

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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EDWARDS RANCH-ORCHARD FARM
Along East Gaythorne Road and Roger Road
Santa Paula vicinity
Ventura County
California

HABS CA-2962

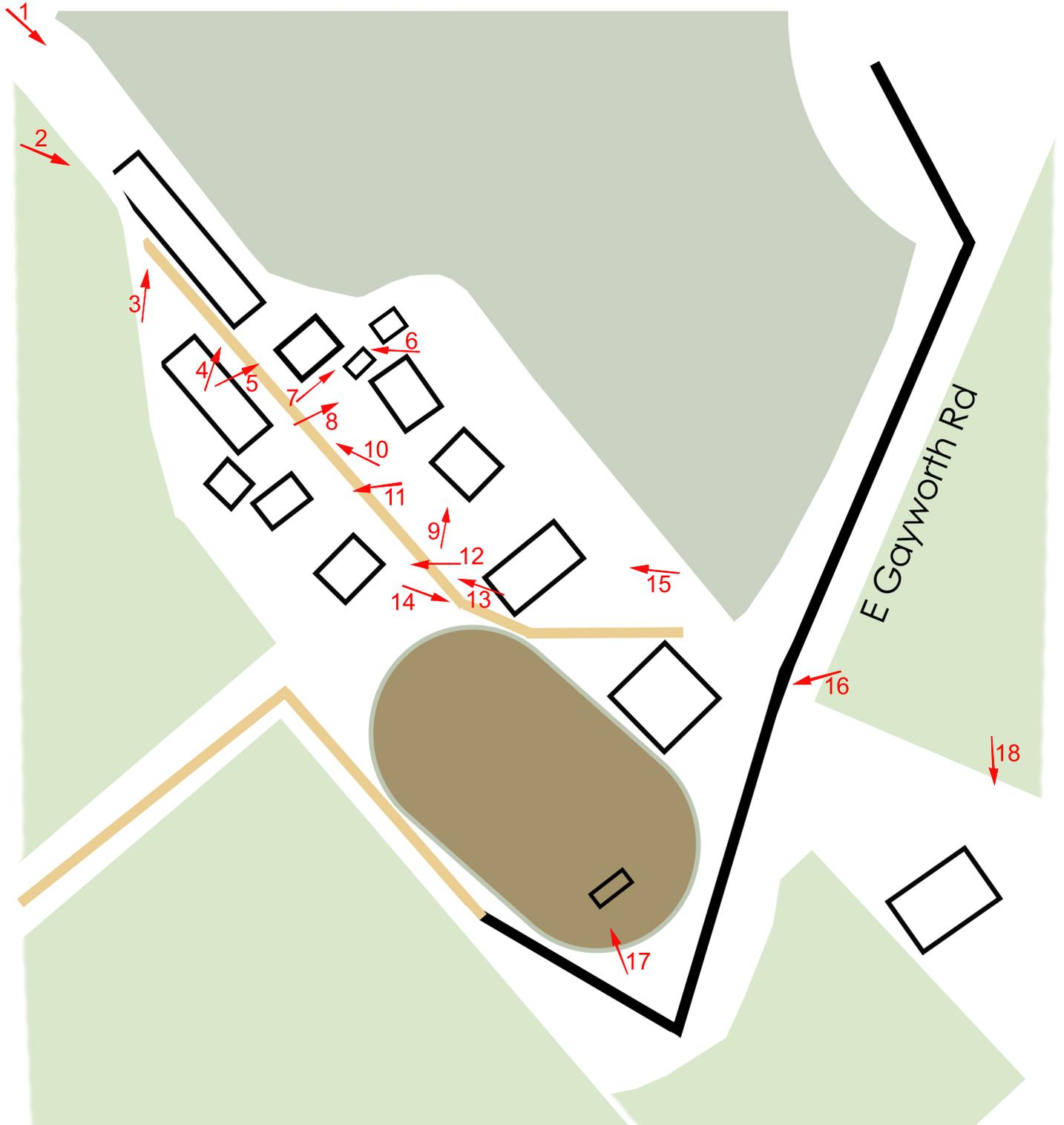
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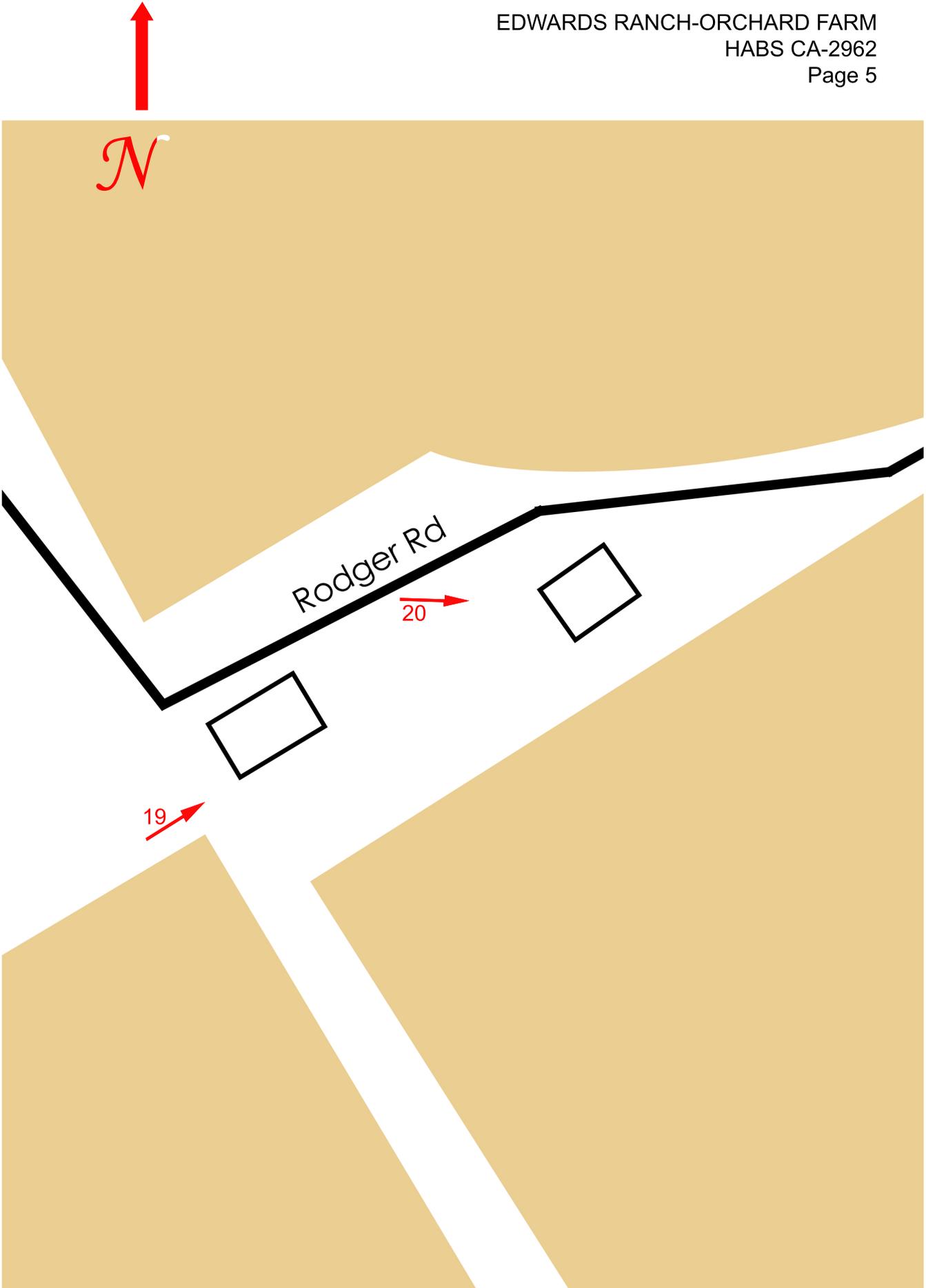
All photographs by Dennis Hill, Content Creation June 27, 2022

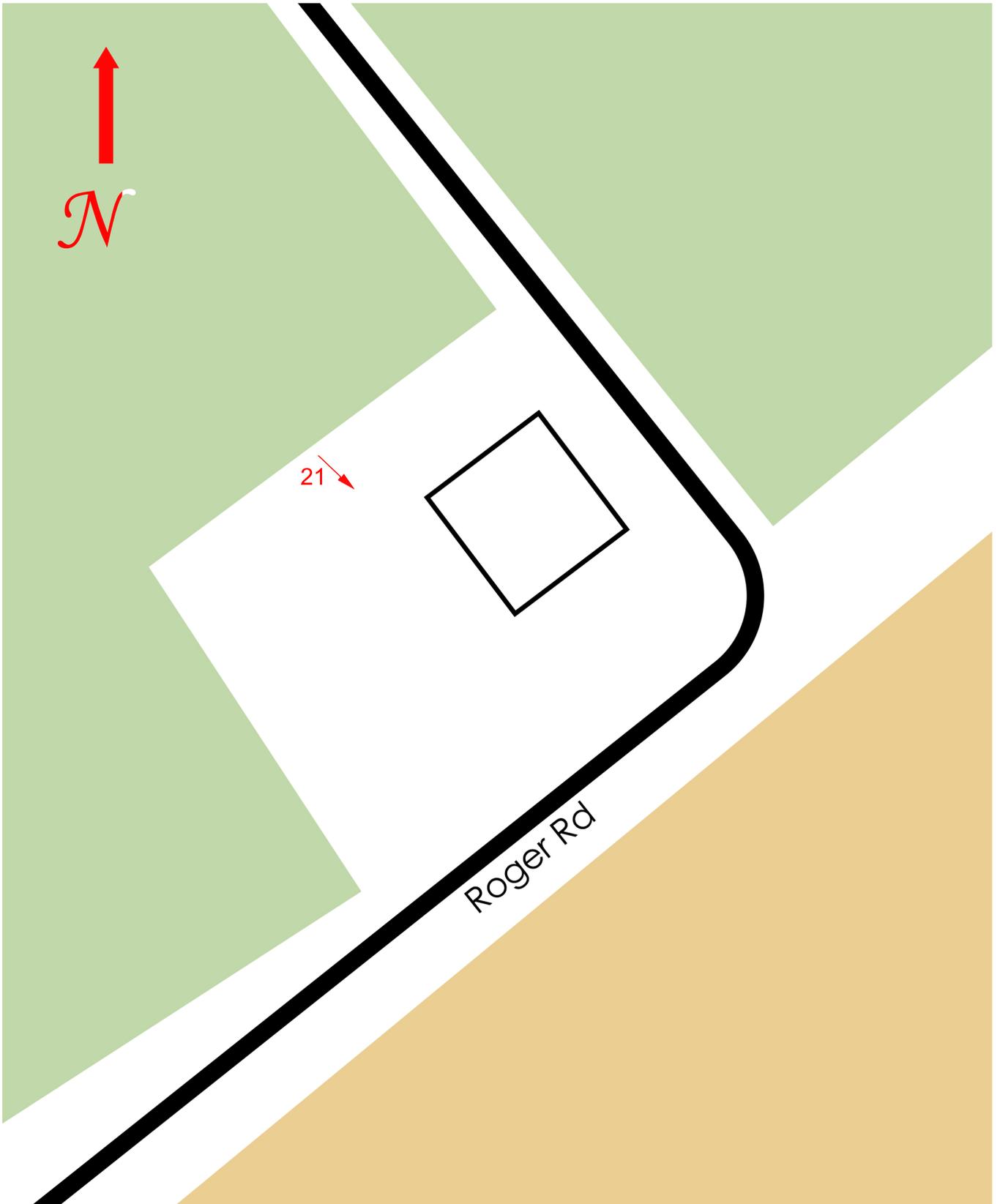
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

EDWARDS RANCH-ORCHARD FARM, SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA

Location: The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm is located on Edwards Ranch Road in Santa Paula, Ventura County, California. The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm is comprised of three sites: The More-Edwards Grouping; Ranch Residence; and Edwards House.¹

The More-Edwards Grouping is located at latitude 34.298873, longitude -119.128149. The Ranch Residence is located at latitude 34.299722, longitude -119.122427. The Edwards House is located at latitude 34.301536, longitude -119.119682. These coordinates represent the central regions of the sites.

Significance: The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm is significant as the oldest continuously operating ranch in the western Santa Clara Valley.² The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm was used for raising livestock, lima bean cultivation, and citriculture, among other uses, over the course of its history, and as such illustrates the historical development of agricultural products and farming techniques from the dry farming of grains and row crops to irrigated tree crops and citrus farming. The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm reflects the growth and development of agriculture in the western Santa Clara Valley from the 1850s to the 1940s.

The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm was one of the first ranches founded in the Santa Clara Valley. It was developed in the 1850s by notable pioneer Thomas More who, along with his brothers Andrew and Henry More, was one of the largest landholders in the state of California at the time. More was one of the earliest dry farmers in the area, planting wheat on his ranch. In 1860, Thomas More hired important Ventura County pioneer, W.D. Hobson to design the More-Edwards Adobe. It is a rare extant example of a Monterey style adobe,³ and was built using both indigenous and imported materials. The More-Edwards Adobe is significant both for its architectural style and its construction method. Today, the More-Edwards Adobe is the second oldest extant building in the Santa Clara Valley.

In the 1860s, the property was purchased by another important early pioneer, George Briggs. Briggs was the first major subdivider of Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy in 1867, and thereby paved the way for agricultural growth and development of the valley in the late 19th century. He planted 160 acres of fruit trees on the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm, one of the earliest orchards to be set out in the Santa Clara Valley.

¹ The names of these sites are derived from the 1996 Western Santa Clara Valley Historic Resources Survey.

² Significance and history are partially derived from the 1996 Western Santa Clara Valley Historic Resources Survey by San Buenaventura Research Associates. It has been altered and supplemented by additional research as needed.

³ "Old Grain Cradle Fingers Given to Museum Here," *Ventura County Star*, September 4, 1934.

Following Samuel Edward's purchase of the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm in the 1880s, they continued to plant more lemon trees and over the subsequent decades, the Edwards family greatly expanded the farm's operations to focus on citrus cultivation. The prosperity and expansion of the farm can be seen in the Edwards House and Ranch Residence, which were constructed in the early 20th century under the direction of Samuel Edward's son, Roger G. Edwards. The Prairie style Edwards House was constructed circa 1910 for Roger G. Edwards by master architect Albert C. Martin.

The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm is associated with the significant growth of ranching and agriculture in the western Santa Clara Valley, key pioneers important in the history of Ventura County history, and several significant buildings designed by renowned architects.

In 1996, the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm was identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district by the Western Santa Clara Valley Historic Resources Survey. In 1968, the More-Edwards Adobe was designated as Ventura County Landmark #2. It was briefly removed from listing due to concerns regarding its condition, and re-designated in 1990.

Description:

The Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm is composed of three groupings: the More-Edwards Grouping; the Ranch Residence; and the Edwards House. These groupings are clustered along a dirt road in a clearing surrounded by lemon orchards and oil drilling equipment. The More-Edwards Grouping is the southwestern most of the groupings on the property, with the Ranch Residence approximately halfway between it and the Edwards House.

More-Edwards Grouping

The More-Edwards Grouping is a grouping of buildings centered on the More-Edwards Adobe. The grouping is divided by a dirt road. Buildings from north to south on the east side of the road are: Schoolhouse Cluster; More-Edwards Adobe; Office; Residence #9 and Garage; Residence #10; Barn #1; and Barn #3. Buildings located from north to south on the west side of the road are: Implement Shed; Residence #7 and Garage; and Residence #8.

Schoolhouse Cluster

The Schoolhouse Cluster is composed of five connected buildings organized in a linear arrangement from northwest to southeast. From north to south, it includes two equipment sheds; the original c. 1870 schoolhouse; a third equipment shed; and a residence.

The northernmost equipment shed is a one-story wood frame structure with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a side gable roof with corrugated metal roofing. The exterior walls are

clad in vertical and horizontal wood plank siding. There are three open bays on the west façade.

The second equipment shed is a one-story wood frame structure with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a side gable roof with corrugated metal roofing. It abuts the equipment shed to the north and the schoolhouse to the south; the west façade is open and the east façade is clad in corrugated metal siding.

The schoolhouse is a one-story utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a side gable roof with open eaves, overhanging rakes, and corrugated metal roofing. The exterior walls are exposed wood studs with interior horizontal wood siding. The primary entrance is centered on the west façade and consists of a partially glazed wood door accessed by a metal stoop and steps. The door is flanked by a window opening on each side; the window sash and frames have been removed, and the openings blocked with plywood.

The third equipment shed is an open sided wood post-and-beam structure with a gable roof.

The residence is a two-story wood-frame utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with open eaves and corrugated metal roofing. The exterior walls are clad in wood clapboard siding. Fenestration consists of rectangular openings; window frames and sash have been removed. There is a first-floor doorway with a wood gate on the west façade; and a second-floor paneled wood door on the south façade, accessed by a wood staircase and landing.

More-Edwards Adobe

The More-Edwards Adobe is partially collapsed. It had a rectangular plan, complex one- and two-story massing, and asymmetrical composition. It had gable and shed roofs with wood shingle roofing. Some of the adobe walls were clad in horizontal wood siding. The primary façade, which originally featured a second-story balcony, has entirely collapsed. Extant features include wood door and window surrounds; some plaster cladding; partially glazed wood door; and brick chimney. Visible fenestration is composed of three-over-three double-hung wood sash windows; other windows are boarded or destroyed.

Office

The Office is located to the south of the More-Edwards Adobe. It is a one-story utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a front gable roof with exposed eaves and wood shingle roofing. The exterior walls are clad in board-and-batten siding. The primary entrance is symmetrically located on the west façade and consists of a four-panel wood door with a simple wood surround. Fenestration consists of coupled, divided-light wood sash windows.

Residence #9 and Garage

Residence #9 and its Garage are situated southeast of the Office. Residence #9 is a one-story building with an irregular plan, asymmetrical composition, and simple massing. It has a hipped roof with gable vents, boxed eaves, composition shingle roofing, lattice gable vents, and an interior brick chimney. The exterior walls are clad in wood clapboard siding. A projecting partial-width porch is located at the southwestern corner of the building; it has a flat roof with shaped wood rafters supported on a wood beam and square wood posts. Fenestration consists primarily of aluminum sliding and four-over-four and one-over-one wood sash double-hung windows in single, coupled, and tripartite configurations, with flat wood surrounds. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the west façade and consists of a door with a metal screen door. The Garage has a rectangular plan and simple massing. It has a gable roof clad in corrugated metal, wood clapboard siding, and a double garage door.

Residence #10

Residence #10 is located to the south of Residence #9. Residence #10 is a one-story vernacular cottage with an L-shaped plan, asymmetrical composition, and simple massing. It has a cross-gable roof with composition shingle roofing, open eaves, overhanging rakes, and an interior brick chimney. The exterior walls are clad in board-and-batten siding. There is a projecting semi-enclosed porch on the west façade, with a hipped pent roof supported on square wood posts and a wood balustrade. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding, vinyl double-hung, and divided-light wood sash double-hung and fixed windows. The primary entrance is located on the semi-enclosed porch and consists of a paneled wood door with a security screen.

Barn #1

Barn #1 is located south of Residence #10. Barn #1 is a one-and-one-half story utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with asphalt shingles, open eaves, overhanging rakes, louvered gable vents, and two gabled vent monitors. The exterior walls are clad in horizontal wood plank siding. There is a lean-to addition on the west façade, with corrugated metal siding and asphalt composition shingle roofing. The north, east, and west façades have sliding wood barn doors with metal hardware. Fenestration is minimal and consists of a single horizontal grouping of wood sash windows.

Barn #3

Barn #3 is located south of Barn #1 and Barn #2. It is a one-and-one-half-story open-sided shed of wood frame construction, with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with

open, bracketed eaves and corrugated metal roofing. The east and west façades are partially clad in corrugated metal siding. There is a large, screened rectangular opening on the east façade and a smaller rectangular opening in the west gable.

Implement Shed

The Implement Shed is located across the road and to the southwest of the Schoolhouse Cluster. It is a one-story open-sided wood post-and-beam structure with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with corrugated metal roofing and open eaves. The gables are clad with corrugated metal siding. The north portion of the building is enclosed with corrugated metal siding on the east and west façades.

Residence #7 and Garage

Residence #7 and its Garage are located to the south of the Implement Shed. Residence #7 is a one-story Craftsman style building with a rectangular plan, asymmetrical composition, and simple massing. It has a low-pitched front gable roof with composition shingle roofing, lattice gable vents, open eaves, and overhanging rakes supported on wood knee braces. It has a partial-width projecting porch with a nested gable roof supported by square wood posts and a wood beam with a dentil molding. The exterior walls are clad in wood clapboard siding. Fenestration consists of steel casement windows. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the east façade and consists of a partially glazed paneled wood door with a flat wood surround, extended lintel, and metal screen door. The Garage has a rectangular plan, simple massing, and a hipped roof with open eaves and wood shingle roofing. The exterior walls are clad in horizontal lap siding. There is a wide wood shelter with flat roof clad in corrugated metal on the east façade.

Residence #8

Residence #8 is situated just south of Residence #7. Residence #8 is a one-story vernacular cottage with an irregular plan, asymmetrical composition, and simple massing. It has a steeply pitched front gable roof with boxed eaves, overhanging rakes, and asphalt composition shingles; and a shed roof on the north lean-to addition. A partial-width projecting porch on the east façade has a shed roof supported by square wood posts. The exterior walls are clad in wood channel siding. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding, vinyl double-hung, and divided-light wood sash double-hung windows with flat wood surrounds. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the east façade and consists of a partially glazed, paneled wood door.

Barn #2

Barn #2 is located south of Barn #1. It is a one-and-one-half-story utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and

asymmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with open eaves, overhanging rakes, and corrugated metal roofing. The exterior walls are clad in wood board-and-batten siding. There are three large rectangular openings on the north façade and a triple barn door on the south façade. Fenestration is minimal and consists of a single aluminum sash horizontal sliding window on the south façade.

Ranch Residence

The Ranch Residence is a small cluster consisting of the Ranch Residence and Ranch Barn.

Ranch Residence

The Ranch Residence is a one-story Craftsman-style building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and symmetrical composition. It has a side gable roof with open eaves, overhanging rakes supported on wood outriggers, composition shingle roofing, and an exterior plastered chimney. There is a projecting partial-width porch on the north façade with a flat roof supported by square wood posts and a full-width enclosed porch on the south façade. The exterior walls are clad in wood clapboard siding. Fenestration consists primarily of divided-light wood casement windows in coupled and tripartite configurations, with flat wood surrounds and extended lintels. The primary entrance is located on the north façade and consists of a wood glazed French door.

Ranch Barn

The Ranch Barn is located west of the Ranch Residence. It is a one-story open-sided shed of wood frame construction, with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a gable roof with open eaves, overhanging rakes, and corrugated metal roofing. There is a lean-to on the south façade. The exterior is partially clad in vertical wood plank siding.

Edwards House

The Edwards House cluster that includes the Roger G. Edwards Residence and Garage and surrounding lawn, specimen trees, and a tennis court.

Roger G. Edwards Residence and Garage

The Roger G. Edwards Residence is a two-story vernacular building with a roughly 'T'-shaped plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a low-pitched hipped roof with open eaves and shaped rafter tails, composition shingle roofing, and three interior brick chimneys. The exterior walls are clad in wood drop siding. Fenestration consists of wood sash, divided light fixed, casement, and double hung windows, some in horizontal groupings. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the north façade and consists of a partially glazed, paneled wood door with a flat wood surround and cornice, flanked by French casements and accessed by a wood porch and steps. A secondary entrance is located on

the east façade. There is a projecting porch at the southwest corner with a shed roof supported on wood posts.

The garage is located south of the Roger G. Edwards Residence. It is a one-story utilitarian building with a rectangular plan, simple massing, and asymmetrical composition. It has a low-pitched gable roof with open eaves and composition shingle roofing. The exterior walls are clad in wood clapboard siding. Wood sash double-hung windows are located on the south and west façades. A pedestrian entrance with wood door is located on the north façade.

History:

The property that comprises the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm was originally part of the 30,000-acre Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy that was granted to Manuel Jimeno Casarin in 1840.

In the late 1850s, brothers Thomas, Andrew, and Henry Moore purchased the land to raise livestock. Originally from Ohio, the More brothers had traveled to California in 1849 where they briefly tried their hand in the mining business. After several years, the brothers turned to cattle and shipping along the California coast. The Mores were successful in these trades and began purchasing land in Southern California. By the 1860s, the More brothers had purchased large swaths of present-day Ventura County, including the Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy, Rancho Sespe, Rancho Lompoc, and the Island of Santa Rosa, making them among the largest landholders in California at that time.

In 1860, Thomas More settled on the Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy, and commissioned notable local architect William D. Hobson to construct a two-story Monterey Revival-style adobe residence (More-Edwards Adobe). Hobson settled in San Buenaventura in 1859. He designed several adobe buildings in Sespe and Saticoy, along with the Ventura County Courthouse, schoolhouse, and several commercial buildings. He became known as the "Father of Ventura County" because of his work in splitting Ventura County from Santa Barbara County in 1873.

By the late 1850s and early 1860s, a series of droughts placed financial strains on the More brother's many landholdings, and they were forced to divide and sell portions of their ranchos. This included the 1862 sale of the land now comprising the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm to George C. Briggs.

George C. Briggs was born in New York in 1825. A successful horticulturalist, Briggs was drawn to the ranch after visiting it in 1861, convinced the land was ideal for a large orchard. The following year he purchased four leagues of the ranch from More for \$40,000. He planted 160 acres of fruit trees near the adobe, one of the first orchards to be set out in the Santa Clara Valley. Briggs eventually abandoned the orchard after several years of work and subdivided the land in 1867. This subdivision paved the way for the agricultural development of the valley.

In the 1880s, notable local resident Samuel Edwards purchased approximately 1,043 acres of the land, including the Briggs Orchard and More Adobe, and renamed it Orchard Farm (it was also known as “Edwards Ranch”). Born in England, Edwards briefly sold mining equipment before moving to Santa Barbara, where he established a hardware business. Edwards continued to reside in Santa Barbara while running Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm. During this period, Edwards expanded the site and continued agricultural cultivation of the land. The first crops raised by Edwards were lima beans, followed by sugar beets and walnuts.

In 1906, Samuel Edwards’ son Roger Edwards moved to the ranch and took control of its operations. In 1908, he hired notable local builders Myers & Abplanalp to construct several large buildings on the ranch.⁴ At the same time, several barn and sheds were remodeled, thereby putting the “big ranch in first-class trim.”⁵

Beginning in 1911, Edwards began to modernize the farm, and diversify income streams from the land. That year, he installed a large pumping system and irrigation plant on the ranch. The system could successfully irrigate seven hundred acres of farmland with water secured via artesian wells. At that time, the *Oxnard Courier* wrote that the property was “one of the finest ranch properties in Ventura County... [it] will be made much more valuable by the installation of this new system.”⁶

Edwards continued improving the property, and in 1913, he again hired Edward Abplanalp for additional construction work. That year, it was reported that the original roof of the adobe house, “which had been put on some 40 or 50 years ago was removed ...to build a new one.”⁷

In the 1920s, Roger Edwards became increasingly involved in oil drilling, including on the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm. By 1925, Edwards had secured over 9,000 acres for oil drilling in Ventura County.⁸ In 1927, it was reported that in addition to his work on the ranch, Roger Edwards served on the board of several local banks and was elected to the state assembly from Ventura County in 1914. He managed the Edwards Ranch-Orchard Farm until 1946.

In 1985, the ranch (Samuel Edwards Associates) joined the Limoneira Company to become the largest agri-business in the Santa Clara Valley.

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**Project
Information:**

This report was prepared for Agromin by Alexandra Madsen, Senior Architectural Historian; John LoCascio, Principal Architect; and Christine Lazzaretto, Managing Principal, of Historic Resources Group, Pasadena, CA.

The report was prepared in partial fulfillment of the mitigation measures stipulated by the County of Ventura Cultural Heritage Board.

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