

HISTORIC-PERIOD RESOURCES IN THE SAN PASQUAL VALLEY AN OVERVIEW OF POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRESERVATION

PATRICK MCGINNIS

The City of San Diego has set aside extensive portions of the San Pasqual Valley as agricultural or open space preserves over the last 40 years. By severely restricting urban development, the City has created a green space that largely retains the rural atmosphere of late 19th- and early 20th-century America. Examples of this rural agricultural heritage present in the Valley include pioneer family houses, farm buildings, dairies, schools, cemeteries, and an aqueduct system. This paper presents a cross-section of the extant historic-period built environment and discusses the challenges of preserving these resources for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

The existing built environment in San Pasqual Valley stretches back well over 150 years. During this time the area has developed rich agricultural traditions that continue today. Evidence of this continuum is found throughout the valley, in places from the Indian Cemetery, which dates back to the Mexican era, when the valley was a Native American pueblo, to the farmhouses, dairies, and irrigation canals of the 1870s to 1940s. The acquisition of properties in the valley by the City of San Diego during the late 1950s, and the subsequent establishment of the area as an agricultural preserve, put an end to potential urban development, making the San Pasqual Valley uniquely qualified to preserve the traditions and constructions of past residents.

THE HISTORIC-ERA BUILT ENVIRONMENT

After purchasing the land, the City usually leased it back to the original owners, who continued the same land-use activities they practiced when it was privately owned. As a result of this, most structures in the valley, with the exception of the Wild Animal Park, were built before the mid-1950s. A large number of structures and features from the earlier part of the 20th century and the latter part of the 19th century still exist in viable states of use. These include residences, dairies, farms and associated buildings, cemeteries, schools, and irrigation systems. These stand as a testament to the valley's importance as a center of agriculture and the dairy industry in San Diego County and southern California. The

challenge for the City of San Diego is to find ways to preserve these resources while continuing to meet the needs of the community. Presented here are just a few of many examples that highlight the rich history of this area.

RESIDENCES

The Olds Residence/de Jong Dairy

This building (figures 1 and 2) was constructed prior to 1901 by Nelson Olds Jr., who arrived in San Diego with his father in 1878 (*San Diego Union* 1934). The Olds family was prominent in the dairy business from the 1880s until Olds Jr. retired in 1912. The Olds brothers grew their own alfalfa for feed, exported alfalfa seed, and also devoted acreage to raising fruit crops, including Muscat grapes (Black 1913). The building, located in Cloverdale Canyon, is vernacular in style with clapboard siding and multi-hipped roofs. The Olds brothers ranch became the Cloverdale Ranch in the 1940s and the de Jong Dairy in 1980 (Keiser 1986). The building has been associated with the dairy industry in San Pasqual Valley for over 100 years. Today, it serves as the office for the de Jong dairy.

The Wood House

Constructed between 1880 and 1890, this house was the home of dairyman Frank Wood and his family (figures 3 and 4). Wood and the Olds brothers Nelson and Edward established the Circle Creamery in 1895, merging ten years later with the Judson Creamery (Keiser 1986). Members of the Woods family lived here as late as the 1960s. This



Figure 1. The Olds residence, front view.



Figure 2. The Olds residence, oblique view.



Figure 3. The Wood house, front view.



Figure 4. The Wood house; oblique view.



Figure 5. The Clevenger house, front view.



Figure 6. The Clevenger house, oblique view.



Figure 7. The John B. Judson House, front view.



Figure 8. The Earl Bishop Dairy, oblique view.



Figure 9. The San Pasqual Breeder's Association Building, now a residence.



Figure 10. The Seventh Day Adventist School in 1999.



Figure 11. The San Pasqual Academy in 1999.



Figure 12. The San Pasqual Academy after renovation in 2001.



Figure 13. The East Pasqual Adobe Schoolhouse, prior to 1918. (From *San Pasqual: A Crack in the Hills* by Mary Rockwood-Peet)



Figure 14. The East Pasqual Adobe Schoolhouse, post 1918 and prior to restoration in 1944. (From *Henry Fenton: Typical American* by Laura Fenton)



Figure 15. The East Pasqual Adobe Schoolhouse as it stands presently.



Figure 16. The Indian Pueblo-period cemetery, facing northeast.



Figure 17. The Pioneer Cemetery, facing northwest.



Figure 18. Stone and mud-mortared catch-basin from the late 18th or early 19th century.

pyramidal folk-style house is clapboard-sided with a low, pitched, hipped roof with ridge, partially enclosed shed-roof porch, and casement and bay windows. It is presently used as a residence.

The Clevenger House

No longer in its original location (one-quarter of a mile to the north), the Clevenger house has the distinction of being the earliest remaining wood-framed structure in San Pasqual Valley (figures 5 and 6; Rustvold 1968). Clevenger farmed the land and rented out pasturage to sheep ranchers. The home was built in 1872 and was originally a one-room structure with attic (Keiser 1986). Later construction gave the home the salt-box/hall-and-parlor style it has today; additions built of adobe are no longer standing. Currently, the Clevenger house is in a dilapidated state and would require serious restoration.

The John B. Judson House

The John B. Judson house (Figure 7) has been occupied continuously by members of that family since its initial construction in 1887. Judson and family arrived in San Pasqual in 1875. He was the first to introduce alfalfa to the area and was a pioneer in developing the dairy industry that would come to dominate agricultural life in the valley (Rustvold 1968). An ordained minister, Judson also helped to organize the Seventh Day Adventist church in the area, and he and his descendents were church elders (Rockwood-Peet 1949). The house, designed by Robert Ellis, is typical of the period, with clapboard siding, fishscale-sided gabled dormers, and an interesting gable-on-hip roof (Keiser 1986). This house was designated an historical landmark by the San Diego Historical Site Board in 1984.

DAIRIES AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS

The Bert Verger Dairy

The Verger Dairy (no photo) was originally part of the H. G. Fenton ranch and was built by Fenton in the early 1940s (Gunn 1946). Like others associated with this period, the dairy was built in the Commercial/Moderne style with a rectangular plan, stucco walls, rounded corners, and little ornamentation — minus the tile, hipped

roof office added later. Fenton arrived in San Pasqual at the age of seven in 1879. In addition to his dairy interests, Fenton built substantial businesses in the construction industry and remained a community leader for the rest of his life (Fenton n.d.). Bert Verger has operated the dairy since 1967 (Keiser 1986).

The Earl Bishop Dairy

Originally part of the Judson Dairy, the Earl Bishop Dairy was built sometime in the 1930s or 1940s in the Art/ Moderne style (Figure 8). The dairy consists of two stucco-covered, flat-roofed buildings with stylistic elements including glass-brick windows and flush rectangular vents. Concrete and metal cow pens, feed bins, and a silo, are also on site. The dairy was operated by Earl Bishop from 1970 until 1987 (Keiser 1986).

The San Pasqual Breeders Association Building

This building (Figure 9) now serves as a residence but was once the headquarters of the San Pasqual Breeders Association. This cooperative organization, formed in 1945, was developed to increase dairy production through artificial insemination and health examinations of cattle. The organization disbanded in 1954, due to technological advances in cattle breeding (Keiser 1986). This building, like the Verger and Bishop dairies, is built in the Commercial/Moderne style with a flat roof, stucco walls, and rounded corners.

SCHOOLS

Seventh Day Adventist School

The forbear of the San Pasqual Academy, this one-room schoolhouse (Figure 10) was built by the community in 1898 on land donated by Peter Georgeson, to serve the needs of the growing Seventh Day Adventist community, including pioneer families such as the Judsons, Georgesons, Potts, Johnsons, and Marchuses (*San Diego Evening Tribune* 1954; Rockwood-Peet 1949). This building is the oldest Adventist church school in California (Carrico 1999). No longer in its original location, the school has exterior board-and-batten siding, a three-post, hipped-roofed

porch, and double-hung, parallel side windows. The school was replaced by the San Pasqual Academy in 1949.

San Pasqual Academy

The San Pasqual Academy opened in 1949 on 239 acres of the Ervin Georgeson Ranch at the east end of the valley (*San Diego Union* 1949). Initially designed to be a self-sufficient operation, the academy (figures 11 and 12) could house up to 500 boys and girls and supported businesses through which the students could receive vocational training. These included an egg ranch, dairy, citrus and avocado orchards, a book bindery, and a student-run store to sell the products of the academy. Additionally, several small residences for housing teachers were built on the property. During the period of the late 1950s, as the City purchased properties in the valley, the San Pasqual Academy retained ownership of the land by selling its water rights to the City (Rustvold 1968).

The core complex consists of the classrooms, dormitories, gymnasium, cafeteria, and administration building. These buildings were constructed in the Commercial/Moderne style similar to another Adventist school built earlier at Loma Linda, California (Carrico 1999). These buildings are box-like, with stylistic elements such as horizontal linear placement of windows, rounded corners, and rectilinear columns that blend into the façade. The Academy closed its doors in the mid-1990s, as enrollment dropped. In 1999, the County of San Diego Probation Department proposed to purchase the property from the Seventh Day Adventists and, through adaptive reuse, to turn it into a juvenile justice facility (Jenkins 2000). Although the County purchased the land, this proposal was dropped after an intensely negative backlash developed from nearby residents. In late 2001, the County, in partnership with the local business community, renovated the core complex and converted it into a school for foster teenagers (*San Diego Union* 2002). The first students arrived in October of 2001, and ultimately the school plans to serve more than 250 students; plans for further construction of facilities are in the works as of this writing.

East Pasqual Adobe Schoolhouse

This building (figures 13-15) was originally constructed in 1882 by N. R. Roberts on land donated by the Darling family; it was built by the community, including the Judsons and future community leader H. G. Fenton (Rockwood-Peet 1949). By 1918 a new and larger school was needed, and the San Pasqual Union School was built in response. The roof, doors, and windows of the adobe school were removed for reuse in the union school. In the ensuing years the school, without protection from the elements, fell into disrepair. In 1944, Henry Fenton sought to rectify the problem and paid to have his old school refurbished. The adobe walls were encased in stucco; windows, roof, and doors were replaced; and a cement-slab floor and steps were added. This was done for the purposes of a reunion of the class of 1886, which was photographed by a National City photographer at that time. All surviving classmates and their teacher, Elizabeth Judson Roberts, were reunited (Rockwood-Peet 1949). This occasion was celebrated by Life Magazine in September of that year and became an annual event until Fenton's death in 1951. Today the gable roof is almost completely collapsed, and many windows are broken out. Additionally, graffiti was spray painted on the interior and exterior of the building when it was used as a location for an episode of the television series "Renegade." However, the walls remain sound, and the building would seem an excellent candidate for restoration.

CEMETERIES

Indian Pueblo-Period Cemetery

Now on land owned by the San Pasqual Union School District, this cemetery is the earliest historic-period resource in the valley (Figure 16). Originally established by the ex-neophytes of the mission system, the cemetery has been continuously maintained by Native Americans at least since the establishment of the Mexican-period Pueblo of San Pasqual in a land grant given to them in 1845 by then governor Echeandia (Farris 1994). Associated with the cemetery was an adobe church that no longer exists (Bevington

1926). Originally the cemetery was surrounded by an adobe wall, and in older photographs it appears to have extended beyond its present limits.

Pioneer Cemetery

The Pioneer Cemetery is located on a knoll just north of the Santa Ysabel river, at the east end of the valley (Figure 17). During the early part of the 20th century, the valley's population grew and residents decided that a formal cemetery was needed as opposed to the tradition of burying the dead on their homesteads. In 1911, the San Pasqual Cemetery Association was formed and the land secured from donations by the Trussel and Rockwood families (Keiser 1986). Most of the leading families of the area have plots there, including the Judsons, Johnsons, Georgesons, Rockwoods, Trussels, Peets, Roberts, and others. Interments have taken place as late as 1998.

IRRIGATION

Catch Basins, Ditches, and Aqueducts

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries of San Pasqual Valley's history, irrigation was achieved through a variety of means. Practices ranged from simple flooding techniques to more complex wooden flumes and underground pipelines. Individual farmers built catch basins (Figure 18) and ditches for their own uses or cooperated in building large earth-and-stone aqueducts that covered large portions of the valley. The latter can be found at numerous points up-slope on the eastern side of Cloverdale Canyon.

CONCLUSION

Because of the rare state of preservation in both the natural and the built environment, San Pasqual Valley is a special resource worth preserving. The presence of so many structures and places dating back to the 19th century provides a chance for a true glimpse into a period long past. The valley contains resources that are excellent examples of the post-colonial period and specifically the late 19th century. These resources represent the sweeping patterns of migration that typified this period. As a regional center of the

dairy industry that continues today, these places are important for their contribution to the prosperity of the San Diego area as a whole.

There are a variety of ways in which the City of San Diego can maintain the character and setting of San Pasqual Valley and its built environment. The valley possesses concentrations and continuity of sites, buildings, structures, and objects that retain more meaning when seen in their historic and geographic contexts as whole. Evaluation of the properties on an individual basis, as part of an historic district or a rural cultural landscape, can be done by the City to determine significance at the local, state, and national levels. Most buildings continue to be used in the manner for which they were built, or not at all. Houses continue to serve as residences, and cemeteries remain cemeteries. However, the majority of dairies are no longer in operation, with the Judson, Bishop, and San Pasqual dairies closing in the last 20 years.

Adaptive reuse that preserves the integrity of sites and structures, while allowing for a change in utilization, is one way to meet both preservation goals and the changing needs of the population. Evidence for this can be found in the change from the San Pasqual Academy to a school for foster children and in other buildings that have found uses other than their intended purposes. Buildings that have switched uses without changing the structures include the Old's house (converted to an office for the de Jong dairy) and the San Pasqual Breeder's Association building (converted to a residence). Other alternatives include restoration of buildings to their original states, preservation and/or stabilization of sites and structures, and adaptive reuse for retail, exhibition, and educational purposes. In this way we can preserve San Pasqual's past for future generations.

As of August 2001, only the John B. Judson house has been placed on the register of historical landmarks designated by the City of San Diego Historical Site Board. However, many others, including the Verger Dairy, Bishop Dairy, East Pasqual Adobe Schoolhouse, Old's house, and the San Pasqual Breeder's Association Building, have been evaluated and await determinations of eligibility.

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