

POND FARM POTTERY  
(Pond Farm Workshops)  
17000 Armstrong Woods Road  
Guerneville  
Sonoma County  
California

HALS CA-95  
*HALS CA-95*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### POND FARM POTTERY (Pond Farm Workshops)

HALS NO. CA-95

Location: 17000 Armstrong Woods Road, Guerneville, Sonoma County, California

Austin Creek State Recreation Area, California Department of Parks and Recreation

Boundaries: the property has an irregular outline and is enclosed on three sides by rustic wood and wire fencing. The fourth boundary is the top of the bank of the middle fork of Fife Creek. The main entry is marked by the overhead “pond farm pottery” sign.

Latitude: 38.550492, Longitude: -123.003431 (Pond Farm Pottery sign over the entry to the property, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84)

Significance: The Pond Farm Pottery landscape is significant as the school, studio, and residence of Marguerite Wildenhain, an influential ceramist and teacher.

Description: Pond Farm Pottery is a rural property of about 1.3 acres. It is located in the hills above the Russian River in Austin Creek State Recreation Area, Sonoma County, California. It has a rustic appearance with wooden buildings set in a meadow. The property is partially surrounded by forest. The barn/studio is a two-story tall structure with a prow-like entry and commands attention at the highest point of the property. The nearby guest house is a simple one-story building just northwest of the barn. Marguerite Wildenhain’s modest one-story house is downhill of the barn and is partially obscured by plants. Most of the property is covered in seasonal grasses with some ornamental and native trees and shrubs. The edges are defined by vertical wood fencing, except along the back edge which is defined by the top of the bank of the ravine at Fife Creek. The surrounding landscape is California forest land and meadow with fir and oak trees dominant. The barn and main house are vacant, and the guest house is used for Parks’ staff housing.

#### **Setting**

Access to the property is through a redwood forest in Armstrong Woods. The road winds through shady woods to emerge above the redwoods, at about 650 feet elevation, into an area of open hillsides with scattered California native oaks, Douglas fir trees, and some madrone. Pond Farm Pottery is located in a clearing on a gentle rise. No other dwellings are visible. The middle fork of Fife Creek is located behind the barn and house in a ravine. The pond for which the property is named is located a short distance east of the property. Across the

road, to the west, is a hillside with fruit trees; they are remnants of the Walker/Herr orchard.<sup>1</sup> The property was always a challenge to reach, for visitors and students alike, but they often felt that journey captured part of the experience of the place; that one journeyed through a darkened area, and, with effort, one reached the sunny opening where knowledge and understanding illuminated one's life.<sup>2</sup> The location and setting were also important components to the teaching methods of both Wildenhain and Jane and Gordon Herr. The Herrs were responsible for locating the original school at the property in the 1940s.

### **Topography**

With very minor exceptions, the grading of the property appears to be little altered from what occurred naturally. (The original homesteaders may have made topographical changes that are now difficult to detect.) The parking, guest house, and barn/studio occupy the highest ground. Behind the house and studio is the bank of the creek. The fall of land towards the south is gentle and steady. Much of the ground is somewhat bumpy and uneven. Building placement and design accommodates the topography.

### **Spatial Organization**

The early settlers established the barn on relatively flat land with easy access to the road. The front faces roughly west, and it appears that this structure, which dominates the property, became the organizing element for the property.

The northernmost part of the property comprises what was once the public area. Originally fenced off from the private residential area, this area contains the barn/studio and the guest house. A teardrop-shaped dirt and gravel drive begins under the "pond farm pottery" sign at the road and circles back at the barn. Facing south onto the driveway is the guest house. It is located just northwest of the barn. A kiln structure is tucked into an ell at the southeast corner of the barn. A teaching area was also established behind the barn where a deck, a barbecue and seating are located. The stoop at the southwest corner of the barn, and an old and failing peach tree, mark the other important outdoor teaching area of the school. These buildings, structures and spaces create a simple complex.

The main house in which Wildenhain lived is south of the barn and shares its orientation. A simple arbor and patio were constructed in front of the house, on the western exposure. A curving, beaten-earth path joins the patio to a gate at the road. Between the house and barn, and roughly parallel to them, is a series of very low stone walls. Remnants of additional low stone walls are south of the house and mark the area that had been devoted to growing vegetables and fruit trees. A beaten-earth path connects the barn to the house. Along this path, near the house, are remnants of fences that mark the private area. The proximity of

---

<sup>1</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>2</sup> (Herger, Interview 1989)

house to barn is expressive of the close relationship between craft and life advocated by Wildenhain.

### **Fences and Gates**

A visitor approaching the property from Armstrong Woods would first see the vertical wood fences along the road. These line the edge of property along the road and wrap the property at the north and south ends. At the southern end the fence curls away from the road, enters an area of dense shrubs and trees, then transitions to wire, then ends abruptly at a wood and wire gate, short of the bank of the creek.

The wood fence was built of rough square wood posts, generally 4" x 4", often with horizontal wire to which wood palings or wood lath was attached. The palings and lath have inconsistent lengths. The fence also has some metal t-stake for support as the posts decay. According to Laura Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker, during Wildenhain's period as a tenant of State Parks, Wildenhain often asked for assistance mending the fences, and salvage materials were used; materials for the fences and gates were, historically, changeable. The fence has been maintained in the much the same manner by Parks' workers and by volunteers since Wildenhain's death.<sup>3</sup>

Wildenhain installed additional wood and wire fencing and gates around her house and gardens to keep out deer and livestock;<sup>4</sup> now only remnants of these fences remain. These occur east, north and west of the house. During Wildenhain's life there was a section of fence that went from the barn and the main house, east of the stone terraces;<sup>5</sup> it is no longer in existence. Dorothy Herger, Wildenhain's friend and a former student, recalls that there had once been a wire fence near the southern face of the barn, and parallel to it, with a gate at the path to the main house. This fence extended toward the wood fence along the western fence line. There is no evidence of this fence now. Fence remnants do occur behind the barn, and some are below the top of the bank.

The current "pond farm pottery" sign is a re-creation of the original sign. The original sign is currently stored in the barn. When State Parks acquired the property, the auto gate under the Pond Farm Pottery sign was wood and matched the fencing materials. At some point during State Parks ownership, a new metal stock gate was installed.<sup>6</sup> According to Dorothy Herger, at one time a pedestrian

---

<sup>3</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

<sup>4</sup> According to former student Dorothy Herger, in the early days of Wildenhain's pottery studio, there were parallel wood fences north of the main entry to allow Gordon Herr access to his land. It is not clear when this changed; the location of the "pond farm pottery" sign is, by all accounts, in the same location as the original sign. (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>5</sup> (Herger, Interview with author 2009)

<sup>6</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2008)

gate was located next to the auto gate; it is no longer in existence. There remains a wood pedestrian gate leading from the road to Wildenhain's house; it is different from one that appears in a historic photograph,<sup>7</sup> but it is not known if the current gate post-dates Wildenhain's tenure. Given the changeable character of the fencing, this is difficult to ascertain.

### Vegetation

It appears that during Wildenhain's tenure, much of the property was left to naturally occurring grasses, originally punctuated by large century plants (*Agave*) and pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) planted around the drive and near the fence along the road; many progeny of the original century plants grow there now. Historically, native trees were kept to the perimeter, but they are encroaching on the property now. A chinquapin tree (*Castanea dentate*), growing near the fence line east of the guest house, was a subject of Wildenhain's sketches;<sup>8</sup> it is still in existence. A Japanese plum that Wildenhain often wrote about once grew outside the south window of the main house,<sup>9</sup> but it is now gone. A peach tree, south of the barn, provided a shady spot for lectures and reading. Fruit trees were more plentiful during the Pond Farm era and now only scattered fruit trees remain, including two fig trees.

Wildenhain was an enthusiastic gardener and preferred tough, low water-using plants.<sup>10</sup> The gardens were generally casual in character. She did grow roses and vegetables,<sup>11</sup> calling her vegetable garden her "jardin potager."<sup>12</sup> West and south of the house at the low stone walls was where Wildenhain kept her kitchen garden and compost piles. Several fruit trees once grew in this area. Flowering bulbs, succulents, shrubs, and trees were massed around the front of the house. Some bulbs, such as daffodils, Amaryllis, grape hyacinth, continue to bloom in spring. *Ficus carica* (edible figs), *Acacia baileyana* (mimosa tree), *Chaenomeles spp* (flowering quince), *Lagerstroemia* (crape myrtle), *Abelia*, *Watsonia*, various fruit trees, and *Gelsemium sempervirens* (Carolina jessamine) have persisted around the house. A climbing rose remains near the arbor. California native oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) have sprouted in the garden in recent years. Wildenhain was proud of the eucalyptus trees<sup>13</sup> she had planted behind the barn; these were removed by State Parks due to concerns about fire danger. Remaining near the barn are *Gelsemium sempervirens* (Carolina jessamine) and *Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora* (montbretia).

---

<sup>7</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>8</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>9</sup> (Herger, Interview with author 2009)

<sup>10</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>11</sup> (Haskins 1996)

<sup>12</sup> (Herr 2007)

<sup>13</sup> (Herger, Interview with author 2009)

### **Barn and surrounding features**

The barn presents a strong and iconic form closely associated with Pond Farm. Wildenhain used the land around the barn as an extended classroom. Class discussions often took place on the low stoop/bench at the southwest corner of the barn, near which a peach tree provided shade. Behind the barn, a barbecue, curved bench, wood L-shaped bench, and arbor-covered area were used by Wildenhain and her students. Students were regularly instructed to draw out-of-doors, using elements in the landscape as study subjects.

#### **Barbecue and Bench**

A low rectangular-shaped structure and semi-circular bench embedded with pottery shards and stones remain and are a testament to Wildenhain's ingenuity. On axis with the simple wood steps that exit the east side of the barn is the rectangular structure, which may have been a barbecue. Beyond this structure is the curved bench which faces the barn.

The barbecue is brick with sections of concrete in which are embedded some glazed and fired ceramic pieces, most with bas-relief patterns. A couple of them are a few inches across. There are also broken bits of pottery and stones, completing the mosaic. The bench appears to have been made of concrete. Embedded into it are several pieces of glazed and fired ceramic, as well as stones. One of the larger and complete ceramic pieces is an oval shape, a few inches across, with a blue glaze. Dorothy Herger thought some pottery pieces had been made by Wildenhain, but that others were the work of students.<sup>14</sup> The bench is in good condition and the barbecue is in fair condition.

#### **Wood Deck**

Currently a simple wood deck is located next to the back wall of the barn. It is made of boards and plywood and is in poor condition. A 1950s era photograph shows a lattice covered picnic bench, gravel paving, an area of lush plants near the door,<sup>15</sup> but no wood deck. It is assumed that Wildenhain added the deck sometime after the photograph was taken but the date is not known. This area was used for breaks and sometimes for drawing lessons.<sup>16</sup> According to Parks worker Laura Parent, a lattice cover over the deck was removed when the building was reroofed in the 1990s.<sup>17</sup>

#### **L-shaped wood bench**

Nearby, at the edge of the slope to the creek, is a simple L-shaped wood bench which hugs the trunk of a large bay tree. The bench has partially slipped down

---

<sup>14</sup> According to Dorothy Herger, Wildenhain used some student ceramic pieces in these objects. (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>15</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>16</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

<sup>17</sup> (Parent, Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation 2013)

the bank.

#### Screen

At the northeast corner of the barn there had been a sort of wood screen or tall fence made of wood posts, wire and tree branches. An undated photo shows it had been decorated with pieces of gourd-like pots;<sup>18</sup> it is now a screen of vertical pickets. A gate was previously located next to the screen, but is no longer extant.

#### Wildenhain's House and Surrounding Features

The main house and the landscape surrounding it were for Wildenhain's private use. The house was constructed downhill of the barn and is a very simple one-story wooden structure. A partially enclosed storage area occupies the lower area below the house where the grade falls away at the southern edge. Wildenhain erected fences around the house. Visitors would have entered a richly planted and decorated area, with a concrete pathway studded with bits of pottery and stones leading to an outdoor gathering place near the front door of the house. The gathering place contained a simple wood arbor and wood table with several chairs, and a small brick barbecue. Originally, dense plantings partially obscured the house from the driveway and barn.

#### Arbor

The arbor is centered on the front kitchen window. 4" x 4" posts are located to each side of the window, about 8 feet apart. A second set of posts is set about thirteen feet away with a third set of 2" x 8" posts located an additional eight feet away. 2" x 4" beams connect the posts. Some 1" x 2" wood cross ties remain, but many are missing. According to several accounts by students and visitors, Wildenhain often sat and entertained under the arbor at a simple wood table.<sup>19</sup> The table is not extant.<sup>20</sup> The arbor is in poor condition.

#### Paving Embedded with Pottery Pieces and the Bridge

Paving is in place around the entrance to Wildenhain's house, as well as the garden and arbor areas. The paving is concrete into which are embedded various objects, including glazed and fired pottery pieces, stones (a few are polished), bits of brick, and sea shells. Some ceramic pieces are incised with pattern and portions of pots or vases also appear, occasionally bearing the stamp of Pond Farm Pottery. The paving extends from the front door into the garden near the barbecue and a short distance towards the gate opening that faces the barn. It extends under the arbor. To the west, it meets a small concrete bridge and extends past it a short distance. The small, slightly curved, 33" x 56" concrete "bridge" crosses over a shallow drainage swale.

---

<sup>18</sup> (Unknown n.d.)

<sup>19</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>20</sup> (Herger, Interview 2012)

Barbecue at main house

A very small brick and stone barbecue is near the entry to the main house and the arbor. It is simple construction of stacked bricks.

### **Guest House**

The guest house, dating to 1962, is a small and utilitarian one-story wood structure. It is currently used as State Parks' staff housing. The house has a rural appearance with mown naturally-occurring grasses surrounding it. Current occupants have placed potted plants, contemporary barbecues, and picnic tables nearby.

### **Integrity and Condition**

The property retains a strong level of historic integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, in spite of the poor condition of the barn and the main house. Some garden plants remain, but many are now gone. Circulation patterns are still visible. Many garden structures remain, but most are in poor condition.

History: Pond Farm Pottery was established by Wildenhain in 1953. Prior to that date it had been a portion of a much larger parcel, part of the site of an ambitious project by Gordon and Jane Herr to establish an art colony and school. That school was known as Pond Farm Workshops.

### **Prehistoric Context**

Prior to homesteaders settling this land, Pond Farm and environs were under the control of the Kashaya or Southwestern Pomo. The Kashaya were small in number; according to Russian accounts there were about 1,200 in the early 1800s. They lived in semi-permanent villages and camped on the ridges surrounding Pond Farm when travelling on trading expeditions. Large, prehistoric occupation areas are located throughout the vicinity, and lithic scatters are located on the Pond Farm Pottery property.<sup>21</sup>

### **Walker Era – Chronology of the Property**

The property was acquired by land patent in 1875 by Leonidas Walker; the family lived on the land prior to that date. The Walkers initially owned 160 acres, and added to the land in 1876. They called their land Rancho Del Lago.<sup>22</sup> John and Eva Walker eventually inherited the ranch from Leonidas Walker. The Walkers raised cows and sheep, but seem to have maintained a small operation. They also maintained orchards. Sometime in the 1870s, they constructed the barn that later became the Pond Farm Pottery studio space. They constructed a house and small shepherd's cabin, along with a hay barn, chicken coop, ice

---

<sup>21</sup> (Parkman, Senior State Archaeologist 2012)

<sup>22</sup> (Herr 2007)

house, wells, cisterns, and various outbuildings.<sup>23</sup>

### **Herr Era – Chronology of the Property**

The property remained in the Walker family until 1939, when John and Eva Walker sold most of it to Gordon and Jane Herr. The Herrs bought the land with the intention of creating an experimental art colony; it was not until after WWII that they succeeded in this goal. Prior to WWII, the Herrs travelled to Europe to begin talking with artisans about the possibility of the school, and it was during this trip that they met Marguerite and Frans Wildenhain.<sup>24</sup>

The Herrs named the property for a fish-shaped pond that had been created by the Walkers and they began making improvements to the land in 1942, with the intention of creating the art colony and school. Their idealistic vision for the school incorporated a lifestyle grounded by a close association with the earth. The school was located far enough away from major cities to provide the quiet introspection they wished to provide teachers and students, but close enough to a major city (San Francisco) to provide markets for their products.

Gordon, an architect, designed and built a small house for his family,<sup>25</sup> locating it a short distance northwest of the Walker's farmhouse. Wildenhain moved to the property in that same year, and Herr designed Wildenhain's cottage. Herr also remodeled the barn, transforming it into a studio space. Wildenhain assisted in the construction efforts. Their efforts may have been limited by minimal funding as well as war-time shortages of building supplies.

During this time, the Herrs practiced farming. After the war they and Wildenhain persuaded some European artisans to relocate to Pond Farm to participate in the Pond Farm Workshops. Herr remodeled additional buildings on his property for use as working and living spaces. Wildenhain and Gordon enlarged Wildenhain's house, per Gordon's design, adding a bedroom, sitting room, bathroom and mud porch, in anticipation of the arrival of Marguerite Wildenhain's husband, Frans Wildenhain. Frans, metalworker Victor Ries, and weaver Trude (Jalowetz) Guermonprez arrived in 1949.<sup>26</sup> Herr designed and built the "Hexagon House" and several modern, simple cottages near the entrance to Armstrong Woods for use by students.<sup>27</sup>

Additional artists joined the school, which began to generate interest right away. "Two weeks after its opening, Pond Farm was the subject of an issue of *The*

---

<sup>23</sup> (Parkman 2007))

<sup>24</sup> The use of the name "Wildenhain" refers to Marguerite. To distinguish Marguerite from Frans, Frans Wildenhain's last name will only occur with his last name.

<sup>25</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>26</sup> (D. B. Sessions, *Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance* 1997)

<sup>27</sup> (T. T. Steele, *Hexagon House: Home to Pond Farm Workshops* n.d.)

*Christian Science Monitor* which stated that the Workshops were to crafts what Tanglewood was to music.”<sup>28</sup>

Then Jane Herr died in 1952. She had provided funds and organizational skills for the school. The school’s functions collapsed due to Jane’s death, but also due to disagreements about the management of the school. After the school ended, everyone but Marguerite Wildenhain left the property. In 1956, Gordon sold Wildenhain several acres of land containing the barn, Marguerite’s house, and a sheepherder’s cottage. Herr continued to own the land nearby, which he continued to visit, until the property was acquired as part of the creation of Austin Creek State Recreation Area in 1963.<sup>29</sup>

### **Wildenhain Era – Chronology of the Property**

In 1942 when Marguerite Wildenhain moved to Pond Farm there was not a suitable dwelling for her, so she camped outdoors for much of the summer. Wildenhain assisted Gordon Herr in remodeling the barn and constructing her one-room cottage.

Wildenhain also began improving the property, building a series of low rock retaining walls, hauling manure and planting vegetables, fruit trees and shrubs.<sup>30</sup> Water for the house and garden was pumped from Fife Creek and stored in wooden tanks.<sup>31</sup> Later, a well was dug and water piped to the studio and cabin.

Installation of the kiln occurred during that first year, and Wildenhain produced work for sale as quickly as possible. Once the Workshops began, Wildenhain was an active member of the school in its short duration, 1949 to 1952. Following the failure of the Workshops, Wildenhain continued producing wares and she began teaching her intensive summer workshops at the property; these summer sessions became legendary in the ceramics world.

In 1956, Marguerite Wildenhain purchased land from Gordon Herr that contained the barn/studio, her house, the sheepherder’s cottage, and her gardens. She erected a wood fence around the northern end of the property shortly thereafter (which is also the enclosed area today) and installed the Pond Farm Pottery sign over the auto entry.<sup>32</sup> She had been using the converted chicken house as a studio and she moved the kickwheels from the chicken house, on

---

<sup>28</sup> (T. T. Steele, *School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge* 1992)

<sup>29</sup> (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2003)

<sup>30</sup> (Houston 1968)

<sup>31</sup> (G. H. Steele 2007)

<sup>32</sup> Wildenhain also authored several articles and spoke at symposia and conferences. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, she was invited to speak at Dartington Hall in England in 1952, and in 1963 she was the keynote speaker for the National Art Education Association conference.

Herr's property, to the larger studio in the barn and added additional kickwheels.<sup>33</sup> In 1962, Wildenhain hired architect Albert Lanier to remodel her house and to design the guest house; the guest house took the place of the shepherd's cottage.

In 1963 the State of California forced the purchase of several hundred acres of land to create Austin Creek State Recreation Area, and the Herr and Wildenhain properties were part of the purchase. The purchase of Wildenhain's property was completed in 1966. Wildenhain was allowed to remain, as a tenant, until her death.<sup>34</sup> The Walker farmhouse, a chicken barn that had been converted to a pottery and weaving studio, the Herr's house, and various other small buildings and agricultural outbuildings were demolished by State Parks, beginning in 1964.<sup>35</sup> Wildenhain continued to teach and work at the property. She installed a second kiln in the 1970s. Wildenhain taught her final summer workshop in 1980. The barn/studio, Wildenhain's house, and her guest cottage remain as potent reminders of Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery.

#### **Brief History of Marguerite Wildenhain**

Marguerite Wildenhain, née Friedlaender, was a nationally, even internationally, significant ceramist and teacher. Wildenhain introduced Bauhaus techniques and philosophies, which were rooted in generations-deep European traditions, to American students. Arriving in the United States in 1940 at the age of 45, she began working at Pond Farm in 1942 and teaching at the property in 1949. The kiln was last fired in 1980. Wildenhain continued to live at the property until her death in 1985. Pond Farm Pottery remains as the site most strongly associated with Wildenhain and her contributions to American arts and crafts.

Marguerite Friedlaender was born near Lyon, France, in 1896. Her father, Theodor Friedlaender, was born in Berlin. He was a silk merchant who traveled extensively. Marguerite was raised in a well-educated and influential family.<sup>36</sup> Wildenhain's mother, Rose Calman, was English and was raised in Germany. The family heritage was Jewish, but they were secular.<sup>37</sup> As a child, Friedlaender attended schools in Lyon, Berlin, and Yorkshire. When she was 17, she attended the Berlin School of Applied Arts and later studied sculpture, porcelain decoration, and pot-throwing.<sup>38</sup> In 1919 she was one of the first students to join the Bauhaus, and she was the first female to join the Bauhaus ceramics school in

---

<sup>33</sup> (Herger, Interview 1989)

<sup>34</sup> (Pettersen 1977)

<sup>35</sup> (Parent, Personal Communication 2012)

<sup>36</sup> (Schwarz and Schwarz, Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology 2007)

<sup>37</sup> (Rosen 2007)

<sup>38</sup> (Winnicke 2007)

Weimar.<sup>39</sup> Bauhaus students at this time began by taking preparatory classes at the Weimar school before apprenticing in pottery. The pottery school was established in Dornburg at the Krehan Pottery works, a centuries' old family workshop.<sup>40</sup> There Friedlaender experienced the Bauhaus method of intensive instruction from two instructors,<sup>41</sup> one versed in craft (the *Werkmeister*) and one versed in art, or form (a *Formmeister*). Her instructors were a Master Potter, Max Krehan, and a Master Sculptor, Gerhard Marcks.<sup>42</sup>

Friedlaender was the first woman in Germany to achieve Master Potter status; she was awarded the title in 1926.<sup>43</sup> She was made the head of the German State Arts and Crafts School in Burg Giebichenstein at Halle where she established an excellent reputation for her work and that of the school. Friedlaender re-organized and then ran the ceramics workshop at Burg Giebichenstein between 1926 and 1933.<sup>44</sup> She recalled, "Halle had become the first place in which the principles of the Bauhaus had been put to the test... Soon Burg Giebichenstein was to be known all over Europe for the high quality of its craft work."<sup>45</sup> In January of 1929 the work exhibited under and by Friedlaender received very high praise, and it is notable that even at this stage Friedlaender's work and that of those learning from her showed the qualities of artistic integrity and beauty that she became known for in the United States, even though her American work has a very different character.

Friedlaender married fellow potter Frans Wildenhain in 1930, taking his last name. Wildenhain's European career was interrupted by Nazi pressure to leave the school in Germany. She fled to Holland in 1930, with Frans following later. They reestablished their careers there, opening the "Little Jug" pottery. By 1940, Nazis again threatened, and she boarded one of the last Dutch ships to depart the war-time harbor. Due to her French citizenship, she was able to secure a passport; Frans could not and he was conscripted into the German army. They lost contact for seven years. After brief stays in New York and a short teaching experience in Oakland, Wildenhain moved to Pond Farm.

After Wildenhain installed a kiln at Pond Farm, she produced wares that sold in San Francisco, Chicago, and Dallas. Her work evolved into more expressive styles. She began teaching at Pond Farm in the first year of the Workshops,

---

<sup>39</sup> (Minnesota 1988)

<sup>40</sup> (G. Schwarz 2007)

<sup>41</sup> (Anderson, *Bauhaus and the Crisis of Modernism*, by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007) 2007)

<sup>42</sup> Both men exerted tremendous influence on Wildenhain. Krehan died in 1925. Wildenhain retained a close relationship with Marcks until his death in 1981

<sup>43</sup> (Wildenhain, *Archives of American Art Interview, Transcript 63* 1982)

<sup>44</sup> (Wildenhain, *Archives of American Art Interview, Transcript 63* 1982)

<sup>45</sup> (Kittel 2007)

training students in Bauhaus techniques of throwing and decorating pots. Her kickwheels were slightly modified from the centuries-old wheels of traditional German kickwheels, and these wheels and techniques helped revolutionize throwing techniques around the United States.

She taught the intensive rite-of-passage summer workshop from 1943 until 1980. Beginning in 1952 she visited schools and universities around the country to lecture and to demonstrate her skills, which were considered remarkable. She authored three books and wrote articles. She became a prominent spokesperson for the emerging Studio Pottery Movement in the United States.

Through her workshops, writing, and personal example she maintained the Bauhaus ideals of truth to materials and attention to form; these were ideals that had far-reaching effects in the American Studio Pottery movement. She was noted for her insistence on making the human expression visible in the work.<sup>46</sup> Wildenhain's work underwent a sustained evolution and she was recognized, across the country, for her technique as well as the beauty of her work.

In 1980, Wildenhain's work was the subject of an art show featured in three states; the catalog stated: "The internationally known Pond Farm Pottery School has attracted students from as far away as China, India, Lebanon, and Nigeria. No other craft school in the United States has had greater cultural significance, or has done more to elevate standards in the field of pottery."<sup>47</sup> And in the foreword to a catalog for a major museum retrospective in 1980, this statement was made:

Once in a while an artist reaches the undisputed stature of master. Just how or when one arrives at such a level is impossible to determine, yet recognition of it is usually unanimous and undisputed. Marguerite Wildenhain has achieved that eminence in the field of pottery. By now generations of American potters owe their attitudes and techniques to the teacher at Pond Farm in northern California.<sup>48</sup>

Sources: Anderson, David. "Bauhaus and the Crisis of Modernism." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 61-79. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Haskins, Dale, interview by Russ Whitman and Al Willis. *Ranger, California Department of Parks and Recreation Pond Farm*, (Oct. 31, 1996): Haskins, Ranger Dale. Interview by Russ Whitman and Al Willis. Pond Farm, CA. October 31, 1996.

---

<sup>46</sup> (Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* 1973)

<sup>47</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

<sup>48</sup> (Press and Weihs 1980)

Herger, Dorothy, interview by Susan Alvarez. *Interview* Herger residence, Vallejo, (Nov. 9, 1989).

Herger, Dorothy, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Interview* (May 9, 2012).

Herger, Dorothy, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Interview with author* Vallejo, CA, (Jan. 11, 2009).

Herr, Gordon. "Letters from Europe, 1939." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 268-280. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Herr, Jane Brandenstein. "Letters from Pond Farm, 1941-1952." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 283-293. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Herr, Jonathon Guthrie. "Love, Because Nothing Else Matters." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 314-336. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Houston, James D. "'Marguerite Wildenhain & Pond Farm.'" *Per/Se*, Summer 1968: 47-55.

Kittel, Hubert. "From the Bauhaus to Burg Giebichenstein." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 170-179. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Minnesota, University of, ed. "American Studio Ceramics, 1920-1950: An Exhibition." *Minneapolis : University Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1988 . 105 p. : , Catalog of an exhibition held Nov. 10, 1988-Jan. 8, 1989, at the University Art Museum of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Apr. 12, 1989-Jan. 6, 1991, at. Minneapolis: University Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1988.*

Page & Turnbull, Inc. "HABS-Format Report: Pond Farm Pottery Studio." HABS Format Historical Report, Guerneville, 2003.

Page & Turnbull, Inc. "Pond Farm Pottery Studio HSR." Historic Structures Report, 2003.

Parent, Laura, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation Austin Creek S.R.A.*, Guerneville, CA, (Sept. 8, 2008).

Parent, Laura, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Parks Maintenance Worker I, California Department of Parks and Recreation* (Mar. 27, 2013).

Parkman, E. Breck. "Pond Farm Time: 9000 Years of Archaeological Significance." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 24-38. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Parkman, E. Breck, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Senior State Archaeologist* (Dec. 4, 2012).

Petterson, Richard B. "Marguerite Wildenhain." *Ceramics Monthly*, Mar. 1977: 21-28.

Press, Nancy Neumann, and Terry Faith Anderson Weihs. "Marguerite: A Retrospective Exhibition of the Work of Master Potter Marguerite Wildenhain." Itahca, NY: Herbert E. Johnson Museum of Art, 1980.

Rosen, Lia Lynn. "Hard Work and Hard Won Freedom." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 205-255. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Schwarz, Dean, and Geraldine Schwarz. *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Schwarz, Geraldine. "Five Women Remember the Dornburg Bauhaus." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 111-126. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Sessions, Dr. Billie. "Marguerite Wildenhain: A Woman of Choice Substance." *History of Art Education: Proceedings of the Third Penn State International Symposium*. The Art Education Program, School of Visual Arts, The Pennsylvania State University, 1997. 129-137.

Steele, Gail Herr. "A Daughter's Perspective." In *In Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 297-301. Decorah: South Bear Press, 2007.

Steele, Tim Tivol, interview by Janet Gracyk. *Personal communication*. (Jan. 14, 2009).

Steele, Tim Tivoli. "Hexagon House: Home to Pond Farm Workshops." In *In Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 338-356. Decorah: South Bear Press.

Steele, Tim Tivoli. "School of the Pond Farm Workshops: An Artists' Refuge." *A Report: From the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum* 10, no. 2 (1992).

Unknown. "Pond Farm Workshops." *Arts & Architecture*, December 1949: 23-25.

—. "Various Slides of Pond Farm Pottery." Guerneville, CA: Owned by Russian River/ Mendocino District, California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Wildenhain, Marguerite, interview by Hazel Bray. *Archives of American Art Interview, Transcript 63* Archives of American Art, (Mar. 14, 1982).

—. *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts*. Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1973.

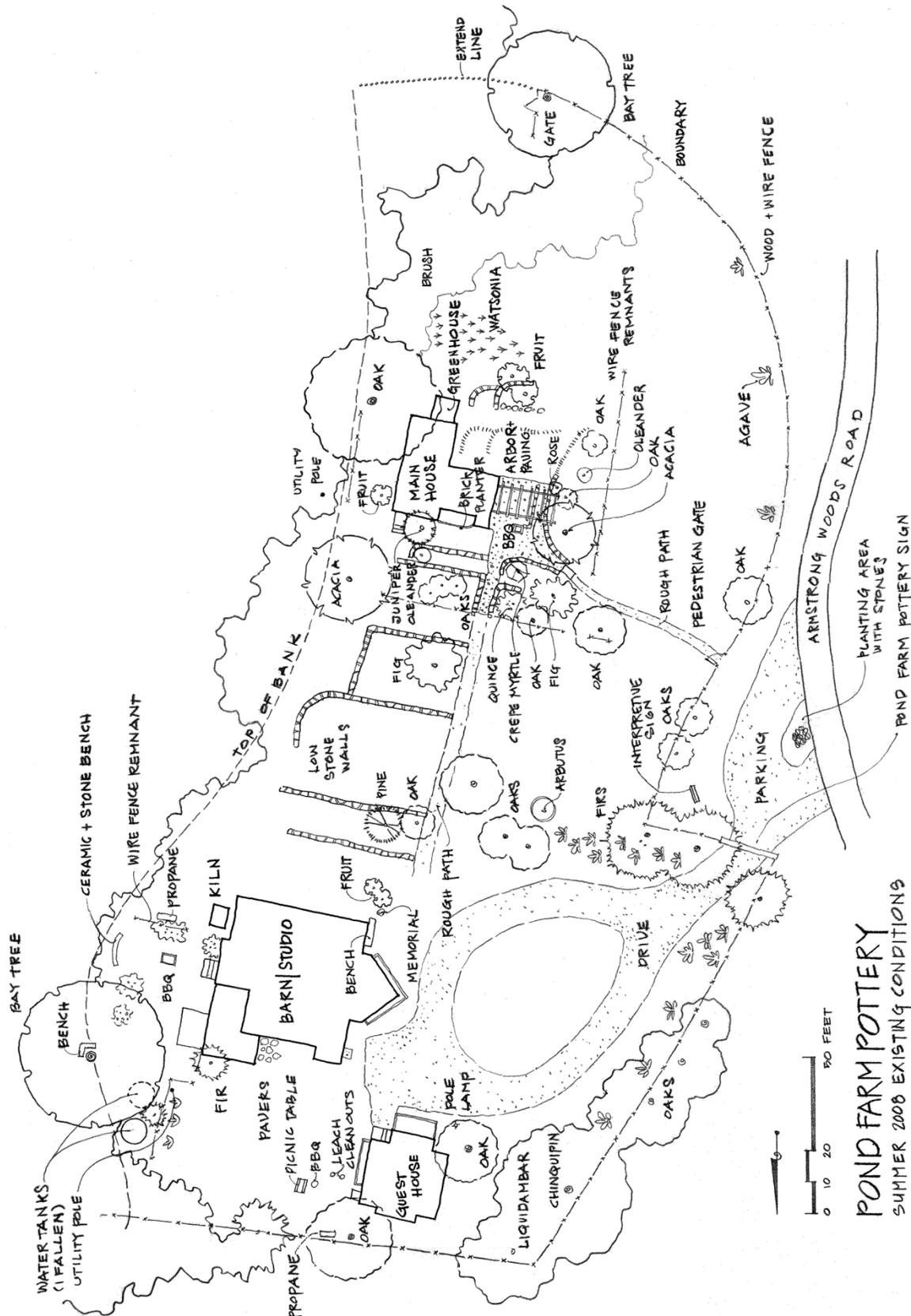
Winnicke, Winfried. "Focal Point Berlin." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, edited by Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, 217-221. Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007.

Historian: Janet Gracyk, RLA 5491, ASLA

Terra Cognita Design and Consulting  
145 Keller Street  
Petaluma, CA 94952

July 24, 2013

2013 HALS Challenge Entry: *Documenting the Cultural Landscapes of Women*



POND FARM POTTERY  
SUMMER 2008 EXISTING CONDITIONS



The sign over the entry drive is a replica of the original. View is roughly northeast. (Janet Gracyk, Nov. 5, 2008).



View of barn with guest house visible to the left. Agaves and a volunteer fir tree are visible to the right. View to the east. (Janet Gracyk, Nov. 5, 2008).



The barbecue and curved bench are located behind the barn. A tributary of Fife Creek is beyond the bench. View roughly to the east. (Janet Gracyk, Nov. 5, 2008).



The outdoor seating area in front of Marguerite Wildenhain's house is deteriorating, but retains original elements, including the barbecue and tile-embedded paving. The path beyond leads through the (remnant) fence to the barn and guesthouse. View to the north. (Janet Gracyk, Jan. 16, 2009).

ADDENDUM TO:  
POND FARM POTTERY  
(Pond Farm Workshops)  
17000 Armstrong Woods Road  
Guerneville  
Sonoma County  
California

HALS CA-95  
*HALS CA-95*

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001