

- Picnic tables and barbeque pits are available; ground fires and portable stoves are prohibited.
- Please observe the park hours posted at the entrance station. The museum in the House of Happy Walls is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.
- There are a few rattlesnakes, so be alert for them as well as for poison oak.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash; they are not allowed in the museum or on hiking trails.
- Don't trespass on private property surrounding the park; help us be good neighbors.

VALLEY OF THE MOON
NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
2400 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen, CA 95442

A nonprofit association dedicated to promoting education and interpretive activities at Jack London, Sugarloaf Ridge, and Annadel State Parks, by publishing descriptive park literature and providing trained volunteer docents. Memberships are welcome and donations are tax-deductible.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

MIKE CHRISMAN
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN
Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

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JACK LONDON STATE HISTORIC PARK
2400 London Ranch Road
Glen Ellen, California 95442
(707) 938-5216

Jack London STATE HISTORIC PARK



"The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time."

Jack London

Jack London fought his way up out of the factories and waterfront dives of West Oakland to become one of the highest paid, most popular novelists and short story writers of his day. He wrote passionately and prolifically about the great questions of life and death, and the struggle to survive with dignity and integrity. He wove these elemental ideas into stories of high adventure based on his own experiences at sea, in Alaska or in the fields and factories of California. As a result, his writing appealed not to the few, but to millions of people around the world.

Along with his books and stories, Jack London was widely known for his personal exploits. He was a celebrity—a colorful, controversial personality who was often in the news. Generally fun-loving and playful, he could also be combative and was quick to side with the underdog against injustice or oppression of any kind. He was a fiery and eloquent public speaker and much sought after as a lecturer on socialism and other economic and political topics. Despite his avowed socialism, most people considered him a living symbol of rugged individualism, a man whose fabulous success was not due to special favor of any kind, but to a combination of unusual mental ability and immense vitality.

Born January 12, 1876, by the time he was 29 he was already internationally famous for *Call of the Wild* (1903), *The Sea Wolf* (1904) and other literary and journalistic accomplishments. He was



divorced from Bessie (Maddern), his first wife and the mother of his two daughters, Joan and Little Bess, and he had married Charmian (Kittredge).

Strikingly handsome, full of laughter, restless and courageous to a fault, always eager for adventure on land or sea, he was one of the most attractive and romantic figures of his time.

Jack London ascribed his literary success largely to hard work—to “dig,” as he put it. He tried never to miss his early

morning 1,000-word writing stint. Between 1900 and 1916, he completed over 50 books, including both fiction and nonfiction, hundreds of short stories and numerous articles on a wide range of topics. Several of the books and many of the short stories are classics of their kind, well thought of in critical terms and still popular around the world. Today, almost countless editions of London’s writings are available and some of them have been translated into as many as 70 languages.

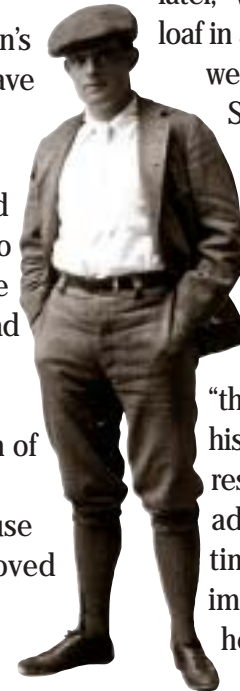
In addition to his daily writing stint and his commitments as a lecturer, London also carried on voluminous correspondence (he received some 10,000 letters per year), read proofs of his work as it went to press and negotiated with his various agents and publishers. He also oversaw construction of his custom-built sailing ship, the *Snark* (1906-1907), the construction of Wolf House (1910-1913) and the operation of his beloved Beauty Ranch, which became a primary preoccupation after about 1911.

Somehow he managed to do all these things and still find time to go swimming, horseback riding and sailing on San Francisco Bay. He also spent 27 months cruising the South Pacific in the *Snark*, put in two tours of duty as an overseas war correspondent, traveled widely for pleasure, entertained a continual stream of guests whenever he was at home in Glen Ellen and did his fair share of barroom socializing and debating.

London was first attracted to the Sonoma Valley by its magnificent natural landscape, a unique combination of high hills, fields and streams, and a beautiful mixed forest of oaks, madrones, California buckeyes, douglas fir and redwood trees. “When I first came here, tired of cities and people, I settled down on a little farm...130 acres of the most beautiful, primitive land to be found in California.” He didn’t care that the farm was badly run down. Instead, he reveled in its deep canyons and forests, its year-round springs and streams. “All I wanted,” he said later, “was a quiet place in the country to write and loaf in and get out of Nature that something which we all need, only the most of us don’t know it.”

Soon, however, he was busy buying farm equipment and livestock for his “mountain ranch.” He also began work on a new barn and started planning a fine new house.

Living and owning land near Glen Ellen was a way of escaping from Oakland—from the city way of life he called “the man-trap.” But excited as he was about his plans for the ranch, London was still too restless, too eager for foreign travel and adventure, to settle down and spend all his time there. While his barn and other ranch improvements were still under construction, he decided to build a ship and go sailing



around the world—exploring, writing, adventuring—enjoying the “big moments of living” that he craved and that would give him still more material to write about.

The great voyage was planned to last seven years and take Jack and Charmian around the world. In fact, it lasted 27 months and took them “only” as far as the South Pacific and Australia. Discouraged by a variety of health problems and heartbroken about having to abandon the trip and sell the *Snark*, London returned to Glen Ellen and to his plans for the ranch.

Between 1909 and 1911 he bought more land, and in 1911 he moved from Glen Ellen to a small ranch house in the middle of his holdings. He rode horseback throughout the countryside, exploring every canyon, glen and hilltop. He threw himself into farming—scientific agriculture—as one of the few justifiable, basic and idealistic ways of making a living. A significant portion of his later writing—*Burning Daylight* (1910), *Valley of the Moon* (1913) and *Little Lady of the Big House* (1916)—had to do with the simple pleasures of country life, the satisfaction of making a living directly and honestly from the land and thereby remaining close to the realities of the natural world.

Jack and Charmian London’s dream house began to take definite shape early in 1911, as Albert Farr, a well-known San Francisco architect, put their ideas on paper in the form of drawings and sketches and then supervised the early stages of construction. By August 1913, London had spent approximately \$80,000 (in pre-World War I dollars),



and the project was nearly complete. On August 22, final cleanup got underway, and plans were laid for moving the Londons’ specially designed, custom-built furniture and other personal belongings into the mansion. That night at 2:00 a.m., word came that the house was burning. By the time the Londons arrived on the scene, the house was

ablaze in every corner, the roof had collapsed, and even a stack of lumber some distance away was burning. Nothing could be done.

London looked on philosophically, but inside he was seriously wounded, for the loss was a crushing financial blow and the wreck of a long-cherished dream. There were many rumors about the cause of the fire. In 1995 a group of fire experts visited the site and concluded that the fire was the result of spontaneous combustion. Workers wiping down the wood interior had left linseed oil soaked rags in the building. London planned to rebuild Wolf House eventually, but at the time of his death in 1916 the house remained as it stands today, the stark but eloquent vestige of a unique and fascinating shattered dream.

The destruction of Wolf House left London terribly depressed, but after a few days he forced himself to go back to work. Using a \$2,000 advance from *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, he added a new study to the little wood-frame ranch house in which he had been living since 1911. Here, in the middle of his beloved ranch, he continued to turn out the articles, short stories and novels for an ever-growing international market.

He also spent a considerable amount of time living and working aboard his 30-foot yawl, the *Roamer*, which he loved to sail around San Francisco Bay and throughout the nearby Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. In 1914, he went to Mexico as a war correspondent covering the role of U.S. troops and Navy ships in the Villa-Carranza revolt.

In 1915 and again in 1916, Charmian persuaded him to spend several months in Hawaii, where he seemed better able to relax and more willing to take care of himself. His greatest satisfaction, however, came from his ranch activities and from his ever more ambitious plans for expanding the ranch and increasing its productivity. These plans kept him perpetually in debt and under intense pressure to keep on writing as fast as he could even though it might mean sacrificing quality in favor of quantity.

His doctors urged him to ease up, to change work habits and his diet, to stop all use of alcohol and to get more exercise. But he refused to change his way of life and plunged on with his



writing and his ranch, generously supporting friends and relations through it all. If anything, the pressure of his financial commitments and his increasingly severe health problems only made him expand his ambitions, dream even larger dreams and work still harder and faster.

On November 22, 1916, Jack London died of gastrointestinal uremic poisoning. He was 40 years of age and had been suffering from a variety of ailments, including a kidney condition that was extraordinarily painful at times. Nevertheless, right up to the last day of his life, he was full of bold plans and boundless enthusiasm for the future.

Words of grief poured into the telegraph office in Glen Ellen from all over the world.

“No writer, unless it were Mark Twain, ever had a more romantic life than Jack London. The untimely death of this most popular of American fictionists has profoundly shocked a world that expected him to live and work for many years longer. (Ernest J. Hopkins in the San Francisco Bulletin, December 2, 1916)

“His greatness will surge triumphantly above race and time,” said his old friend George Sterling. His genius was “so flaming, so passionate, and so sincere” that it would overwhelm the limits of “prejudice and nationality.”



When You Visit

Jack London State Historic Park was created in 1959 when a small portion—about 40 acres—of London’s 1,400-acre Beauty Ranch was acquired by the state, partly through a gift from Irving Shepard, London’s nephew and an heir to the London estate. The original park included London’s grave, the ruins of Wolf House and Charmian London’s House of Happy Walls.

Additional acreage has been added over the years, so that today the park contains more than 800 acres, including many of the ranch buildings and the cottage where London wrote much of his later work.

The House of Happy Walls

Built by Charmian London in 1919-26, this house is similar to Wolf House in some ways—the Spanish-style roof tiles and walls of field-stone, for example—but is much smaller and more formal. Charmian lived here whenever she was not traveling abroad or staying with relatives. After her death in 1955 at the age of 84, her will directed that the house be used as a memorial to Jack London and as a museum that would house the London collection of photographs and exhibits about the life and adventures of the world famous author. It also contains a visitor center where you can purchase books by and about Jack London.

Much of the furniture in the house was designed by

the Londons and custom built for use in Wolf House. The library is furnished with equipment from London’s study. The big roll-top desk, the Dictaphone and some of the other items on exhibit here appear in old photographs showing London at work.

Wolf House

The trail to Wolf House is a little more than a half-mile long and slopes gently downhill. It is recommended that you allow an hour or more for the one-mile round trip. The trail wanders through a beautiful mixed forest of oaks, madrones, California buckeye, douglas fir and redwoods.

The remains of Wolf House still vividly remind visitors of Jack and Charmian’s original dream. Stone walls complete with window openings, fireplaces and other details appear little changed by the passage of time. They make it easy to see how grand the house was intended to be.

Native materials were chosen and carefully matched to one another—boulders of maroon lava, unpeeled redwood logs outside and redwood paneling inside. The Spanish-style roof was dark red and matched the stone walls. The long outdoor pool was to be stocked with mountain bass.

The entire house stood on an extra thick concrete slab that was intended to be earthquake proof. Double thick concrete walls were intended to be fireproof. Modern utility systems were installed, and every detail of hardware or trim was of the very highest quality, for money was no object. The house would have been magnificent.

The Grave Site

Jack London's ashes were placed on the little hill close beside the plain wooden headboards that marked the graves of two pioneer children. The final ceremony was simple and without ritual, attended only by a few members of London's immediate family, his old friend George Sterling and workmen from the ranch. A small copper urn wreathed with primroses and bearing his ashes was sealed within a specially made cement receptacle, and in Sterling's own words:

"Amid the profound silence of the on-lookers, a huge boulder—a great block of red lava long-pitted by time and enriched by the moss of uncounted years—was urged by roller and crowbar above the sepulcher.

"Then the party dispersed as quietly as it had gathered, the stillness making it a funeral impressive beyond all memory of those in attendance.

"No word, aside from a brief whisper, had been said. The thirteen strong men of the ranch faced the bearers of the remains in silence, and as silently departed."



"I liked those hills up there (above the ranch house). They were beautiful, as you see, and I wanted beauty. So I extended the boundary (of the ranch) up to the top of that ridge and all along it.

...I bought beauty, and I was content with beauty for awhile. It pleases me more than anything else now, but I am putting this ranch into first class shape and am laying a foundation for a good paying industry here. Everything I build is for the years to come."



1. Eucalyptus Trees

From the picnic area one can see some of the 81,000 eucalyptus trees that were planted on the ranch. Although advertised at the time as an excellent source of hardwood, they proved to be better suited for firewood than anything else.

2. The Sherry Barn

This building was constructed by Chinese laborers in 1884 for the Kohler and Frohling winery. Originally used to make sherry, it was converted into a stable for London's English shire horses. Luther Burbank's spineless cactus was grown for cattle feed in the open area between the barns and London's cottage. Burbank prunes and potatoes were also raised on the ranch.



3. Manure Pit

Jack London hired Italian stonemasons in 1914 to build this "pit" to store fertilizer for later distribution in the fields. In addition, London also had an elaborate system built to gather and store liquid fertilizer from his cow barn.



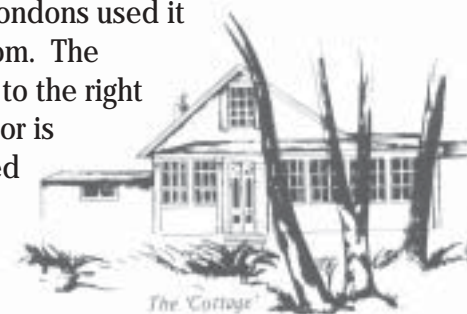
4. Stallion Barn

This barn housed six of London's highly prized purebred English shire horses. Note the contrast in construction techniques between the Italian-built structures (those with protruding stones in the walls) and the Chinese-built winery buildings (stones flush with the wall).



5. The Cottage

This wood-framed cottage was bought by London in 1911, with the old Kohler & Frohling winery buildings. It was enlarged after 1911 to include 3,000 square feet of living space. The room on the west side was added in 1914 to serve as London's study. Here he wrote many of his stories and novels. The stone-walled east wing was originally constructed as part of the old winery. The Londons used it as a dining room. The glassed porch to the right of the front door is where Jack died November 22, 1916.



The 'Cottage'

6. Winery Ruins

This building, the main Kohler & Frohling winery, was heavily damaged by the 1906 earthquake. London used it as a carriage house, living quarters for ranch hands and rooms for his guests. A fire destroyed the wooden upper stories in 1965.



7. Terraced Hillside View

London had his steeper fields graded into terraces in order to retain moisture and prevent erosion. As you can see in the vineyard areas, some of those original terraces are still being used today.



8. Distillery Building

Originally constructed in 1888 as part of the old winery, this building was used by London's ranch hands to store and repair farm equipment. The ruins of a blacksmith shop are visible on the west side.



9. Pig Palace

Often referred to as the "Pig Palace," this unique piggery was designed by London and built in 1915. Laid out in a circle to save labor, the piggery's central feedhouse is surrounded by 17 pens. Each family of pigs had its own area: a courtyard with feed and water troughs, roofed sleeping area and a fenced outdoor run.



10. Silos

Erected between 1912 and 1915, these cement-block silos stand over 40 feet high. They once held silage—fodder—made by cutting up green forage plants.

11. The Lake

About three-quarters of a mile up the trail beyond the silos, London built a curving stone dam and created a shallow, five-acre lake. With its rustic redwood bathhouse, it was a favorite spot for the Londons and their many guests.

Beyond the lake, the trail passes through a mixed forest of madrone, manzanita, redwood and douglas fir interspersed with grassy meadows and oak woodland. There are impressive vistas of the Valley of the Moon as you approach the park boundary just below the 2,463-foot summit of Sonoma Mountain.

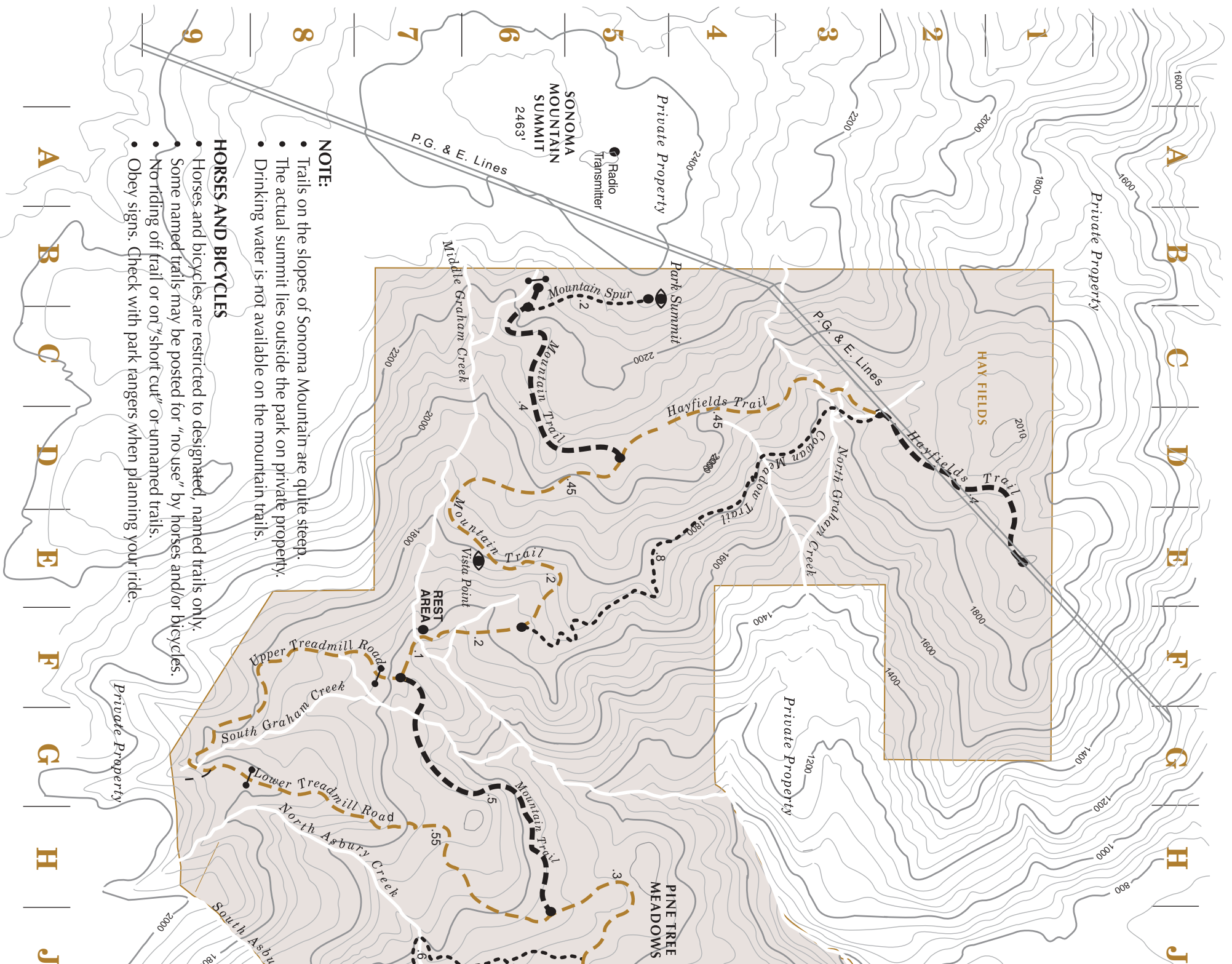
The strenuous 6.6-mile round trip takes about three hours. Be sure to bring your own drinking water.



The Beauty Ranch Trail



This half-mile trail circles through the center of the 1,400 acres of land that London called his "Beauty Ranch." Between 1905 and 1916, London planted fruit, grain and vegetable crops in this area, and raised fine horses, pigs, cattle and other animals as breeding stock. Many of the buildings were designed and built by London as part of his effort to develop and demonstrate new agricultural techniques that could be shared with farmers everywhere.



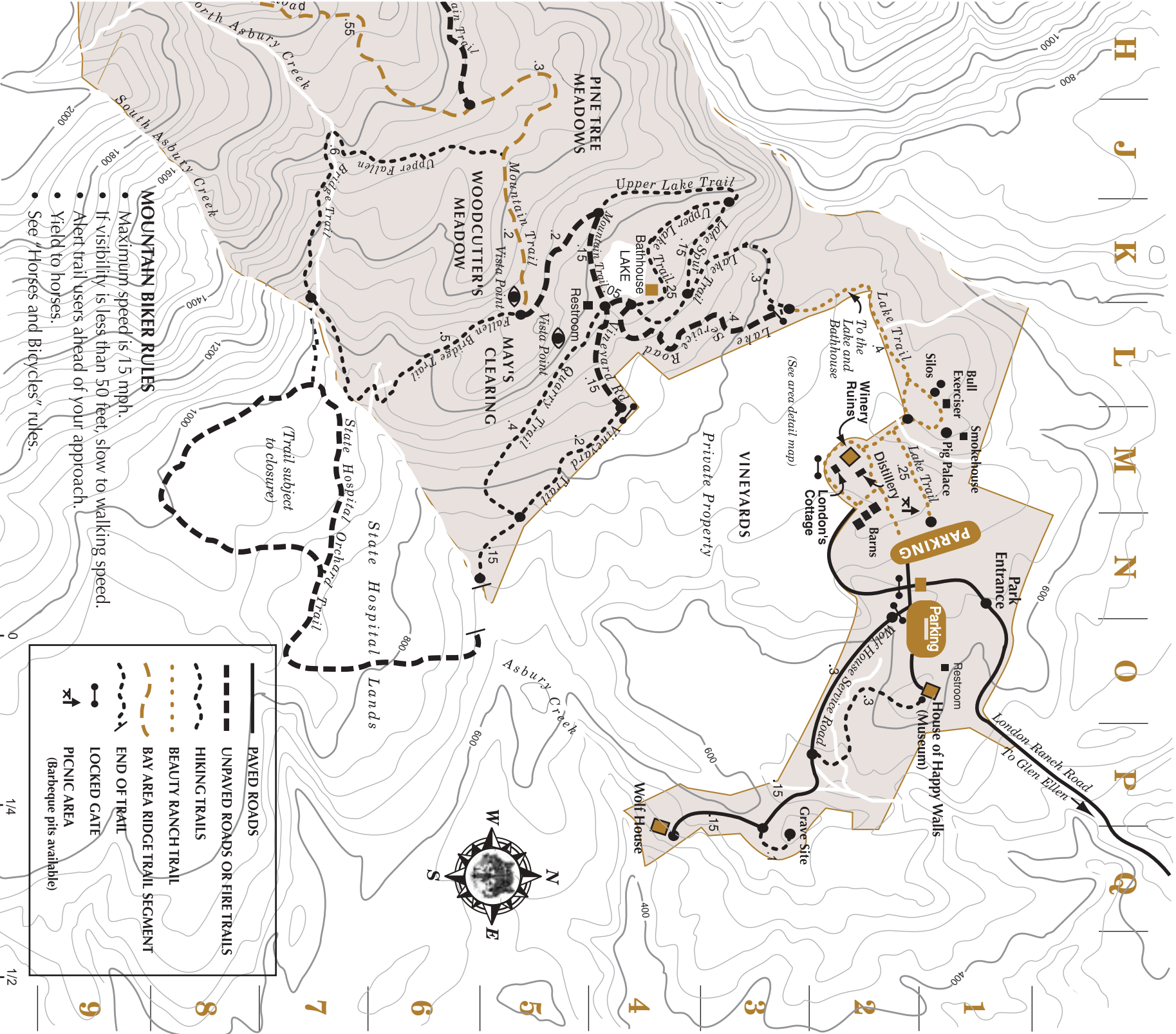
- NOTE:**
- Trails on the slopes of Sonoma Mountain are quite steep.
 - The actual summit lies outside the park on private property.
 - Drinking water is not available on the mountain trails.

HORSES AND BICYCLES

- Horses and bicycles are restricted to designated, named trails only.
- Some named trails may be posted for "no use" by horses and/or bicycles.
- No riding off trail or on "short cut" or unnamed trails.
- Obey signs. Check with park rangers when planning your ride.

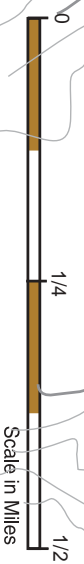
A B C D E F G H J

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



- MOUNTAIN BIKER RULES**
- Maximum speed is 15 mph.
 - If visibility is less than 50 feet, slow to walking speed.
 - Alert trail users ahead of your approach.
 - Yield to horses.
 - See "Horses and Bicycles" rules.

	PAVED ROADS
	UNPAVED ROADS OR FIRE TRAILS
	HIKING TRAILS
	BEAUTY RANCH TRAIL
	BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL SEGMENT
	END OF TRAIL
	LOCKED GATE
	PICNIC AREA (Barbecue pits available)



H | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9