage to another, although all of them were small and probably had no more than four to six rooms each. In addition, window treatment varied: on some cottages the windows were all one size; on others, sizes were mixed. Placement also varied: sometimes windows were symmetrically spaced, sometimes asymmetrically. The same was true of front porch placement: sometimes centered, sometimes off-center. In sum, the variety suggests that these cottages were constructed by carpenters who worked from traditional knowledge rather than from plan. The same was probably true of outbuildings. Generally, the tenant houses at Headquarters showed evidence of regular maintenance, whereas those in outlying areas were in various stages of deterioration.

Because tenant buildings were not constructed for long-term permanence and because they lay scattered across the countryside, their potential importance as historical resources has been recognized only recently. Many buildings have already been demolished. Since 1982, at least 20 of the 59 structures extant at the time of the survey have been razed for various development projects. Most of the structures lost were tenant houses. While there is little that is architecturally or technologically distinctive about this type of housing, the structures, as a group and in relation to other ranch buildings, reflect the economic status of ranch tenants and the socio-economic hierarchy associated with corporate farming.

## II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Carrillo Tenant House was associated with the 20th century development of the Irvine Ranch, although the ranch itself had its origins during the mid-19th century when many California land-grant ranchos were broken up. By 1868, through a series of purchases and court actions, James Irvine, Llewelyn Bixby, and Thomas and Benjamin Flint were in control of approximately 110,000 acres that had previously belonged to Ranchos Santiago de Santa Ana, Lomas de Santiago, and San Joaquin. Irvine provided the financial support to stock the land with sheep, which proved to be a profitable operation for several years [LSA 1983:7]. During the late 1860s the ranch supported at least 40,000 sheep, which were divided into herds of 3,000-5,000 animals spread out over the property. Shepherds reportedly lived in 8'x10' board cabins next to the corrals where they penned sheep each night. As many as 20,000 lambs were born each spring, and wool production is said to have reached as much as 200,000 pounds annually [Cleland 1978:69-70].

During the early 1870s, winters of low rainfall forced the owners to reduce the size of the flocks, and the infamous drought of 1876-77 probably resulted in severe livestock losses. The drought coincided with Irvine's purchase of the shares held by Bixby, Flint and Company. As sole owner, Irvine continued to raise sheep for a time, but the primary emphasis shifted to cattle. By 1882, however, the vicissitudes of sheep ranching augmented by constant legal battles with squatters prompted Irvine to sell a portion of his holdings. He had the land divided into 40-acre farms, which he offered for sale on the installment plan. The development scheme met with limited success, in part because new settlers often could not meet payments and in part because railroad companies also were promoting development along their own lines. During the mid-1880s, Irvine began leasing land to tenant farmers, possibly because he had experienced difficulty in selling 40-acre parcels. He first considered allowing tenant farming in about 1871, but this type of operation did not really begin to dominate the ranch until after 1895. During the 1880s, however, limited tenant farming seems to have coincided with efforts to diversify agricultural operations inasmuch as tenants are said to have raised barley and hay on leased land. At that time, the Ranch reportedly took a one-fifth share of the crop [Cleland 1978: 77-78, 89].

When Irvine died in 1886, he left the ranch in trust for his wife and son, James Irvine Jr., and gave the trustees permission to sell the ranch at their discretion. The trustees did, in fact, put the ranch up for sale at auction, but mistakes in the bidding procedure prompted them to withdraw the offer of sale. Railroad expansion changed the economic prospects of the ranch dramatically during the late 1880s. After taking the ranch off the market, the trustees took advantage of competition between the Santa Fe Railroad and Southern Pacific and eventually deeded a right-of-way across the middle of the ranch to Santa Fe in return for permission to cross Santa Fe's tracks with roads, irrigation ditches, and other ranch improvements [Cleland 1978:92-94].

During the 1890s, the ranch operation took on the attributes for which it has been known throughout much of the 20th century. Under the guidance of James Irvine Jr., who incorporated the ranch as The Irvine Company [TIC] in 1894, the practice of leasing land and equipment to tenant farmers increased. In 1896, 1,800 acres were leased to farmers on a sharecrop basis. Crop farming also took on added importance, although both cattle and sheep ranching continued. By 1895, approximately 31,000 acres were planted with barley. Two types were grown here: Chevalier barley, which was exported to Europe for brewing, and feed barley. Production reached more than a million sacks annually, with fields generating about 8-10 sacks per acre. Beans were the second most important crop produced on the ranch during

the 1890s, with much of this crop grown on the 1,800 acres leased to tenants. Wheat, corn, and potatoes were also grown on the ranch [Cleland 1978:103; Meadows 1975:n.p.].

Company records show that in 1897, 20 tenant farmers were growing barley. In addition to corn, potatoes, wheat, and beans, some tenants began to grow peanuts. Early in the 20th century, lima and black-eyed beans were added to the list, and by 1911, lima beans had replaced barley as the principal crop. Twenty-three tenants were growing limas in that year. In about 1905-07, rhubarb, flax, alfalfa, and artichokes were added to the increasingly diversified operation. Sugar beets were planted for the first time in about 1910, and a year later company records show 12 tenants were growing this crop. During these years, the ranch itself still continued to operate cattle, sheep, and barley stations, each with its own camp and employees [LSA 1983:17-18; Cleland 1978:104-113].

In the early 1900s, James Irvine Jr. also experimented with orchard crops. In 1906, one of the largest tenant operations began when C.E. Utt and Sherman Stevens persuaded Irvine to join them in a citrus production venture. The two men formed the San Joaquin Fruit and Investment Company, in which Irvine took a share. Stevens and Utt planted 600 acres of walnuts and apricots and 400 acres of oranges and lemons. Under the terms of the contract, they developed water resources located on the ranch. While the trees grew to maturity, the partners grew row crops such as beans, peanuts, and peppers. Within a few years, the operation started to turn a profit, which allowed the company to expand its operations. In 1921, TIC granted the San Joaquin Company a lease for a period of fifteen years, at the end of which time the latter company was to purchase the land for \$1000 an acre. During the 15-year lease period, TIC collected 25 percent of the profits [Cleland 1978:116-119].

The success of the San Joaquin Fruit and Investment Company led Irvine to drain low-lying areas of the ranch in order to expand production, and eventually citrus orchards began to replace grain fields. In addition, other row crops were introduced, including tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, mustard, peas, celery and rhubarb. Beans continued, though, to be one of the principal crops, and as many as 17,000 acres were devoted to lima beans in the 1930s and 1940s. Tenant farmers grew most of these crops. They leased their houses, barns, and equipment from The Irvine Company, and the company took one-third of the crop as payment [LSA 1983:10-11,17; LSA 1987 Appendix A].

Marketing cash crops required extensive warehouse and handling facilities as well as housing to accommodate employees. The first warehouse was constructed in 1889, and a second was added in 1895. In 1910, James Irvine Jr. helped to organize the Santa Ana Cooperative Sugar Company and built a sugar beet processing facility. In about 1917-18, The Irvine Company acquired the Holly Sugar Company in Santa Ana. The growing number of employees and tenants with families also led The Irvine Company to build employee housing (bunkhouses and single-family dwellings) and to establish a school and post office near the ranch headquarters on Myford Road. The company also built a citrus shipping station at ranch headquarters [LSA 1983:10,17; Sanchez 1984:78-82; Cleland 1978:111; Meadows 1975:n.p.].

Expanding agricultural production required the development of water resources and extensive irrigation systems. In order to finance these costs, The Irvine Company sold off parts of the ranch from time to time. Between 1900 and 1910, 350 acres at Laguna and 400 acres at Newport were sold off; these became the present-day cities of Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, and Corona del Mar. The cities of Tustin and Costa Mesa also had their origins in such land sales [Hertel 1971:9-10].

The depression of the 1930s marked the end of expanding agricultural operations for The Irvine Company. In 1937, TIC adapted the leasehold system to urban development with the creation of Bayshores, a residential community. Rather than selling land, The Irvine Company leased building lots for a period of 25-75 years and changed an annual lease fee as well as a maintenance fee for the private beach that was part of the community. (Eventually the practice of leasing urban residential lots was phased out in favor of fee-simple sale.) During the early 1940s, the company sold 2,318 acres of land to the federal government for the El Toro Marine Corps Base and another 1,600 acres for a dirigible station [Hertel 1971:11-13].

After James Irvine Jr. died in 1947, his son Myford inherited the helm. Myford Irvine continued the operation established by his father, a combination of tenant farming, company farming, and cooperative marketing efforts, but he also further diversified the company by investing in housing and commercial development. The post-World War II housing boom provided the impetus for this direction, which continues to the present. The Irvine Company is now primarily engaged in urban development, and its agricultural facilities and remaining farmland are leased to commercial growers [LSA 1983:11-12].

The Irvine Ranch and its successor, The Irvine Company, was and remains a major influence in the development of Orange County. In this regard, the company shares a place in California history with other large ranch and land companies, notably the Tejon Ranch, the Kern County Land Company, and Miller and Lux, all of which have helped to determine the nature and timing of growth and development in various areas of central and southern California since the late 19th century. While in general their influences have been similar, each of these land companies has operated in its own fashion, and each has left its own mark on the landscape. The Irvine Ranch is distinctive for its tradition of leasing agricultural land to tenants, yet comparatively little of the history of ranch tenant operations has been documented. Several pertinent research topics remain unexplored, including how acreage was assigned to tenants as well as who determined what crops would be grown and in what quantities. Likewise, there is no biographical profile of Irvine Ranch tenant farmers.

The historical context for evaluating the relative significance of individual structures in outlying areas has never been completely developed. Only two buildings associated with the ranch headquarters have been placed on the National Register: the Irvine Bean and Growers Association Building and Irvine Blacksmith Shop, both located at East Irvine. The most complete study of Irvine Ranch was conducted in 1982, when LSA surveyed the historic ranch structures lying within the corporate boundaries of the City of Irvine [LSA, 1983].

Little is known about the tenants or land-use associated with the Carrillo tenant farm, and the historic name is taken from the family believed to have lived here the longest, the Jack Carrillo family. The Carrillos lived here for many years (though an undetermined number) prior to 1952. This information comes from John Poh, who worked for Carrillo as a hired hand, then moved into the house in 1952. The Poh family lived in the house until 1958. Successive tenants included the Steve Changala and then the Si Changala families [Poh, personal interview 17 April 1989].

During the six years that John Poh lived on the place, about 500 acres were planted with lima beans, black-eyed beans, and barley. In about 1953 or 1954, he built two-thirds of the existing machine shed as well as the electric plant. The house had no electricity at the time, and the electric plant he built was to furnish power for farm operations; the house was not electrified until after the Pohs left. Other structures situated on the farmstead at that time included a redwood water tank with a windmill and a large, three-portal barn situated west of the house.

The barn was of single-wall, board-and-batten construction; the center bay was used for hay storage and the wing bays held stalls for horses. In addition, a garage sat northeast of the well house, which would also have been northeast of the garage presently located on the property [Poh, 17 April 1989]. None of these structures remains.

### III. Sources

Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Irvine Ranch*. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1978.

Hertel, Michael M. *Irvine Community Associations*. A Research Report of the Claremont Urban Research Center. Claremont: Claremont Graduate School, 1971.

LSA Associates, Inc. Cultural Resources Division. *An Initial Survey of Historic Resources Within the City of Irvine and Its Sphere of Influence, 1983* [cited as LSA 1983]. Unpublished manuscript prepared for The Irvine Company and on file at TIC.

LSA Associates, Inc. *Historic Property Survey Report for the I-5/I-405 Confluence, City of Irvine, California*. Prepared for The Irvine Company, June 1987 [cited as LSA 1987].

Meadows, Don. *Irvine--A City on Rancho San Joaquin*. Privately printed by the First National Bank of Orange County, 1975.

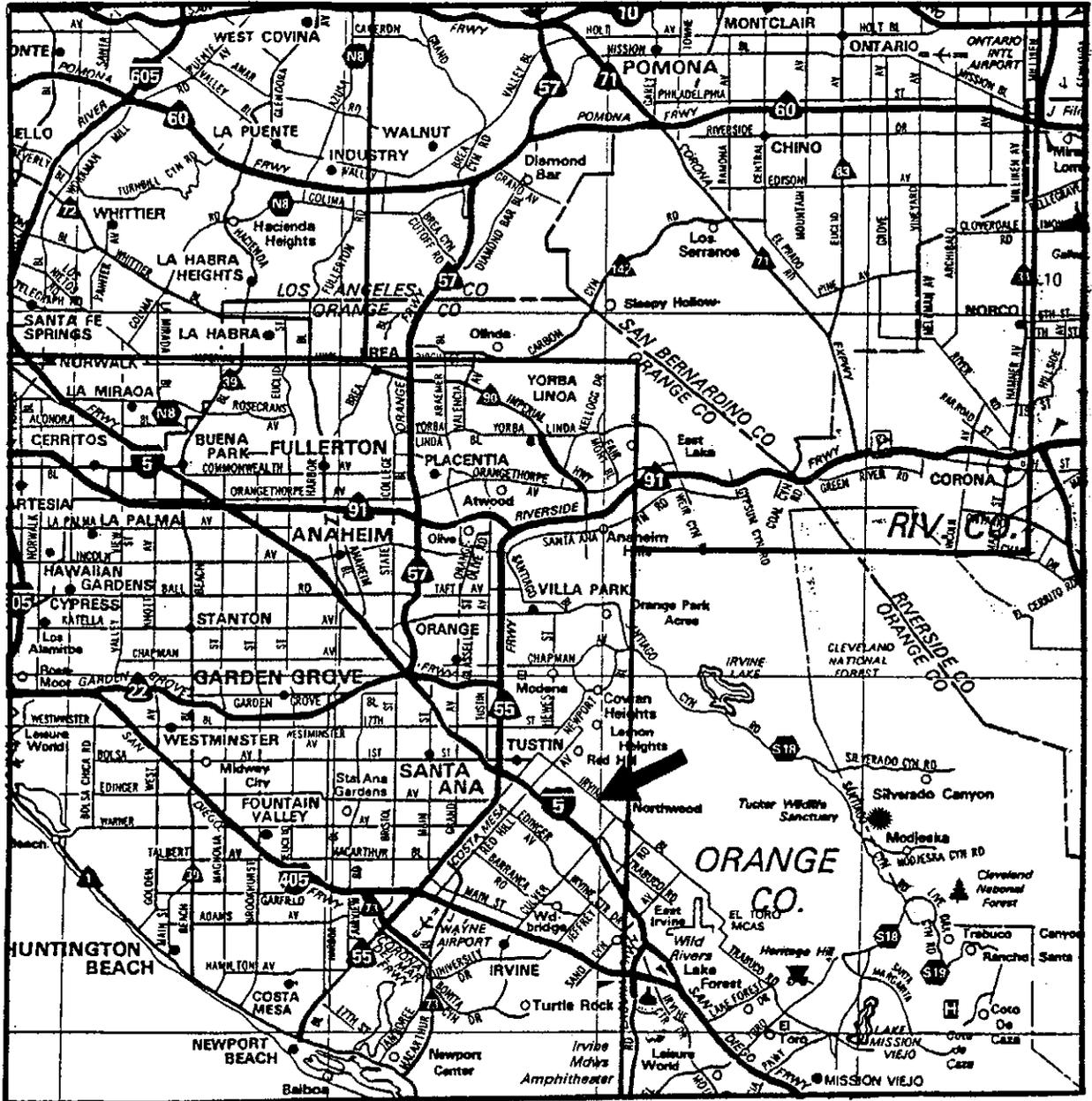
Poh, John. Interviewed in person on the premises by Rebecca Conard on April 17, 1989.

Sanchez Talarico Associates. *Historic Structures Report for the East Irvine Historical Site EIR, 1984* [cited as Sanchez 1984].

### IV. Project Information

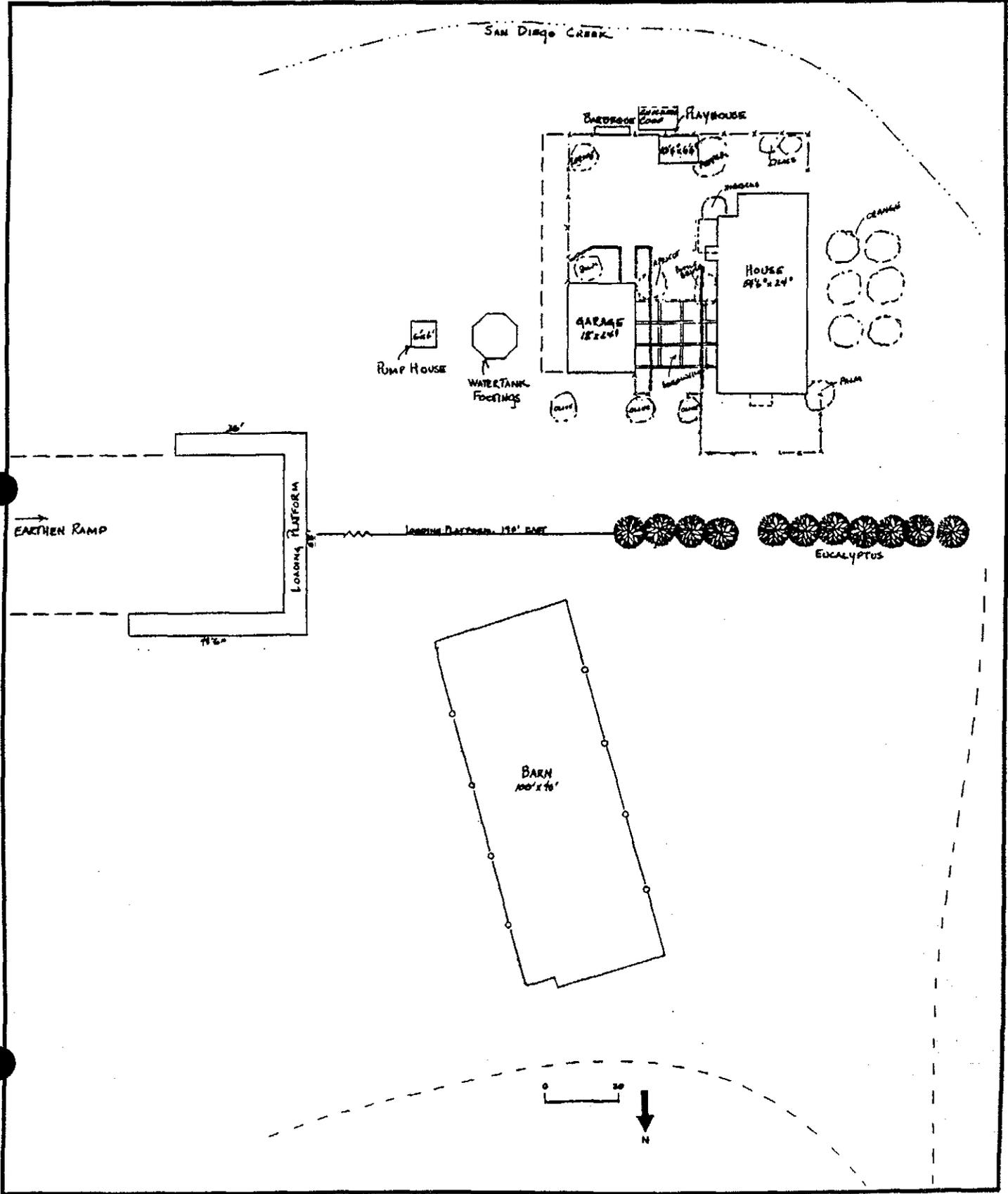
This report was prepared as partial compliance with mitigation measures set forth in the EIR for Planning Area 34 of the City of Irvine. At the request of the Historical, Archaeological, and Paleontological Committee of the City of Irvine, mitigation measures stipulated that photographs, measured drawings, and archival research were to be completed prior to demolition of two TIC tenant houses in the planning area: the Boyd House and the Carrillo House. Elizabeth Padon of LSA Associates, Inc. served as the Project Manager. The report was prepared under the direction of Rebecca Conard of PHR Associates, who acted as the Principal Investigator. John Elliott (LSA), Kevin A. Palmer (PHR), Pamela Post (PHR), and Ellen Keegan (PHR) provided research assistance and clerical support. Everett Weinreb of Santa Barbara was the photographer. The historical information included here is based on available published sources, limited oral history investigations, and a brief foray into company records conducted by LSA Associates in 1982. A reconnaissance of currently held company records conducted by The Irvine Company in 1989-90 indicated no holdings that would be useful for establishing construction dates, names of leaseholders, leasehold acreage, and crop production over time. Local historian Jim Sleeper, who has indexed some Irvine Ranch records, was also contacted; a check of his files likewise failed to locate any information regarding the tenants.

Vicinity Map  
Irvine Ranch Agricultural Headquarters  
Source: 1989 Thomas Bros. California Road Atlas





Site Plan, Carrillo Tenant House, 1989



Floor Plan, Carrillo Tenant House, 1989

