

**CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK**  
**HISTORIC BACKGROUND STUDY & HISTORIC INVENTORY**



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Cover Photograph: Ralph M. Dyar Family on Horseback in Front of Dyar House, ca. 1925  
Southern Service Center Historic Photograph Collection

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## INTRODUCTION

This is an overview of the historic events, locations, and individuals who contributed to Cuyamaca Rancho State Park's historical development. It seeks to facilitate the placement of the park's historic resources into their proper historic context, periods and themes.

### EARLY EXPLORATION PERIOD—1769-1825

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park's first historical period begins during the latter period of European exploration and settlement along North America's west coast. Specifically, it is tied to Imperial Spain's attempts to create a presence in Alta (Upper) California to ward off potential incursions by rival European powers. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the present parkland was under the military and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Spanish Presidio and Mission San Diego de Alcalá. Founded respectively on May 14 and July 16, 1769, they were originally located near the mouth of the San Diego River on a hillside overlooking the Native American village of Cosoy.<sup>1</sup> Although the Spanish would later relocate the mission six miles east, the fortified compound or *presidio* served as a base of operations for between twenty to thirty horse-mounted Spanish troopers whose patrol area included the Cuyamaca Mountain region.<sup>2</sup> The Spanish missionaries reportedly directed local neophytes to cut down and haul large timbers from the Cuyamaca Mountain area for use in the construction of Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1813. Scars visible along the west side of North Peak in 1975 were thought to have been the result of this and subsequent logging activities during the Spanish Mission Period.<sup>3</sup>

The first reported contact between Spanish colonials and the local Kumeyaay in the Cuyamaca Mountains reportedly occurred on October 29, 1772, when then-Captain Pedro Fages, military governor of Alta California, was leading a troop of twenty mounted horsemen across the Cuyamaca Mountains in pursuit of military deserters from the San Diego presidio. Following well-trodden Kumeyaay trails, Fages trekked through Green and Cuyamaca Valleys. He and his troop continued eastward down Oriflamme Canyon into what is now the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Instead of returning, he then pioneered what historian Herbert E. Bolton described as "one of the major discoveries of the Spanish [California] period: a trail northwest to the San Joaquín Valley westward to Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. A section of the Fages Trail through today's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park would become the basis of the nationally significant 1774-1776 Juan Bautista de Anza Trail. Ten years later, in April 1782, now Lt. Colonel Fages retraced his steps westward back over the Cuyamacas while returning from Sonora. Fages' diary entry for April 19, 1782 contained the first recorded description of what is now Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. He described an area containing "numerous groves of

pine and other trees..., a great deal of pasture in the canyons between the hills on either hand, and plenty of water."<sup>4</sup>

Forty-three years later, in 1825, after California had become a Mexican territory, Alférez (Sub-Lieutenant) Santiago Argüello of the San Diego Presidio "rediscovered" the Fages Trail, reestablishing a direct official overland mail and immigrant route between San Diego and settlements along the Colorado River and then on to Sonora, Mexico.<sup>5</sup>

### **EI RANCHO CUYAMACA—1821-1848**

After 1821, the Cuyamaca area, along with the rest of Alta California, eventually came under the influence the newly independent Republic of Mexican. Prior to Mexican Independence, Native Americans living in the area had remained a relatively autonomous, well-armed force resistant to religious conversion. However, the steady encroachment of Mexican ranching and military activities into their traditional hunting/gathering areas pressured San Diego's backcountry tribes to rebel in a series of loosely coordinated hit-and-run attacks against local ranchos. The worst of which was a particularly brutal raid on Rancho Jamúl in April 1837. A punitive expedition consisting of northern Baja California frontier soldiers and their Native allies cornered and brutally chastised the suspected raiders in Cuyamaca Valley between Lake Cuyamaca and the *ranchería* or village of *Ah-ha-kwe-ah-mac*. The so-called "Battle of Cuyamaca" reportedly ended Native American resistance to Mexican authority in San Diego's mountainous backcountry, eventually opening the land to further exploitation.<sup>6</sup>

Eight years later, in 1845, Mexican California Governor Pío Pico granted a "tract known as *Cuyamaca* [consisting] of 11 leagues, more or less" to his nephew by marriage, Agustín Olvera. Don Olvera, a prominent figure in Los Angeles (Olvera Street in Downtown Los Angeles is named in his honor), was an absentee owner. While Olvera did not personally use the grant as range land, he permitted neighboring rancheros to do so. Sometime around 1846 Don Olvera sent his agent, Cesario Walker, to manage and exploit the rancho's natural resources, particularly its forests. Walker erected an adobe hut and sawmill in Green Valley near the confluence of Cold Stream Creek and the Sweetwater River. However, in a last act of defiance, the following year Natives from the nearby *Mitaraguí* *ranchería*, according to Walker, "made a kind of revolution" and forced him out of the area. Their victory was temporary, though; geo-political events were taking place that would have a profound effect upon their ancestral homeland.<sup>7</sup>

## AMERICAN HOMESTEADING/RANCHING PERIOD—1856 -1890

Between 1846 and 1848, the United States and the Republic of Mexico were engaged in a short, but bloody war. Although a few minor skirmishes were fought in California, the majority of the fighting occurred in Mexico. With the capitulation of Mexican forces and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, the United States government acquired most of the American southwest and western territories, including all of California. As a result, the majority of the area's residents technically became citizens of the United States. However, those owning property had to substantiate their claims with the United States Land Commission. Many, like Ramón Osuna, 1846 grandee of the neighboring *Rancho Valle de las Viejas*, could not, and were forced to relinquish their claims. Others, like Don Olvera, were mired in decades of litigation.<sup>8</sup>

Taking advantage of the situation was James Ruler Lassator, who "purchased" 160 acres of land in Green Valley from a local Native American chief in 1857. A North Carolina émigré, Lassator and his sons had erected a sod house along the Southern Emigrant Trail at Vallecito. The former Sonora Road, the trail was an important travel corridor for settlers traveling northward to Los Angeles and San Francisco. Indeed, Lassator used his Green Valley homestead, which included a new stone house, to grow and harvest hay and barley, which he slid down Oriflamme Canyon on sleds to sell at Mason Valley and Vallecito. Built on the site of Cesario Walker's adobe and the former Mitaraguí ranchería, the Lassator home was the first permanent dwelling in what is now Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. It was also the first built of native stones gathered on site, a local tradition that would last well into modern times. After Lassator's death in 1865, his widow Sarah Mulkins Lassator successfully filed a petition to homestead their Green Valley ranch. She duly transferred title to her son, John Mulkins, who continued to raise sheep, cattle, and horses on the ranch, and grew fields of wheat and barley. The Lassator/Mulkins ranch was in operation until sometime after 1880. In 1881 the Lockhardt family reportedly built a wood frame house next to the abandoned stone house, the stones of which were later incorporated into the 1924-built Dyar House.<sup>9</sup>

One of the recipients of Lassators' hay and barley was James E. Birch's *San Antonio and San Diego* mail line. Between 1857 and 1860, the line, the first official federally subsidized overland mail route between the east and west coasts, utilized the Lassators' Vallecito sod house as a rest stop. Instead of continuing along the Southern Emigrant Trail to Warner's Ranch, mail and passengers continued on mules up the Lassators' "Hay Road" through Oriflamme Canyon along the old Fages Trail into Cuyamaca and Green Valleys. The "Jackass Trail" then passed conveniently by Lassator's stone house, which the mail line utilized as its headquarters, rest stop, and *mulada*, an area to store its mules.

From here, the mail line continued along the Fages Trail through the rest of Green Valley to the Little Guatay Valley, then down the Viejas Grade, eventually reaching San Diego.<sup>10</sup>

Another of Lassitor's customers whom he supplied feed and let use of his Vallecito place was the mail line's rival, the *Butterfield Overland Stage Company*, another stage coach company that ran along the Emigrant Trail. Competition with the latter forced the Jackass Trail mail line's abandonment in 1860. However, the reopening of the historic San Diego Road through the Cuyamacas initiated a wave of settlers and ranchers attracted to the area's rich pasturage to farm and raise livestock. In an attempt to hedge off further squatters like Lassator and his stepson John Mulkins, who would later obtain clear title to their homestead, and to pay off legal debts, in 1869 Don Olvera began selling off parcels himself. He sold a third of what was left of his original 335,501-acre rancho to Isaac Hartman, and the remainder to Samuel Stewart. The latter sold ½ of his portion to Robert Allison, ¼ to John Treat, and another ¼ to Allison and Juan Luco. Treat, who settled in an area southwest of Lake Cuyamaca, between Middle and Cuyamaca Peaks, established the Milk Cattle Ranch, where he raised prized Durham cattle and horses. Treat and Allison also operated a sawmill on Cuyamaca Mountain's southern flanks.<sup>11</sup>

Allison and Treat were the only two ranchers who lived entirely on former rancho land. Southwest of the rancho, a man identified only as Chase reportedly homesteaded a ranch west of Allison near Descanso in what was then known as "Little Guatay Valley." It is not known if his ranch became part of CRSP's later Merigan Ranch Acquisition. Chase may have been neighbors with or parceled out his ranch to subsequent homestead families, who by 1890 had supplanted the local Native Americans. The latter had been reduced from fifty to eighty families due to a smallpox epidemic and other factors. Among the new homesteaders were Trinidad Rodriguez, Julian Sandoval, Moses Manasse, James Flinn, and Gavino Aguilar. The Sandovals raised barley and grazed horses, mules, and cows. Their adobe ranch house was an important stopover for mail and coach runs between Guatay Valley and San Diego, and was often used as an election polling place of which his neighbor, Gavino Aguilar officiated. Moses Manasse raised mules, hogs, and cattle on his ranch in the western part of Guatay Valley.<sup>12</sup>

### **STONEWALL GOLD MINE AND CUYAMACA CITY—1870-1917**

While the former rancho's ownership was in flux, around 1869 a former Black slave, Fred Coleman, discovered placer gold in a creek outside the rancho's northeastern boundary. Soon hundreds of gold-seekers flocking to the area created the boom town of Julian. Coinciding with the discovery and exploitation of the Julian and nearby Banner gold

fields, English immigrant Charles Hensley reportedly found quartz gold at the headwaters of Boulder Creek overlooking the dry lake in Cuyamaca Valley. Christened the "Stonewall Jackson Mine," miners digging into the hard quartz bedrock discovered a rich gold vein. By 1872 the mine reportedly produced a total of \$10,000 of gold bullion that year.<sup>13</sup>

As gold ore was being taken out of the mine's 140-foot-deep shaft, as many as 12 individuals, including Hartman, Stewart, Allison, Treat, and Luco, claimed to own the land on which the mine operated. The latter five had failed previously to "float" the former Cuyamaca Rancho's northern boundary to include the Julian gold fields. By December 1871, the number of claimants to the Stonewall Jackson Mine had whittled down to only two: Almon Frary, Sr. and Joseph Farley. Frary and Farley continued to operate until January 1876, when it was shut down due to insufficient operating capital.<sup>14</sup>

The Stonewall Jackson Mine remained idle until September 1886, when Lieutenant and later Governor Robert W. Waterman purchased the two parcels on which the mine was located and an additional 26,000 acres of the former Rancho Cuyamaca grant. An experienced and successful San Bernardino County mine owner and operator, Governor Waterman had the capital to bring major modern improvements to the mine. Placing his son Waldo S. Waterman as superintendent in charge of the *Stonewall Mine* (Waterman dropped the "Jackson"), these improvements included the building of a large sawmill and lumberyard, which allowed for the shoring up of new mineshafts and the building of larger hoist and ore processing buildings.<sup>15</sup>

A number of local private sawmills provided additional lumber and firewood for the mine. One of these was operated by Robert Allison on nearby Cuyamaca Peak. The other, operated by William Shaw, was situated in an area known as "the Pinery" on North Peak. In operation since 1870, both had originally provided roughly cut green lumber for the mines and town at Julian.<sup>16</sup>

The Cuyamaca sawmills also provided lumber that went into housing and support structures for the Stonewall mine's supervisors and employees. Situated amongst the hillocks between the mine and the dry lake, this self-sufficient hamlet, known as "Cuyamaca City," reportedly had a hilltop reservoir, general store, post office, a "fine-looking" house for the superintendent and his family; as well as between 20 to 24 worker cottages, bunkhouses, and a boarding house—which became a hotel. It also contained two separate barns and corrals to hold livestock needed at the mine. In addition, the Watermans donated \$600 for a schoolhouse that reportedly had 19 pupils from the town as well as nearby ranches ranging in ages between 5 and 17 years. After classes, the



schoolhouse served as the town's social center, with regularly held dances. Governor Waterman also funded and donated books for the creation of the Cuyamaca Reading Club. Because it was a "dry" town, some employees took the road up to Julian to frequent its many saloons.<sup>17</sup>

It is not known if Cuyamaca City had a church, but it did have a cemetery which allegedly still contains the remains of fourteen individuals. Among these are Joseph McLane, an alcoholic miner who drank himself to death; Jerome Macdonald, a sawmill worker crushed by a rolling log; and a young burn victim.<sup>18</sup>

Concurrent with the development of the Stonewall Mine and Cuyamaca City was the development of the nearby Lake Cuyamaca Reservoir. In 1886, Theodore S. Van Dyke and others formed the *San Diego Flume Company*, which began construction of a 35 foot high by 750-foot long dam across the western end of Cuyamaca Valley on Boulder Creek. The concrete and rock core earthen dam was built to contain over 4 million gallons of water in a reservoir covering over 1,300 acres. The water from the dam flowed down Boulder Creek and along a 35.6-mile long wooden trestle flume system to the town of La Mesa. From here it connected to a pipeline of the *San Diego And Coronado Water Company*, which sold water to the City of San Diego. In 1910 land developers James A. Murray and Ed Fletcher purchased the flume company and expanded it into the *Cuyamaca Water Company*. Sixteen years later, the *La Mesa, Lemon Grove and Spring Valley Irrigation District* (now the Helix Water District) purchased the system for \$1,201,980. Controversy over who owned the rights to the San Diego River's waters resulted in years of acrimonious litigation. Today the County of San Diego operates the reservoir as part of the Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District, offering recreational fishing from boat or dock.<sup>19</sup>

Although it is outside the current State Park's boundary and administration, the Cuyamaca Dam and Reservoir have impacted Cuyamaca Rancho State Park's historic landscape. As the reservoir filled, it covered an earlier earthen dam erected by the Stonewall Jackson Mine's original owners. Known originally as "*La Laguna que se Seca*" or "the lake that would go dry," water impounded by the dam had been used primarily to provide steam for the mine engine's boilers. As the new reservoir filled in, the hillocks where the Stonewall Mine and the adjacent Cuyamaca City became part of a peninsula jutting into the new lake. The reservoir was reportedly one of the causes of the mine's eventual closing. Groundwater seeping into the 630-foot-deep mineshafts became more and more difficult and expensive to pump out.<sup>20</sup>

While one of the richest gold mines in Southern California, eventually producing about \$1 million in gold bullion, the Stonewall Mine's operations began to decline after Governor Waterman passed away in April 1891. The Sather Bank of San Francisco foreclosed on a mortgage it held against the Cuyamaca ranch and other Waterman properties in San Bernardino. These and other factors led Waldo S. Waterman to close the mine. In December, he was forced to sell the mine along with the ranch to satisfy the mortgage. From 1892 to 1917, the former Cuyamaca Rancho went through a series of owners who tried unsuccessfully to leach out gold from the mine's tailing piles through the cyanide reduction process. In 1917, Colonel Adolph G. Gassen, a San Diego-based land speculator, purchased the property. Gassen had no wish to reopen the mine, so it and the nearby Cuyamaca City turned into a ghost town. Although the town and mine buildings were still standing as late as the early 1930s, a Los Angeles wrecking company dismantled and hauled them away for scrap. While there is no longer any above-ground evidence of the mine, the latter's collapsed pit, cut stone foundation ruins, tailing piles, and scattered machinery still mark its site. Likewise, shallow pits and scattered brick fragments and other debris are all that remain from the townsite.<sup>21</sup>

Evidence of the historic mine and town's dubious historic legacy can also be seen in the surrounding landscape. The amount of trees cut down and converted into lumber or firewood for Cuyamaca City and the Stonewall Mine's operation (as much as thirty cords of wood a day) resulted in the loss of acres of dense oak and sugar pine on the surrounding peaks.<sup>22</sup>

Attempts to prevent further loss of the former rancho's forest began in 1910. Colonel Ed Fletcher, who had learned that a sawmill would be in operation on land adjacent to a section of land his real estate company owned, bought the tract outright from the potential lumberman. Two years later, Fletcher and fellow San Diego investor George Marston and banker Myron T. Gilmore, developed part of the land into the Pine Hills subdivision, where many of San Diego's elite purchased lots to build second homes in a protected forest. Besides adding to Col. Fletcher's real estate holdings, the trees' subsequent preservation would also help sustain the Cuyamaca Water Company's northwestern watershed feeding Boulder Creek.<sup>23</sup>

## **ROAD DEVELOPMENT—1870-1926**

The discovery, mining, and processing of gold ore out of the mines, as well as an influx of homesteaders who established small ranches naturally facilitated the extension of roads from San Diego into the area. Although the Fages Trail was the first to penetrate the Cuyamacas, it and subsequent routes through Rancho Cuyamaca were too rocky at first

for freight wagons or stage coaches to travel. The first viable road extended from Santa Ysabel along Coleman Creek to Julian just after 1870. Eventually, dirt roads radiated out from Julian to the nearby Banner and Stonewall mines.<sup>24</sup>

Another road was the somewhat passable "Old San Diego-Cuyamaca Stage Route" that provided connecting coach and freight wagon service from Lakeside to Julian. The route basically followed the earlier Fages Trail up the Viejas Grade into Little Guatay Valley along the Descanso Creek, where it eventually reached Green Valley. Here it diverted from the original Fages Trail along Cold Spring Creek. Curving around the West Mesa area, it then traveled up through the Stonewall Gap. Also known as *Paso Picacho* [Sp., "The Mountain Pass"], the curving pass provided access into the lower Cuyamaca Valley in between the Stonewall and Cuyamaca Peaks. The road was also the main wagon road between San Diego and the Stonewall Mine and Cuyamaca City during their heyday.<sup>25</sup>

In 1912, San Diego County planned on utilizing a section of the old stage route as part of a new automobile highway connecting San Diego to Julian via Descanso. Fletcher, anxious that the new road alignment would travel east of Stonewall Peak away from his Pine Hills development, convinced the County Board of Supervisors to reroute the new road up through the Stonewall Pass to Cuyamaca Dam, and then along the lake's northern shore to what is now the Sunrise Highway. However, it appears that this road alignment was not completed until 1935.<sup>26</sup>

By 1913 automobile traffic slowly began to supplant horse-drawn stages and freight wagons along the roads. As a result of a 1909 bond issue, existing winding wagon roads were straightened out and graded, or abandoned in favor of less hazardous routes. One of these was the road from Little Guatay Valley to Julian. In addition, the Viejas Grade Road was discontinued in 1926 in favor of a new alignment of the old Yuma Road a mile south at Descanso Junction. The new concrete-paved highway continued west at Los Terrenitos in favor of a less precipitous route south of Viejas Valley. Part of the transcontinental Lee Highway, it linked San Diego to the East Coast via the Imperial Valley until 1970, when the multi-lane Freeway 80 supplanted it.<sup>27</sup>

Even after the mines played out during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, road and highway improvements continued in the Cuyamacas. Besides new farmers and ranchers, the roads attracted another sort of visitor to the area. For 85 cents a bus ticket, day trippers could travel the 42.6 miles in a few hours from San Diego to the hamlets of Descanso, Guatay, or Pine Valley. At Descanso, for example, travelers could buy a picnic basket at the local general store or café and walk a short distance to any number of scenic locations to enjoy an alfresco lunch before taking the return bus back to San Diego. Visitors could also avail

himself to an overnight stay in a several mountain cabins adjacent to the general store or at the nearby Hulburd Grove.<sup>28</sup>

### **MOUNTAIN RESORT DEVELOPMENT—1884-1926**

Once known as "Little Guatay" within the larger Guatay Valley prior to 1877, Descanso's oak-shaded glen offered a "Place of Rest" (*Descanso* in Spanish) for travelers making the long, hot, and dry thousand-foot climb up the Viejas Grade Road. Seven years later, a group of four Spiritualists, among them Ebenezer W. Hulburd, each filed for a 160-acre homestead on which they built small cottages, farmed, and raised stock. After adding adjacent parcels by preemption and timber claims, the group eventually owned some 2,200 contiguous acres, which they named the "Mountain View Ranch." After the group built a number of additional rental cottages, it promoted the ranch as a retreat for fellow Spiritualists. Many came to attend séances held by Justin Robinson, a well-known spiritualist medium at the time. By the 1920s the Hulburd Grove Resort (as it was now known) was a major tourist destination, with a hotel, small store, swimming pool (water was pumped out of the Sweetwater River bed), and riding stable. In addition, a large number of "artistic and commodious homes" were built on the surrounding hillsides and "along the streams". Many of these homes were being built as second homes or vacation rentals for families from San Diego, El Centro, and Los Angeles who were taking advantage of the improved automobile access via the Imperial Valley and Cuyamaca highways. Although built for utility and economy, their stone and timber construction had a certain rustic charm that set a standard throughout the Cuyamaca Mountain area.<sup>29</sup>

Also vying for the weekend or summer vacationer was the Descanso Park Addition. Developed in 1926 by Peter Jacobs, a construction engineer who, though the *Jacobs Brothers Development Company*, was also developing desert properties in the desert at Ocotillo. Jacobs and his sons reportedly designed and built from fifteen to twenty cottages within the tract to "fit in with the natural contour and scenic beauty of the surrounding hills." One of these cottages is listed on the San Diego County Register of Historic Places. Both Jacobs and Hulburd were motivated to develop Descanso into a mountain resort by real estate speculation during economic boom times. Hopes for San Diego becoming an entrepôt for transcontinental and maritime shipping stimulated the first boom between 1887 and 1915. The second lasted between 1920 and 1930 in response to an increase in San Diego's economy due to military and tourist-oriented development. This was especially true regarding the latter, which offered greater profits for rural landowners than agriculture.<sup>30</sup>

The 1920s in particular represented a period of phenomenal growth throughout Southern California. Motorists demanded new and improved paved roads and highways, resulting in a network of county and state highways branching out from urban centers in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, San Diego, and Imperial counties into nearby beach, mountain, and desert communities. Expecting an increase in automobile-oriented tourism, real estate speculators purchased and subdivided agricultural land into smaller lots on which they built rustic rental cottages. Others hoped to build upscale mountain resorts where they would entice tourists to buy nearby lots so they could “realize the delights of a whole summer spent in the mountains or the advantages of having a place to run out to for weekends . . . [by building] rustic cottages of their own.” Some of the more-frequent visitors to the area were Hollywood movie producers, who, besides fishing, utilized Lake Cuyamaca in at least one silent film Western, starring Tom Mix in 1925.<sup>31</sup>

### **RALPH M. DYAR AND THE STONEWALL RANCH—1923-1933**

On August 17, 1923, the Adolph G. Gassen’s estate sold its Cuyamaca ranch holdings to Ralph M. Dyar for \$200,000. A wealthy semi-retired Detroit, Michigan venture capitalist, around 1920 Dyar had moved to the Los Angeles area, where he busied himself in business and real estate development. Dyar's plan for the Cuyamaca ranch was to establish a base of operations in a large rustic looking "Country House" at the renamed "Stonewall Ranch." Dyar would use the house, partly as a vacation retreat, and partly as an office where he and business partner A. B. Smythe could plan the transformation the southern part of Lake Cuyamaca, between the abandoned Stonewall Mine and Azalea Glenn, into an upscale mountain resort.<sup>32</sup>

Referred to as the "House of Stone," the Dyar House would be the material manifestation of the culture, social, and recreational activities of a member of Southern California's affluent business, political, or entertainment communities. Concurrent with the proliferation of hunting and country clubs in the high desert, mountains, foothills, and coastal areas just outside rapidly expanding suburban centers, from around 1910 to 1940, their owners or leasees could hunt, shoot skeet, fish, ride horses, and generally "play cowboy" amid fresh air and rustic open spaces, while socializing with and entertaining equally affluent guests.<sup>33</sup>

Dyar hired Los Angeles architect Arthur E. Harvey to design an impressive 2-story stone-walled house for himself and his family within a clearing on a rocky knoll just southwest of the confluence of the Cold Stream Creek and the Sweetwater River. Located near a 4-room cabin leased to itinerant cattlemen, the site offered a spectacular view of Green

Valley and the flanking Cuyamaca, Middle and Stonewall Peaks. John L. Harding, the son of John (Jack) M. Harding, the project's superintendent, stated that Dyar chose the location "because it was the site of a former Indian village."<sup>34</sup>

Completed in late September 1924, the Dyar House was a rustic \$35,000 residence that featured locally available 14-to-16"-thick uncoursed rough stone rubble walls set in concrete mortar, hand-hewn heavy timber beams, and Colonial Revival style details. Harvey reportedly appropriated most of his building materials from the ruins of the nearby Lassator home and the Stonewall Mine buildings.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the main house, crews reportedly completed a detached above ground swimming pool, electric generating plant/pump house, and a two-car garage. All featured the same rustic architectural materials as the main house. The garage included built-in living quarters and bathroom facilities for the Dyars' chauffeur. The Dyars reportedly kept two Cadillac automobiles in the garage. Their ranch foreman may have had a Dodge touring car for his personal use parked at a nearby residence.<sup>36</sup>

The cars would have traveled over a dirt road that provided access to the house from the nearby highway (today's Highway 79). Starting at a private gate (near the present Dyar Monument), the road traveled across an open meadow to Cold Stream Creek. Here, at a point some 250 feet southwest of the house site, was a wooden bridge. The poured-in-place concrete abutments that supported the bridge were overbuilt so that they, in conjunction with a large trapezoid-shaped metal plate, acted as a weir damming the creek into a holding pond. One of three such ponds, it was used to stock trout. No longer functioning, the weir's metal plate is missing. However, vertical slots along the abutments' north walls indicate its former location. A narrow wooden bridge built for pedestrian or equestrian use has since replaced the original wooden bridge. Beyond the bridge, the dirt road turned sharply northward along the lower slope west and slightly below the knoll, before turning once again to the right. From here (at the present site of a visitor parking lot), the road headed up the knoll's north face toward the Dyar House. During the 1930s, the dirt road along the meadow was abandoned, replaced by a new asphalt-covered paved road and stone bridge. While there is no trace of the old dirt road across the meadow, the section leading from the bridge to the present public parking lot is still intact, and has been incorporated into the park's trail system.<sup>37</sup>

Other improvements made to the grounds included a wood-frame three-bedroom caretaker's cottage south of the main house; as well as a large, galvanized iron-roofed barn and machinery shed in an east meadow. Attached to the barn was a corral where horses were kept for both recreational and ranch use. A working cattle ranch, Dyar, as

well as the previous owner, leased a four-bedroom ranch house near the site of the Lassator Cabin site to local cattlemen whose stock grazed seasonally throughout the property. For example, local rancher George McCain, whose family owned 1,200 acres of adjacent property, ran his cattle and hogs into the Stonewall Ranch that they leased from Dyar.<sup>38</sup>

The first phase of Dyar's plan for the development of "El Rancho Cuyamaca" included the demolition of any remaining Stonewall Mine buildings, as well as those of the nearby Cuyamaca City. He and his partner would then develop the area into a mountain resort community containing of a private lodge situated within a tract for 68 "country houses." The Azalea Glen area would contain a 41-acre reservoir offering boating, fishing, and duck hunting. There would also be an 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, bridle paths, polo field, and even a small private airfield.<sup>39</sup>

Dyar's motive to develop the former rancho into a mountain resort was tied into the overall speculative expansion of San Diego's mountainous backcountry after the completion of the transcontinental Lee Highway during the 1920s. Entrepreneurs in mountain hamlets like Alpine, Viejas Vista, Pine Valley and Descanso took advantage of an expected increase in local automobile-oriented tourism by building a number of lodges and rental cottages. While staying at these resorts, tourists would be enticed to buy lots in nearby tracts so that they could "realize the delights of a whole summer spent in the mountains or the advantages of having a place to run out to for weekends . . . [by] putting rustic cottages of their own there."<sup>40</sup>

The concept for the recently developed Lake Arrowhead Village in the San Bernardino Mountains may have been the model for Dyar's proposed development of *El Rancho Cuyamaca*. Among the similarities: 1) both were meant to be restricted, upscale mountain resort communities; 2) they were situated on the shores of man-made reservoirs; and 3) they were linked to urban centers by newly improved highways.<sup>41</sup>

While Dyar led the life of a Gentlemen Rancher at the *Stonewall*, with lavish parties entertaining hosting fellow Los Angeles gentlemen ranchers Will Rogers and Leo Carrillo, his plans for developing *El Rancho Cuyamaca* never materialized. The project was stillborn due to a downward spiraling of the American national economy leading up to the 1929 Stock Market Crash and the ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>42</sup>

While A. T. Moore, brother of the ranch's foreman, Harvey W. Moore, paid between \$5,000 and \$11,000 per year to run cattle on the ranch, Dyar had been hard-pressed to pay the \$12,000 annual mortgage in 1930. Because of this and a worsening economy,

Dyar sought to unload what was rapidly becoming a real estate "white elephant." Around February 1933, Dyar, as president of the Cuyamaca Rancho Corporation, offered to sell 20,819 acres of the ranch to the California Department of Parks and Recreation for \$250,000.<sup>43</sup>

The fledgling California Department of Parks and Recreation had been interested in acquiring the Stonewall Ranch ever since noted landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted had highly recommended its inclusion during his previous 1928 survey of 300 potential state parks. Guy L. Fleming, a special investigator assigned to Olmsted's park survey team; no doubt influenced the latter's opinion regarding the ranch. Five years earlier, Dyar had commissioned Fleming, then a consulting horticulturalist, naturalist, and custodian of the Torrey Pines Preserve, to survey and assess the Stonewall Ranch's natural resources and recreational potential. Fleming, who had also suggested areas in Palomar Mountain, Borrego Palm Canyon, and the Anza Desert as potential California state parks, became Superintendent of the California State Park System's Southern California District in 1932. In this role, he would play a critical role in their future development.<sup>44</sup>

In the fall of 1932, Fleming and Harvey Moore took Col. Charles Wing, California State Parks' first chief, and Newton B. Drury, its acting investigation and acquisition officer, on an investigative tour of the Stonewall Ranch.<sup>45</sup> Drury, a noted conservationist, noted,

[. . . having] an expansiveness and scope not possessed by many of the [other state] parks. Unspoiled and undeveloped, there is about it the atmosphere of early days . . . in much the same character and extent that it had when the first grant was made by the Mexican government.<sup>46</sup>

The California State Park Commissioners also regarded the acquisition of Dyar's Cuyamaca ranch as "an exceptionally good buy," because of its grazing concession possibilities, which would make the park "immediately self-supporting."<sup>47</sup> In addition, the future Park Unit's 20,819 acres of "mixed conifer and broadleaf forests, amid chaparral-covered meadows, would serve as a forest reserve."<sup>48</sup>

Because of his property tax burden, and the worsening economy, Dyar was forced to cut his losses and sell his El Rancho Cuyamaca holdings, including the *Stonewall's* furnishings and other personal property, for one half its \$250,000 appraised value. In March 1933, the California State Parks Commission declared the property, as described in a deed dated February 16, 1933, as "suitable for state park purposes," and that it be "accepted and hereby included in the California State Park System."<sup>49</sup> However, because



there wasn't enough money in the California State Park Fund to cover the purchase, the State Park Commission requested that the State Finance Board direct the State Treasurer to issue and sell as many bonds provided in the 1927 California State Park Bonds Act to cover the cost.<sup>50</sup>

California State Parks formally dedicated "Cuyamaca Rancho State Park" in March 1933 "to the theme of man and his relationship with nature." In an editorial to the *San Diego Union*, Guy L. Fleming, now acting Superintendent of California State Parks Southern Region, wrote,

The old Mexican grant of Rancho Cuyamaca that has come to us as a state park offers remarkable possibilities for outstanding park development. Cuyamaca belongs to all of us. Every person in California is a shareholder in this great collection of scenic, historical and recreational assets that [is a part of] our state park system. . . . [However], we must all realize that until some protection can be given the area there is grave danger that we may invite unwise exploitation of the very things which the park was created to preserve. . . . If we remove or deface any of the Indian relics or other antiquities, or if we destroy the bird and animal life, we have desecrated the area and impaired its value to ourselves and to those who come after us."<sup>51</sup>

An April 7, 1933 survey later confirmed the new Park's boundaries. After the Parks Commissioners approved minor boundary adjustments on June 30, 1934 and January 28, 1935, the park's size increased officially from 20,819 to 24,667 acres.<sup>52</sup> Col. Wing asked Harvey Moore, with his intimate knowledge of the former ranch, to stay on as the new park's first custodian. At first reluctant to accept because of his lack of administrative experience, Moore accepted and would contribute to the park's development until his retirement in 1955. The park's Harvey Moore Trail was later named in his honor.<sup>53</sup>

## **THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS PERIOD--1933-1942**

Since its November 4, 1928 creation, the California State Park System had acquired and created a number of parks throughout California, including Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. However, the ensuing Great Depression left the system land rich, but money poor to develop the new parks' infrastructure. Reflecting upon this in his 1933 newspaper editorial, Fleming wrote,

[While] the old Mexican grant of Rancho Cuyamaca has offers remarkable possibilities for outstanding park development; [that] development must, however, await better times." He asked for the earnest "co-operation of the public . . . in

assisting the State Park Commission in protecting and maintaining these areas until funds are available for properly planning and developing each project. Therefore we must be patient and content to consider this park a trust held for our future enjoyment.<sup>54</sup>

At the new Cuyamaca Rancho SP, for instance, the former Dyar house saw duty as park headquarters and residence for Harvey W. Moore and his family. There were no improved equestrian or hiking trails, fire roads, campgrounds or picnic areas, comfort stations, or other public amenities. To offset this, California State Parks utilized the services of the National Park Service [NPS] and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 31, 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC ("Triple C"), was a national make-work program that employed an army of unemployed young men and World War I veterans during the Great Depression. Although initially used for natural resource protection and fire suppression work, military and civilian-supervised CCC enrollees soon began constructing hundreds of NPS architect and landscape architect-designed park improvements throughout hundreds of federal, state, and local parks and forests.<sup>55</sup>

A large part of the public and staff facilities at Rancho Cuyamaca SP, along with road and trail improvements, are due to the CCC's work. On June 18, 1933, CCC enrollees occupied set up a temporary tent camp on the sandy flat between the Sweetwater River and the former Dyar ranch barn, which they utilized for storage and workshop as they began the construction of barracks, mess hall, infirmary, and other semi-permanent buildings for Camp Cuyamaca Rancho between the barn and the Sweetwater River. Designated officially as SP-4, this, and another smaller work camp, SP-14 near the entrance to the Green Valley Falls area, were used to house at least 200 CCC enrollees, foremen, and support staff involved in construction, pest control, and fire protection throughout the park. Smaller work crews were also sent to improve the newly formed Palomar Mountain, Borrego Palm Canyon, Anza Desert, Mission Bay, Carlsbad, and Silver Strand State Beaches and Parks in San Diego County; as well as Mt. San Jacinto State Park and Carpintería State Beach in Riverside and Santa Barbara Counties, respectively.<sup>56</sup>

The former Dyar House reportedly inspired the NPS architects and landscape architects who utilized it as a design center. Indeed architect Arthur E. Harvey's original 1924 Colonial American-inspired design, which incorporated locally available, unfinished natural building materials, traditional hand-craftsmanship, and consideration for its rustic setting, were compatible with the NPS' "Park Rustic" architectural style. Inspired from many traditional regional American vernacular building traditions, the NPS Park Rustic

style's overriding imperative was to fit a building, structure, or landscape improvement's design and construction to the land and its heritage. The result was an organic unity between a man-made construction and the natural landscape that evoked a strong sense of a localized vernacular building tradition.<sup>57</sup>

The best examples of the CCC's work can still be seen in a number of surviving Park Rustic style buildings that are still being used throughout the Paso Picacho campground and administration areas. These include a comfort station, a winter shelter, custodian/ranger residence, and maintenance shop building, as well as a California Division of Forestry [CDF] fire suppression station/barracks building. The latter was originally the 1934-built ranger station cottage's automobile garage, on which the CDF fire suppression station's office and living quarters were added. Except for a small intact grouping of administration and residential structures near its entrance, the majority of CCC-built improvements at the Green Valley campground and day use picnic area have undergone extensive alterations, replacement, and damage, thereby reducing their historic integrity.<sup>58</sup>

"In order to make life more pleasant for park visitors," between 1933 and 1941, the NPS and CCC expanded the Park's road and trail network. Surviving dry-laid or cement-mortared stone revetments, retaining walls, stairways, and culverts along the Park's existing road and trail network bear evidence to their enduring design and craftsmanship.<sup>59</sup>

One historic CCC-built trail that warrants particular attention is the *Monument Trail*. On March 17, 1934, CCC work crews, some consisting of segregated African-American enrollees, began constructing a twisting 1½ mile trail northeast from the Arroyo Seco Day Use Picnic area at Green Valley along the southeastern flanks of West Mesa up to Japacha Ridge. Along the way they cleared brush, widened and leveled a footpath, and broke up stone boulders to construct dry-laid stone ramparts and culverts leading up to the Airplane Crash Monument at Japacha Ridge.<sup>60</sup>

Situated at an elevation of 4,751 feet, the lonely memorial today consists of a battered and rusted V-12 Liberty aircraft engine mounted onto a cement-mortared stone pedestal. The engine is all that is left of a United States Army DeHaviland DH4 biplane that crashed into the ridge sometime around 9 a.m. on December 7, 1922. The aircraft's pilot, Lieutenant Charles F. Webber was transporting his passenger, Colonel Francis C. Marshall, on a survey of cavalry camps along the U.S./Mexico Border from San Diego to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. Unfortunately, bad weather and possibly engine failure caused the plane to lose altitude and crash into Japacha Ridge, killing both men instantly.

Despite a bi-national search and recovery mission, the largest combined air and ground search in United States military history during peacetime, their remains went undetected for five months.<sup>61</sup> On May 4, 1923, while riding along Japacha Ridge, local cattleman George McCain and a companion came upon the crash site unexpectedly and notified the authorities. The following day, military and civilian personnel from Rockwell Field arrived to identify and remove any remains. They returned on May 24th to bury the engine onto which they set a bronze plaque in a cement slab to memorialize the crash site.<sup>62</sup> Ralph Dyar reportedly granted a deed to a small plot of land surrounding the monument as a protective easement "so that it may forever stand as a monument to two brave men who gave their lives in the service of their country."<sup>63</sup>

When the NPS directed the CCC enrollees to improve trail access to the crash site memorial, the federal government, in cooperation with California State Parks, continued to recognize the site's importance. Thirty-four years later, on March 12, 1968, California State Parks improved the trail approaches on either side of the crash monument. Improvements included stone masonry steps, terracing, and a bench built into the embankment. Parks staff also "exhumed" the aircraft's buried Liberty engine and mounted it and the bronze memorial plaque onto a raised stone masonry pedestal.<sup>64</sup>

During the October 26-29, 2003 Cedar Firestorm, a wall of fire rolled over Japacha Ridge, immolating the surrounding forest. Despite the fire's intensity, it caused little damage to the memorial, including a metal national flag and plastic flowers placed at its base the previous year to commemorate the crash's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Symbolically, the survival of the flag and flowers, along with the battered and rusting V-12 Liberty engine and discolored bronze plaque, is a fitting tribute. Neither monumental nor imposing, the Airplane Crash Memorial on Japacha Ridge is a simple expression of three generations' honor and respect. First in 1923, then again in 1934 and 1968, they built and improved the monument so that "the present and coming generation" would honor the memory of the two pioneer military aviators who died on this spot while flying outdated machines through treacherous skies over forbidding terrain.<sup>65</sup>

Other CCC-era buildings and landscape improvements did not fare well during the Cedar Firestorm. The greatest loss was the destruction of the former Dyar House and Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish. Located on Middle Peak's lower eastern flank, the latter was the result of a cooperative agreement in 1939 between California State Parks and the National Park Service to design and construct a group campground and support facilities for the San Diego County Boy Scout Council. While in operation in 1940, the United States' entry into World War II curtailed the camp's completion until 1962. In operation until 1998, Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish contained some of the best examples of CCC-era Park Rustic style

buildings and landscape improvements in a California State Park. The 2003 Cedar Fire reduced most of them to rubble.<sup>66</sup>

Two years prior to Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish's completion, the CCC had constructed *Camp Tapawingo*, a group camp for the San Diego/Ventura County Girl Scout Councils on the abandoned Cuyamaca City site. Similar to Hual-Cu-Cuish, its buildings and landscape improvements were also excellent examples of the Park Rustic style.<sup>67</sup>

Camps Tapawingo and Hual-Cu-Cuish were in operation until 1975 and 1998, respectively, when their leases expired. In a reversal of policy, California State Parks' new management guidelines disallowed the setting aside of land for "non-park, special interest, and exclusive use proposals, which would deny the use [of the Park] to the general public."<sup>68</sup> As a result, in 1975 California State Parks demolished and converted a section of the former Girl Scouts camp into a maintenance/storage area, and mothballed the Boy Scouts camp while considering its future use. As mentioned, the 2003 wildfire drastically altered any plans for the latter's immediate adaptive reuse.<sup>69</sup>

Despite the loss of Camps Tapawingo and Hual-Cu-cuish, and California State Parks' prior alterations of the Green Valley and Paso Picacho public campgrounds and picnic areas, the CCC's influence can still be seen throughout Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Park staff and visitors are still using many of the surviving NPS-designed and CCC-constructed buildings and landscape improvements at Green Valley and Paso Picacho.

Neither of the two CCC enrollee campsites has survived, however. SP-14, located near the entrance to the Green Valley Falls area was dismantled in May 1936. The larger of the two, SP-4, which was abandoned in April 1938, became the basis for the still-operating San Diego City-County School Camp in 1946.<sup>70</sup>

### **THE SAN DIEGO SKI CLUB—1939-1957**

On Sunday, February 19, 1939, on a northeast-facing slope of Cuyamaca Peak, about 1¼ to 1½ miles west of the newly erected CDF Fire Suppression Station, approximately 50 members of the newly formed San Diego Ski Club held San Diego County's first annual open ski meet. Local ski enthusiast Gene S. Muehleisen had founded the club, the first of its kind in San Diego County, in fall 1937 to promote recreational skiing as a sport in San Diego County. The following year, the club organized and held a closed meet on Mount Laguna in Cleveland National Forest. However, Laguna had proven "too rocky" and offered few extended ski runs. The club named the ski run on Cuyamaca Peak after its "co-discoverer," club vice president Milton S. Jackson. While the Jackson Meadow ski run" often had the lightest snow covering, its grassy base, with few rocky obstructions

and moderate drop, offered faster downhill runs. The "ski-friendly" State Park Commissioners, along with Superintendent Fleming, granted the group permission in fall 1938 to "clear specific undergrowth, rocks, and stumps" from the Jackson Meadow ski run. Park Guy L. Fleming had also endorsed the Club's request to improve the ski course and erect a ski shelter, pit privies, and fire circles.<sup>71</sup>

During summer 1939, club volunteers erected a hut on the ridge overlooking the ski run to shelter a "dilapidated" Model A Ford, which was used to power a jury-rigged ski tow. The following year the club widened existing and cleared additional runs. The third summer it erected a warming hut adjacent to the tow shack. The latter contained a stove and cooking facilities, as well as a rescue toboggan and first aid equipment. Anyone wishing to ski Jackson Meadow could use the ski tow, as long as they contributed to its operating expenses.<sup>72</sup>

The Park Commissioners, with the urging of Park Superintendent Fleming, had also granted the ski club permission to use the fire suppression station as a "ski hut." Vacant during the winter, the building offered a room with a fireplace, kitchen, and running water with toilet facilities: luxuries that other contemporary ski huts did not possess. It was only a twenty minute climb from the "ski hut" up a trail to the Jackson Meadow ski run. A nearby fire road provided a nice downhill run from the slope to the hut.<sup>73</sup>

During the ski school's inaugural winter session, experienced club members instructed thirty students on classes were held every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The club also offered a special racing class, from which it chose candidates for its ski team.<sup>74</sup> While the San Diego Ski Club continued to sponsor events Cuyamaca Peak and Mt. Laguna during the immediate postwar years, by the late 1950s highway improvements and a longer skiing season attracted club members to new ski resorts in the San Bernardino and Mammoth mountains. The ski club's use of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park basically ended around 1957 when the club purchased property at Mammoth Mountain north of Bishop, California to construct a ski chalet.<sup>75</sup>

In hindsight, one might question the Park Commission allowing a special-interest group to modify the Park's natural landscape and use State-owned buildings for its own use. This is particularly the case when the optimal use of the ski run was no more than 10 days out of the year. However, the San Diego Ski Club did distinguish itself in many ways. It did much to promote skiing as a recreational and competitive sport in Southern California. Members introduced skiing on several improved ski runs at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and Mt. Laguna. The club reportedly established the first ski patrol in southern California, which validated itself when members rescued two State Parks

rangers snowbound on Cuyamaca Peak. One of the rescuers, Dorothy McClung, became the first female member of the National Ski Patrol in 1941.<sup>76</sup>

## **WAR GAMES—1941-1945**

For all practical purposes, the Great Depression ended after December 1940 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged the United States to becoming an "Arsenal of Democracy" manufacturing and shipping war materiel to countries defending themselves against the Axis powers. As a result, many former CCC enrollees found employment in defense plants or shipyards. A large number with CCC experience were prepared for military service as the United States initiated a draft to expand its armed services into a large defensive force. Such was the case throughout San Diego County, which saw expanded military activities.<sup>77</sup>

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park witnessed four significant military training exercises prior to and during World War II. The first occurred on April 29, 1941, when elements of the 2,400-man United States Marine Corps Eighth Regiment, which included scout vehicles, anti-aircraft, repair, and combat engineers units entered the park northeast of Lake Cuyamaca. The Marines, who were undergoing a strenuous 180-mile 12-day forced march "around San Diego County," were involved with a training exercise that included turning an area of the park into a "Defense Fort."<sup>1</sup> The Marines later bivouacked somewhere in the Green Valley area overnight. After they broke camp the next morning to continue on to Dehesa, Park Custodian Harvey Moore commented that the Marines' camp ground was in better condition after they left.<sup>78</sup>

The second military-related training event occurred on July 30, 1942. When a smaller contingent of United States Marine Corps based in San Diego occupied some of the vacant CCC barracks as part of a security training exercise.<sup>79</sup>

The third event occurred in late December 1942, when elements of the United States Army's 10th Cavalry and 140<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments participated in war games in the open meadow near Camp Rancho Cuyamaca. A segregated African-American unit based forty-five miles to the south near the town of Campo at Camp Lockett, the 10<sup>th</sup>'s primary duty was to patrol, guard, and provide security for dams and trains running along and across the International Border. The Camp Otay-based 140<sup>th</sup> Infantry was supposed to maneuver against the cavalry. However, the more experienced "Buffalo Soldiers" out-manuevered and charged down the surrounding hillside line-abreast with pistols raised routing the

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<sup>1</sup> The Marines had traveled via Miramar, Lake Hodges, Ramona, Lake Henshaw, Banner, Lake Cuyamaca, Dehesa, and Sweetwater Lake before returning to the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot. County Marine Maneuvers.

infantry. After camping in Green Valley, the cavalry troopers returned to Camp Lockett.<sup>80</sup>

The fourth event occurred between June 27, 1944 and April 1, 1945, when the United States Marines utilized 140 acres of CRSP as part of a larger 28,040-acre "Jungle Training and Maneuver Area" in the Cuyamaca Mountains. In addition to CRSP, the area included 8,500 acres of nearby Cleveland National Forest and 19,400 acres of Fletcher Company-owned land northwest of Lake Cuyamaca, where they established a 2-acre headquarters area in a former campground and picnic area near the entrance to Engineer Road. The latter provided access to as many as 2,000 men who bivouacked and trained in the then-heavily forested area and thick brush. The Marine's discontinued the camp's use as jungle warfare training was no longer needed as they advanced across the barren volcanic Western Pacific islands toward Japan.<sup>81</sup>

### **POSTWAR PERIOD—1946-1970**

During the immediate postwar period, California State Parks reaffirmed its commitment to manage Cuyamaca Rancho State Park to preserve "one of the finest examples of [a] Southern California mountain-forest." By doing so, it would offer the public the opportunity to experience and enjoy the Park's outstanding natural environment, acquaint them with the area's history, and instill in them a conservation ethic.<sup>82</sup>

However, California State Parks was faced with a three-fold problem to continue its commitment to preserve the Park's natural and cultural resource protection, while still providing for an enhanced visitor recreational experience. First, the end of wartime civilian travel restrictions brought about an influx of automobile-bound park visitors. Second, existing parks' infrastructures were inadequate to meet the recreational needs of these park users; and third, the means to finance these improvements with budget and staff limitations.<sup>83</sup>

During the immediate postwar period, California State Parks continued the NPS-inspired Park Rustic Style's philosophy of designing buildings and landscape improvements with a style and materials sympathetic to the surrounding natural environment. However, increased labor and material costs necessitated a more standardized approach to the Park Rustic style. As a result, most postwar-era CA State Parks-related buildings and landscape improvements reflect simpler, stripped-down utilitarian forms constructed with standardized regionally available building materials. Nevertheless, they are still compatible with and complement the surrounding rustic environment and continue a 78-year-old design philosophy that still continues to inspire design parameters in numerous CA State Parks.<sup>84</sup>



Not only does the Paso Picacho administration and campground area contain the largest concentration of pre-war Park Rustic style buildings and landscape improvements, it also contains the greatest number of postwar Park Rustic style resources at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. These include contact stations; staff residences; comfort stations and combination buildings; and such hardscape improvements as stone masonry retaining walls, “Diablo”-style stone camp stoves, concrete slab and wood plank-topped concrete picnic tables, and upright wooden interpretive kiosks. Many of which were built by local contractors following standardized California State Parks plans using readily available building materials.<sup>85</sup>

Over the years, many of CRSP's NPS-designed/CCC-built improvements, particularly at Green Valley, Hual-Cu-Cuish, and Tapawingo, have undergone extensive alterations or replacement. However, wildfires were and still are the greatest threats to these historic resources. For example, only a monumental effort from firefighters saved both the Green Valley and Paso Picacho campgrounds during the week-long "Conejos Creek Wildfire," which spread eastward from the El Capitan Indian Reservation in August 1950.<sup>86</sup>

After the 1950 Conejos Fire, the California State Park Commission banned livestock grazing in CRSP. The decision came as a reversal of the popular belief that livestock grazing reduced or diminished the intensity of wildfires. Another reason was that it would have been difficult to control grazing cattle from destroying post-fire-planted conifer tree seedlings. Guilford H. Whitney, a San Diego member of the State Park Commission who promoted the ruling, stated that "the park should be allowed to return as near its original natural state as possible, which means that all growth should be undisturbed."<sup>87</sup>

## **POSTWAR BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS—1975-2005**

As early as 1968, California State Parks was interested in expanding Cuyamaca Rancho State Park's boundaries. By doing so, it hoped to accomplish ecological integrity and provide an expanded zone of protection against adverse development from populated areas.<sup>88</sup>

From 1975 to 2005, four major acquisitions containing historic resources were added to Cuyamaca Rancho State Park: the National Pacific Development Company Acquisition, along with the Minshall, Mack, and Merigan properties.

### **National Pacific Development Company Acquisition—1975**

California State Parks acquired this 2,003-acre parcel on the North Peak's southeastern slope from the National Pacific Development Company on December 31, 1975.<sup>89</sup> Six years earlier, the investment company had acquired the property from the Ed Fletcher

Company.<sup>90</sup> The property contained seven historic resources: the Boulder Creek Drainage, Kelly Ditch, the Cuyamaca Peak Interceptor Ditch, Engineers Road, and the sites of the Cuyamaca Lodge, Middle Peak Cabin, and Camp Billy W. Machen.

### Boulder Creek Drainage

This natural water course, leading from the western base of Cuyamaca Dam to and including La Puerta Creek, was part of the original *San Diego Flume Line*, the 125 year-old 35.6-mile long route which still provides potable water from Lake Cuyamaca to San Diego as part of the Helix Water District. The acquisition included the dam caretaker's cabin, well house, barn and horse stable, and concrete fish ponds. California State Parks removed all these improvements sometime after 1976.<sup>91</sup>

### Kelly Ditch

Running in a parallel northwesterly to southeasterly direction between Boulder Creek and Engineers Road, the approximately mile-long Kelly Ditch is also associated with the San Diego Flume Line's historic operation. After securing the rights from local rancher James Kelly in 1892, the flume company excavated this earthen ditch to intercept and divert rain water runoff flowing down North Peak into Lake Cuyamaca. The ditch remained in operation well into the early 20th century. Abandoned after a series of washouts, it now serves as part of a hiking trail.<sup>92</sup>

### Engineers Road

Located parallel and north of Kelly Ditch, Engineers Road is associated with real estate developer "Col." Ed Fletcher's 1910 efforts to connect his Pine Hills mountain resort development via an Ed Fletcher Company campground development to the recently built county road realignment along Lake Cuyamaca's north shore. A former Lt. Colonel in the California National Guard, during World War I Fletcher apparently used his military connections to convince United States Army engineer units based at Camp Kearny to work on the road to gain practical experience, hence its name. However, the road was not completed until the 1930s.<sup>93</sup>

### Cuyamaca Lodge and Cabins

This site is the location of another early 20<sup>th</sup> century Fletcher project: the Cuyamaca Lodge and Cabins. Erected between 1924 and 1925, it became a well-known and favorite destination of fisherman and hunters "from as far as the Hawaiian Islands."<sup>94</sup>

Located across the County Road southwest of Lake Cuyamaca Dam, just outside the entrance to the Campfire Girls' *Camp Wolahi*, the Lodge included a large rustic dining hall for those staying at the ten individual rental cabins. The Cuyamaca Lodge's

development coincided with the overall increase in fishing and hunting resorts in San Diego's mountainous back country as the result of road improvements during 1920s.<sup>95</sup>

Also associated with the Cuyamaca Lodge was the "Mountain Cabin," which was located at the end of a primitive three-mile asphalt-covered road up Middle Peak's north-facing slope. A 1981 fire reportedly destroyed the Lodge building and cabins. California State Parks demolished the abandoned and derelict Mountain Cabin about a decade later.<sup>96</sup>

#### Camp Billy W. Machen: "Vietnam in the Pines"

In 1967, during the height of the Vietnam War, the Ed Fletcher Company allowed the U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado to establish an advanced SEALs training facility within the 1,596-acre property it owned on North Peak. Dedicated on April 8, 1968 in memory of Billy W. Machen, USN, the first Seal killed in action in Vietnam two years earlier, the camp's headquarters was located one mile northwest of Lake Cuyamaca in the heart of the former Marines Jungle Training and Maneuver Area. Nicknamed "Vietnam in the Pines," Camp Machen contained "a maze of trails, booby traps, and helicopter drop zones" where members of Seal Team One based in Coronado would undergo a grueling 30-day advanced combat training program under conditions similar to those in Vietnam. Created in 1962, Seal Team One had to go to Army or Air Force Special Forces training schools prior to Camp Machen's establishment. As a result of their training at Camp Machen, members of Seal Team One would make significant contributions to the United States' Special Forces operations in Southeast Asia until 1975.<sup>97</sup>

While Seal Team One continued to use Camp Machen, including Lake Cuyamaca, after the Ed Fletcher Company sold the property to the National Pacific Development Company in 1969, it had to abandon the camp after California State Parks chose not to renew the Navy's permit after it acquired the land in 1975.<sup>98</sup> The Navy named its current desert warfare training center in the Imperial Valley after Machen.<sup>99</sup>

In 1976 CA State Parks considered converting the camp's headquarters' area into a group campground for between 75 to 100 campers, or two smaller group camps for 35 to 50 campers each. The proposed facilities would include parking lots, cooking and eating areas, tent pads, and combination buildings.<sup>100</sup> Nothing came of this proposal until August 1997, when California State Parks again considered utilizing the area as a public campground. At the time, the only features that remained from the former military use were a concrete slab, bunker, trailer, and 55 gallon drums. Except for the removal of the latter structures and objects, the proposed project was never realized.<sup>101</sup>

### **Minshall Acquisition—1975**

Around the same time that California State Parks acquired the National Pacific Development Company Acquisition, it acquired an additional 41.67 acres of land adjacent to the Stonewall Mine area on April 22, 1975 from Margaret Minshall.<sup>102</sup> As part of the land transfer, "Mardy" or "Marti" Minshall would be allowed the right of access to her residence over an existing road to her home (the former Harvey Moore residence) and barn until her death. The acquisition helped CSP consolidate the park's northeastern boundary. By so doing, it created a buffer around the lower Stonewall Mine area and provided better connectivity in that section of the Park.<sup>103</sup>

A retired High School teacher and avid equestrian, in 1971 Minshall had previously made the same arrangement with the County of San Diego, in which she donated over 400 acres of her former *Oakasis Ranch* near the San Vicente Reservoir to the County of San Diego. Unfortunately, the 2003 Cedar Wildfire also destroyed the Minshall ranch house in what is now the *Oakoasis Open Space Preserve*.<sup>104</sup>

In appreciation for Margaret Minshall's generosity, as well as for her tireless volunteerism, particularly regarding the founding of the Park's Interpretation Association [CRSPIA], California State Parks dedicated Cuyamaca Rancho State Parks' *Minshall Trail* in her honor.<sup>105</sup> The former *Lake Loop Trail*, it extends past the site of the Minshall's residence site around Lake Cuyamaca's southwest shore, linking the Stonewall and Kelly Ditch Trails.<sup>106</sup> The Minshall Trail, along with the *Harvey Moore* and *Vern Whitaker* trails, is one of three named after individuals who played key roles in the Park's development. The Harvey Moore Trail was named after the CRSP's first custodian/ranger, while the other was named after another exemplary volunteer, honorary State Parks ranger Vern Whitaker.<sup>107</sup>

### **Merigan Ranch Acquisition—1977**

On September 26, 1977, California State Parks acquired and attached approximately 1,823 acres of land north of Viejas Boulevard to CRSP's southwest section.<sup>108</sup> Eighteen months later, the former landowner, Dr. Haig C. Merigan, sold two additional unimproved parcels to California State Parks. A dentist and real estate developer, Dr. Merigan had originally planned to convert the land into a 300-home residential development. However, local opposition resulted in his selling a part of his *Merigan Ranch* to California State Parks.<sup>109</sup>

### Hawley Stone Cottage

At the time of the acquisition, the larger parcel contained several residences, a barn, and various outbuildings. The only building still standing is a modest stone masonry walled cottage and small vertical-board 'n batten storage shed. The former dates to the time of the ranch's first owners, Allen T. Hawley. Rancher, banker, and real estate broker, Hawley purchased the original 2,200-acre parcel on November 29, 1929, and subsequently had the residence erected, possibly as a mountain retreat where he could live as a “gentleman rancher” raising horses and other livestock as an avocation.<sup>110</sup>

The Hawley Cottage’s singular distinguishing architectural feature is its rustic fieldstone and rock rubble exterior wall-construction. Like the earlier-built Dyar House, its uncoursed battened river cobble and rough stone rubble walls set in cement mortar may have inspired the Nation Park Service and Civilian Conservation Corps to design and build the stone masonry structures at CRSP to blend in with the natural contour and scenic beauty of the surrounding rustic landscape. Bevil 2008, 6 and 7

### Oliver Ranch Site

Arguably the most significant historical figures associated with the study property are Lawrence and Mary Emily Oliver. A "self-made" innovative entrepreneur, community leader, and philanthropist, Lawrence Oliver once served on the San Diego Gas & Electric Company as well as the San Diego' Zoological Society's Board of Directors for almost twenty years. More importantly, he and his wife made contributions to San Diego's cultural development, particularly to local Portuguese-American and Roman Catholic fraternal organizations. In 1942, the Olivers, along with then State Senator Ed Fletcher, paid for the transportation and assembly of a 12-foot-tall statue of Juan Rodriques Cabrillo on Point Loma to celebrate the 400th anniversary celebration of Cabrillo’s landing. During the late 1940s the Olivers donated twenty-two acres of their ranch south of Highway 79 east of Descanso Junction to the Roman Catholic Sisters of Social Service as a camp for underprivileged children. During the camp’s 1954 dedication ceremonies, to the Olivers’ surprise, the Sisters named it “Camp Oliver” in their honor. The camp continues to function to this day as a non-denominational all-year non-profit group campground.<sup>111</sup>

With his various business ventures prospering under capable managers, in 1941 Oliver, like Hawley before him, hoped to live the life of a semi-retired gentleman rancher where he could raise prize White Face Hereford cattle. During his ownership of the *Circle R Ranch* between 1941 and 1958, Oliver made several improvements to the Descanso ranch

that included adding several additional buildings and structures, including a ranch house, additional residences, tractor/implement storage sheds, and the fore-mentioned board 'n batten shed. In 1958, the septuagenarian Oliver, who found the demands of cattle raising and attending stock shows no longer enjoyable, and complaining that "good help was hard to get," sold the ranch to Dr. Merigan.<sup>112</sup>

### **Mack Ranch Acquisition—2005**

On 5 May 2005, California State Parks acquired 76 acres of land from Alta C. Mack located adjacent to Cuyamaca Rancho State Park northeast of the Merigan Ranch Acquisition.<sup>113</sup> Situated along Highway 79's west shoulder, the rocky, native oak-covered parcel, which extends westward some 1,922 feet to a rocky ridgeline, contains the southwestern route of the fore-mentioned Pedro Fages Trail. The parcel also contains the site of the Burns residence. A complex of nine rustic buildings and structures located along the parcel's eastern perimeter, it is reportedly associated with Richard and Sarah Burns, who erected them between 1930 and 1932. The Burns came to California from Nebraska and Oklahoma in 1919, settling in Imperial and then San Diego County by 1922.<sup>114</sup> Like the Dyar House and Hawley/Merigan Cottage, the design, materials, and construction of the Burns' Tudor Revival-influenced main and guest houses possess a certain rustic charm suggesting a Post-Mediaeval Tudor farmhouse adapted to modern use. The thick, field stone rubble-faced cement mortared wall construction, along with open beam ceilings and reversed fiberboard wall paneling, can yield important information regarding early 20th century local building practices.<sup>115</sup> However, unlike the Hawley/Merigan Cabin and Dyar House, evidence suggests that the Burns property was a primary, not a secondary place of residence. In addition, like the Dyar and Hawley/Merigan properties, it is associated with trends significant to the broad patterns of San Diego County's recreational and settlement history in the era between the two world wars.<sup>116</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Besides containing unique natural and scenic resources, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park includes a number of unique historical resources that represent the region's historic growth and development from the mid-18th to the mid-20th centuries.

Taken within the larger context of its historical record, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park has been witness to the ebb and flow of activities that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of California's exploration, settlement, transportation, mining, military, and recreational history. In addition, these activities are associated with the lives

of significant historic individuals who played major roles in local, regional, state, and national history. The changes they made to the land, along with the remnants of their homes and activities, have the potential to yield important information critical for understanding and interpreting our collective past.

However, further study and evaluation will have to be undertaken to determine their eligibility for placement on either the State or National historic registers.

## **INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Pedro Fages Trail (Site)

Cesario Walker Sawmill (Site)

San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line (Site)

Lassator Cabin (Site)

San Diego Flume Line

    Boulder Creek Drainage

    Kelly Ditch

Stonewall Gold Mine Historic District (Site)

Cuyamaca City Historic District (Site)

Engineers Road

Ralph M. Dyar House (Site)

Airplane Crash Monument on Japacha Ridge (Site)

Cuyamaca Lodge and Cabins (Site)

Allen T. Hawley Stone Cabin

Richard and Sarah Burns Ranch Complex

Paso Picacho Campground Historic District

Paso Picacho Administration Area Historic District

Paso Picacho CDF Fire Suppression Station

Green Valley Campground Administration Area Historic District

Jackson Meadow Ski Run (Site)

Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish Historic District (Site)

Oliver Ranch Complex Historic District (Site)

Camp Billy W. Machen (Site)



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<sup>8</sup> Fetzer, 2009: 69.

<sup>9</sup> Fetzer, 2009: 60-61; California State Parks April 1986: 14; Hero Eugene Rensch, "The Indian Place Names of Rancho Cuyamaca" (May 1950): 25-26; and Parkman, et al 1981: 57-58.

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<sup>13</sup> California State Parks April 1986: 14; Parkman, et al 1981: 62, 68, and 71-71; and Fetzer, 2009: 75-77.

<sup>14</sup> California State Parks April 1986:14; Fetzer 2009: 78; and Parkman, et al 1981:71-72.

<sup>15</sup> California State Parks April 1986:15; and Parkman, et al 1981:73-74. Waldo Waterman lived in a modest "Superintendent's Cottage" overlooking the heart of Cuyamaca City. Here, he lived with his wife Hazel and their children. The latter were under the care of a nurse, while a Chinese cook provided meals. See: California State Parks April 1986: 52-53.

<sup>16</sup> Fetzer 2009: 87-88.

<sup>17</sup> California State Parks April 1986:15; Parkman, et al 1981:73-74; and Fetzer, 87-88; and 131-133.

<sup>18</sup> Fetzer 2009: 133; and California State Parks April 1986: 53 and 55.

<sup>19</sup> Parkman, et al 1981:71 and 95; and Fetzer 2009: 161 and 164.

<sup>20</sup> Parkman, et al 1981:74 and 95; LeMenager 1992: 200; and SDBE 1968: 5.

<sup>21</sup> California State Parks April 1986: 15-16; Parkman, et al 1981: 73-74, 78 and 91; Fetzer 2009: 134; LeMenager, 200; and Bloomquist 1966: 2.

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<sup>32</sup> Bevil 2000: 17; and LeMenager 1992: 200.

<sup>33</sup> Bevil 2000: 8; Fetzer, 204; and Alexander D. Bevil, *Topanga State Park Cultural Resources Survey: Historic Background Study and Inventory of Historic Resources* (August 2011): 49.

<sup>34</sup> Bevil 2000: 18; and Arthur E. Harvey, *Country House at Cuyamaca, California for Mr. Ralph M. Dyer, Los Angeles* (1924): 12 Sheets.

<sup>35</sup> Bevil 2000: 18; Fetzer 2009: 203; and Harvey 1924: 12 Sheets.

<sup>36</sup> Bevil 2000: 21; Newton B. Drury, "Report to California State Park Commission: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Project, San Diego County" (November 15, 1932): 2; John L. Harding, *The House that Jack Built*, [Unpublished Manuscript] (1978):4-5; and Warren Rhodes, *The House of Stone* [Unpublished Manuscript] (1983):9.

<sup>37</sup> Bevil 2000: 21-22, and 42; and Moore 1974: 31.

<sup>38</sup> Bevil 2000: 22-23; Drury 1932:4; Parkman et al 1981: 99; and Harvey Moore, Interview (February 8, 1974): 10, 16, 25 and 84.

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<sup>43</sup> California State Park Commission [California State ParksC], Hearing *Minutes* (August 21 1932): 54.

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<sup>45</sup> Richard A. Bloomquist, *A History of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park* (December 20, 1966), 2.

<sup>46</sup> Newton B. Drury, *Report to California State Park Commission: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Project, San Diego County* (November 15, 1932): 1. Bevil, Dyar, 22

<sup>47</sup> California State ParksC 1932: 54

<sup>48</sup> Clark Wing, "Cuyamaca State Park Improvements Described," *California Conservationist* (March 1939): 23.

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<sup>50</sup> California State ParksC August 31, 1932: 58.

<sup>51</sup> Guy L. Fleming, "Commends the *Union* for Article Describing Borego [sic] Desert Park and Urging Wise Conservation," *San Diego Union* (March 9, 1933): 7.

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<sup>53</sup> Richard A. Bloomquist, *A History of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park* (December 20, 1966), Part II: 2.

<sup>54</sup> Fleming 1933: 7.

<sup>55</sup> Bevil 2000: 22-23; Parkman et al 1981: 98-99; California State Parks April 1986: 16 and 55; Moore 1974: 16; Joseph H. Engbeck, *By the People, for the People: the Work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in California State Parks 1933-1941* (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2002): 10-11.

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<sup>58</sup> California State Parks 1982: 12; Hobart 1933-1938: 60; The National Park Service, in Cooperation with California State Parks, *Ranger Station Cottage, Stonewall Picnic Area* (November 1, 1934): sheet 1 of 1; *Suppression Crew Quarters, Cuyamaca rancho State Park* (April 24, 1935): sheet 1 of 1; *Garage, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park* (April 30, 1935): sheet 1 of 1; and *Winter Shelter for Campground and Toboggan Slide* (May 2, 1935): sheet 1 of 1; Richard A. Bloomquist, *History of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Part II: from 1933 to the Present* (December 20, 1966): 3; "21,000-Acre Rancho Cuyamaca Plans Open House Early in April," *San Diego Union*, (March 29, 1939): A2; and Ray W. Brooks, "Cuyamaca State Park," *San Diego Union* (January 28, 1951): D9.

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<sup>62</sup> Bevil 2005: 165-167.

<sup>63</sup> Bevil 2005: 166.

<sup>64</sup> Army Corps of Engineers 1942; Bevil 2005: 153, 159, 161 and 165-167; Bloomquist *Addendum* 1968: 3; Hobart 1933-1938: 60; Wright, 1934, II-1. During their exhumation of the engine, parks staff uncovered a metal tube containing three copies of the *San Diego Union* articles dating to 1923 describing the crash site's discovery; a list of the officers and civilian employees of Rockwell Field; and a Coronado Masonic Lodge calendar. The whereabouts of the tube and its contents are unknown. See: Homer Clance, "Mementos in Tube Recall Early Fliers of San Diego," *San Diego Union* (March 19, 1968): B1.

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<sup>113</sup> Department of Parks and Recreation 1982: sheets 2 and 3 of 3; TRW REDI *Property Data for APN 407-121-13; 407-121-14 and 407-121-15* [Microfiche] (1991); and San Diego County Office of the Assessor/Recorder, *Assessment Records for APN 407-121-13; 407-121-14; and 407-121-15, 2005* (2005).

<sup>114</sup> Susan M. Bennett, Letter to Nedra Martinez. Subject: Rock House in Descanso (December 1, 2008): n.p. [Susan M. Bennett Collection]; "El Cajon Woman Celebrates 100th Birthday Today," *San Diego Union* (c. December 17, 1969): n.p. (December 1, 2008): n.p. [Susan M. Bennett Collection]; "Death Takes Mrs. Burns," *San Diego Union* (July 24, 1973), n.p. [Susan M. Bennett Collection]; and "'Grandma' Celebrates Her 102 Birthday," *San Diego Union* (December 18, 1971): D1.

<sup>115</sup> San Diego County Office of the Assessor/Recorder, *Building Assessment Records for APN 407-121-13; 407-121-14; and 407-121-15, 2005*

<sup>116</sup> Alexander D. Bevil, State Historian II, *Mack Ranch Complex, Recordation Forms* (November 8, 2005; updated August 23, 2007); Molly Jean Featheringill, Past President of the Cuyamaca Rancho Foundation, Telephone Interview with Alexander D. Bevil (November 3, 2005); and Laura Itogawa, [Former] Sector Superintendent, California State Parks, Colorado Desert District, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Interview with Alexander D. Bevil, (November 7, 2005).

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