

HOMESTEADING AROUND MUROC

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ABSTRACT

The Enlarged Homestead Act and the Back-To-The-Land movement spurred settlement in the western Mojave Desert during the early 20th century. A large homesteading community emerged during this period, centered around the railroad town of Muroc, and the general region of Muroc Dry Lake. These areas are now part of Edwards Air Force Base (AFB). By examining the archaeological component of homesites on the eastern half of Edwards AFB in light of their historic context, the economic and social structures can be understood. Comparison of the Muroc area with other regions settled under a similar context can reveal the social and cultural underpinnings of homesteading in the Antelope Valley and the western Mojave Desert.

Introduction

In 1934, passage of the Taylor Grazing Act effectively closed the public domain to homesteading (Layton 1988). In 1935, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6588, marking the official beginning of the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range, the precursor of Edwards Air Force Base (Air Adjutant General 1917-1938) (Figure 1). The homesteading era was ending in the western Mojave Desert. However, the homesteaders in the western Antelope Valley lasted for almost another twenty years, until the Base consolidated its holdings by absorbing the homesteaded properties within its boundaries and obtaining the remaining public land on the western side of Rogers Dry Lake. When one views the archaeological remnants of these ambitious homesteads in the desert, he or she is forced to wonder what brought the settlers there, how they lived, and if their efforts were rewarded with success or failure.

The predominant historic period settlement within the boundaries of Edwards AFB was the railroad town of Muroc; it was the area's most significant settlement in the early twentieth-century. Muroc began in 1882 as a whistle stop on the Southern Pacific rail line between Mojave and Barstow. However, settlement in the area did not flourish until 1909, when the Corum family claimed a homestead. The Corums acted as "locaters" and persuaded friends and acquaintances to homestead in the Muroc area. The Corums previously lived in the Los Angeles basin and had an office in the Hellman building, where they recruited potential homesteaders to move to the Muroc area. A large majority of the homesteaders recruited by the Corums also previously lived in the Los Angeles basin, primarily in the cities of Compton and Long Beach. Migrants were often guided by friends or family as well as hired locaters (Bowen 1994a; Allen 1987). The urban West was fertile ground for recruiting potential settlers to the arid West, such as Nevada, Central Oregon, and California's western Mojave Desert (Bowen 1994a; Allen 1987).

The historical record of a region that was homesteaded so late in American settlement history is a resource to be taken seriously. As artifacts of material culture, the most "vernacular" of landscapes has the potential to tell a great deal about the people who undertook such a risky adventure as homesteading in an incredibly harsh environment. This remaining material culture record expresses the dreams and ambitions of those who were searching for a place to call their own in one of the West's final frontiers (Chappel 1990).

Few of the homesteaders who moved to the Muroc area in the early 20th century were able to support themselves solely through agriculture or ranching. Alfalfa cultivation was the primary agricultural pursuit as well as truck farming and poultry production. Alfalfa is highly dependent on an abundant water supply; irrigation was the primary means for successful alfalfa cultivation in the high desert. The lands open for homesteading through the Desert Land Act of 1877 and the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 were classified as non-irrigable, which displays the lack of foresight on the part of local homesteaders in choosing agricultural crops (Gates 1968).

Dry farming techniques do not appear to have been used in the Muroc area. Agriculture was supplemented by off-homestead employment and truck farming and home poultry production. Naoma Darr Spangenberg, the daughter of local homesteaders, remembered having 10 to 20 chickens roaming the homestead for consumption, and Effie Corum Pelton recalled that turkeys were kept (Spangenberg 1994; Pelton n.d.). Off-homestead employment, primarily at the Pacific Coast Borax Mine in Boron, 14 miles to the northeast, was a necessity. Homesteaders were also employed at the mines in Atolia and Randsburg, and worked building local roads (Branstetter 1966).

A variety of contrasting factors drew homesteaders into the Muroc area. The region was affected by the steady stream of individuals who migrated into and out of the Los Angeles area in the early 20th century. The incredible growth of urban soci-

ety in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the impact of extensive tides of immigration on urban society, the impact of large-scale industrialization, and the urban Victorian preoccupation with health and sanitation served to “push” people away from expanding urban areas. Land laws designed to spur settlement on the Great Plains and the arid and the semiarid West, railroad advertisements of cheap railroad land, and visions of bucolic and salubrious healthy living fueled by the back-to-the-land movement were magnetic draws which pulled dissatisfied urbanites to the western Mojave. The result was a stream of working-class homesteaders from the urban West, who moved into the vicinity of Muroc with little or no farming experience, especially in the harsh environment of the Mojave Desert.

Jeanette Darr, a homesteader from San Diego, “thought it was the jumping off place of creation, especially when I saw that curiously flat wasteland called dry lake! The land looked worthless, which it was. Not a living thing grew on it, and its claypan was like cement. The winds blew up and down and across it carried nothing but dirt and tumbleweeds” (Branstetter 1966:7). This “flat wasteland” was the region into which the homesteaders were coming to farm and ranch. As Marshall Bowen (1994b) said regarding the settlers of Independence Valley, Nevada “In retrospect, it is clear that these men and women had created a perfect formula for disaster.”

In the late 19th century, the country’s economy changed rapidly and the urban growth rate was incredible. Urban growth between 1890 and 1910 was between 36 and 56 percent, while rural growth was between 9 and 13 percent for the same time period. By 1910, the United States was only 54 percent rural, whereas as little as twenty years before it had been 65 percent rural (Nugent 1981). Stanford Layton states: “On balance, more people flowed into the cities than out of them, but beginning in the first decade of the century, and rolling into the second under a full head of steam, was a collective passion—indeed, an emotional contagion—among many urban Americans: to gain ownership of their own tract of farmland” (Layton 1988:58). This demographic shift from urban to rural is the basis of the back-to-the-land movement.

The middle class was growing in congested dirty cities. Commercial growth and industrialization created a nation of shopkeepers and merchants who were the first generation of native-born city dwellers. These were people who did not have a first-hand knowledge of rural life (Blumin 1989). European and Hispanic immigrants who worked low-paying jobs in urban areas exacerbated urban problems by creating a larger pool for unskilled labor, which caused resentment among native-born populations. The arid West was beginning to be seen as a place, that “appealed to the Victorian values of hard work, being conscientious, going back to the ‘basics’ and living off the land, and obeying God’s laws. Self-sufficiency was the ideal value, and the homesteader could create a livelihood without the assistance of the outside world”(Salter 1994:1).

Given the long-standing American view “that farmers were naturally virtuous and freedom-loving pillars of democracy, unlike the decadent aristocrats, wretched aliens, and greedy businessmen of urban America,” the growth of an urbanized citi-

zenry raised the specter of a nation bereft of its traditional, conservative values. One response to this potential threat was the back-to-the-land movement, aimed at creating a best-of-both-worlds of synthesis of the city and the country. The chief promoters of the back-to-the-land movement—politicians, lawyers, educators, speculators, bankers, and the like—“proceeded from the assumption that the cities were overpopulated while the rural districts were correspondingly underpopulated.” Some reformers advocated redressing the imbalance by moving urban dwellers from all walks of life into small plots of land in the outlying fringes of the city. There they could become largely self-sufficient by raising their own fruits and vegetables and by keeping chickens, hogs, and dairy cows, while remaining close enough to the city to work there as well as to obtain goods and services available only in urban areas. Other advocates focused on attracting people, especially unemployed urban workers and recent foreign immigrants, to the arid lands of the West (Bowen 1994).

The back-to-the-land movement played on Victorian fears of unhealthy city living. As the cities were becoming more congested, diseases were becoming more prevalent and virulent. Sanitation became a growing concern and indoor plumbing systems became standard during this period. However, for many people, leaving the cities became an important option. The back-to-the-land movement literature played on these fears; country life was called “salubrious. It makes sick people healthy, weak people strong, old people young, and young people mature. Life in the country cures tuberculosis, whooping cough, anemia, and a variety of other physical maladies. It revitalizes one’s appetite but keeps him lean. It promotes longer and sounder sleep which increases a person’s productivity during his waking hours. It sharpens a person’s physical senses. Odors, flavors, sounds, and sights are suddenly startling in their intensity. Life opens entirely new vistas for aesthetic appreciation and lends an extra dimension to the wonders of creation” (Layton 1988:58-59). Charles Anderson, the proprietor of the Muroc Mercantile Store, a Spanish-American war veteran suffered from tuberculosis, until he moved to Muroc in 1917, where he was cured of his suffering.

City dwellers were encouraged by the movement’s literature to escape their congested surroundings and start new lives in the country, where they could breathe fresh air, raise their children in wholesome social environments, and, perhaps most important of all, establish places of their own.

Railroads

The railroads served to promote settlement in the arid West, particularly along their rail lines in order to sell their land grants. The Southern Pacific established the road between Mojave and Barstow which served the Muroc area; however, by agreement it was transferred to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe in 1884, when the Southern Pacific agreed to allow the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe into the growing California market in exchange for the Santa Fe’s line to the Gulf of California. However, the Southern Pacific continued to manage its large land grant, which was not transferred to the Santa Fe.

The Southern Pacific aggressively marketed its lands for settlement along the now Santa Fe line. Marshall Bowen writes that: "All of the new railroads sought to attract settlers to areas served by their tracks, but none outdid the Western Pacific, which organized specially discounted homeseeker's excursions to various points in Nevada and declared shamelessly that some of the most depressing flats along its routes were in fact fertile, well-watered valleys with almost unlimited opportunities for farmers" (Bowen 1994).

Back-To-The-Land Movement

The nationwide back-to-the-land movement encouraged many settlers who were city people and who sought to exchange unsatisfactory jobs and living conditions in the urban West for new lives in the country (Bowen 1994). Many of the settlers into the Muroc area were oil field workers from Signal Hill in Long Beach who lived in the neighboring community of Compton. The Mertz, Economus, and Corum each came from this area and later settled the Muroc area. These people aspired to be commercial farmers and sought inexpensive land. They aspired to become one's own proprietor on one's own farm, a preoccupation that they shared with a large segment of the American public (Layton 1988:37-8). However these hopes were dashed by the impracticality of alfalfa farming in the high desert on land that was difficult at best to irrigate. Furthermore, the later establishment of the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range in the mid 1930's permanently changed the identity of the area.

It was more than coincidental that the back-to-the-land movement happened at a time when prices for farm products were rising sharply. The economic advantages of owning a farm were magnified when the price of wheat nearly doubled between 1898 and 1909 and then shot upward following the outbreak of the First World War. These considerations appealed to rural and small town residents as well as city people, and made developing a piece of virgin land, even in the western Mojave Desert, appear to be a reasonable strategy for improving the quality of a person's life (Bowen 1994).

Land Laws

The Homestead Act of 1862, the 1877 Desert Land Act, and the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 were the primary laws that affected settlement in the western Mojave Desert. These laws were developed to encourage settlement in the arid and semiarid portions of the West; however, much of this land was unsuitable for farming. In the western Mojave Desert, between 2 to 3 inches of rain on average falls every year, which is less than the estimated 20 inches of rain a year necessary for agricultural purposes. Irrigation was the only means for effective farming on the high desert.

Effective settlement in the Muroc area began in 1909; the original settlers homesteaded under the Desert Land Laws and the Homestead Act of 1862. California was not originally affected by the Enlarged Homestead Act since it did not want to

be characterized as a semi-arid state. It opened its public lands to the Enlarged Homestead Act a year later in 1910.

Desert Land Laws

As enacted in 1877 up to one section of land could be acquired for \$1.25 an acre provided it was to be "reclaimed." In 1891, the amount that could be acquired was limited to 320 acres, and improvements to bring water to the land costing \$3 an acre had to be put toward land for cultivation. The wording of the law enabled both husband and wife to acquire 320 acres whereas, under homestead laws, double entries were not permitted (Gates 1968:490-1). The Homestead Act of 1862 was the basic homesteading provision until 1909. It allowed claimants to claim 160 acre parcels, which had to be improved over a five year period or potentially revert back to federal government ownership.

Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909

The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 was a dry-farming homestead measure that provided for 320-acre grants of non-irrigable, non-mineral lands having no merchantable value which were within the states of Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and the territories of Arizona and New Mexico. (California, Idaho, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota, initially included, were withdrawn upon request of their congressional representations.) Five years of continuous residence was originally required, except in the case of some two million acres in Utah; and a graduated scale of cultivation was required. Commutation (buying title to the homestead after a specified period in order to hasten the ownership process, usually with the motive of making a quick sale) was prohibited. Authority for determining which lands were to be available for entry was placed with the Department of the Interior (Layton 1988:21).

The Enlarged Homestead Act underwent several important amendments during the first five years of its enactment. Chief among them were a reduction in the residency requirements from five years to three in 1912; an abandonment of the continuous residence requirement of twelve months per year, in favor of seven, in 1912; and the inclusion of Idaho and California within its provisions in 1910 (Layton 1988:21).

The Enlarged Homestead Act had as its aim the opening of marginal lands to a highly specialized form of farming, a form that showed every promise of transforming those lands into a productive agricultural resource. As such, the act coincided exactly with Roosevelt's concept of conservation. "Conservation," he insisted, "is not keeping out of use, but is putting things to be the best use without waste, and where possible, preserving their potential usefulness unimpaired" (Layton 1988:23). The Enlarged Homestead Act did not live up to expectations to create a bread basket in the arid and semiarid West.

Construction

Once homesteaders made the trek from the Los Angeles basin or elsewhere to the high desert, their first task was to construct temporary buildings to provide shelter for the family and the animals. These temporary houses were lived in while the permanent houses were being constructed, either as new buildings or as add-ons to the claim cabins. One of the first tasks was to dig a well on the homestead; however, water was often hauled from a neighbor's well before the family could dig its own (Chappel 1990:51). These improvements occurred in the first three years of arriving on the homestead.

Claim cabins were usually small simple gable-roofed, one-story structures. They were temporary buildings that provided shelter from the scorching heat and winter rains. Jill Chappel relates that, "Homesteaders...commonly built one-to-three-room cabins once they had arrived on their claims. The most basic architectural principles were employed in the construction of these buildings mainly because of the necessity to erect a shelter as soon as possible" (Chappel 1990:93).

While some homesteaders such as the Mertz family built entirely new homes, many homestead builders often used the claim cabin as the fundamental building unit, upon which to expand. It was "easier and cost effective to simply add onto the house rather than build an entire new one" (Chappel 1990:93). The builders in the Muroc area were adept at scavenging and reusing building materials from abandoned or collapsed buildings. David Mertz, the son of a local builder, noted that if a homestead was vacant for more than several weeks, the owner would find missing lumber and hardware when he returned.

Box construction or board and batten was a commonly employed method of construction among homestead buildings in the Muroc area. Adobe was another important construction technique and building material that was present in the Muroc area.

Board and batten typically utilizes rough-sawn actual, as well as nominal, lumber including 1 x 12's, 2 x 4's, and 2 x 6's. This construction technology can be found in almost every type of ranch building from shops to chicken houses to garages. Box construction is defined in this study as the technique of using vertical planks as the main supporting structural components. The wall boards span the entire wall height and are held rigid by 2 x 4's or 2 x 6's nailed horizontally inside the building at the top of the wall (a top plate in some cases, a ledger in others), near the base of the wall, and as it girts at one to two intervals between. Often there is no interior sheathing to add extra strength to the walls, and the structural system is in full view. Two thicknesses of planks may be used, but in such a case, girts are absent" (Chappel 1990:102-104).

Box, or single wall, constructed buildings on the ranches are generally small in size. Most measure an average of fourteen by twenty feet. Many of these

buildings were former homestead cabins dating to the 1910's that were moved onto ranches to house different ranch activities. This construction technique was in continual use by Fort Ranch ranchers and builders at least through 1945 (Chappel 1990:105).

The primary plan form for most buildings is rectangular to nearly square, except the Bacon-Darr Adobe and the Lansford Adobe. Frequently additions were made during the course of a building's occupancy resulting in the building's overall plan taking on an "L" or "T" shape (Chappel 1990:95). Most homestead ranches had at least one root cellar and often more than one, located either directly under the house or nearby. Cellars were the principal facilities for the storage of home-canned items and foodstuffs which required a cool atmosphere to avoid spoilage (Chappel 1990:183).

Outbuildings were added to the ranch or farmstead as needed. As the ranch proved successful more outbuildings were moved onto the homestead... Certain structures are found on all of the ranches. Those include a main house, a well tower or a windmill derrick with associated pumphouse, a barn, at least one shop, a garage/storage building, an outhouse, and a separate woodshed... The siting of buildings on a ranch is dependent upon factors such as topography, the direction of the prevailing winds, and the rancher's idea of what was convenient or what layout worked best. The latter is particularly true in corral construction. Common sense was a strong determinant as well (Chappel 1990:51-52).

A multidisciplinary approach has been used to record the homesteading community of Muroc. Archival documentation, oral history, archaeological and architectural investigations have been conducted to provide a balanced and complimentary record of the people who settled around Muroc and the material culture which was left behind. Each type of information records a different aspect of the phenomenon of desert homesteading in the Mojave.

Four homestead sites recorded during the ongoing Precision Impact Range Area (PIRA) cleanup Phase I cultural resources inventory become more meaningful when connected with related historical documentation. Site EAFB-1079, recorded as an "historic period homesite or ranching feature," contained a possible holding pond, a crater filled with structural debris, remnants of a barbed wire stock pen, and a large can scatter (Figure 2) (Silsbee et. al. 1994).

Recorded as part of the real estate appraisal report completed for the Muroc Bombing Field expansion, a description of the site in 1938 was available. It was found that the property consisted of a "well equipped with [a] windmill, which belongs to Mr. Patterson, who is [a] cattleman, and who has Cohen and Railroad property leased for grazing" (Karpe 1938:368-370).

The apparent ranching nature of the Patterson Place raises interesting questions regarding Mr. Patterson's filing of a homestead claim. The 160-acre size of the parcel recorded by

the appraiser suggests that the property was homesteaded under the Homestead Act of 1862 rather than the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, which granted 320-acre homesteads. However, the property as appraised would not have "proved up" upon assessment. Did Patterson ever intend to prove the claim, if he ever made one? When was the land first utilized? How large a cattle operation did Patterson have? What were his connections to the community of Muroc in terms of subsistence and economics? The Patterson site clearly becomes more interesting than its humble material remains when reviewed in the larger context of settlement around Muroc.

The Reed Place, EAFB-1618, proved interesting for slightly different reasons. When initially recorded in June 1994, the Reed Place was little more than two roughly parallel lines of non-native rock and a light scattering of ceramic, glass, and metal debris. The artifactual deposit was mixed with military materials related to the use of the area as a bombing range (Figure 3). The vicinity appeared to have been cleared of vegetation at some point in the past and the entire site looked heavily disturbed. Nothing could be seen of the adobe cabin and add-ons recorded by Elmer Karpe in 1938 (Karpe 1938:353-355). A chance site visit in March of 1995 revealed the presence of distinct wall traces outlined in the spring vegetation. The area's surface was still intact enough to display the complete outline of one portion of Samuel Reed's architectural improvements to his 160-acre lot.

What was initially considered to be military-based ground disturbance is more likely the result of homesteader ground clearance for agricultural or grazing purposes. Coupling the material remains with historic documentation shed a different light on a property which might otherwise have been passed over by virtue of its surface archaeological component alone.

Much more of the archaeological remains of the Beers property (EAFB-1111), is still visible on the surface of the PIRA than in the previous two examples (Figure 5). When the Beers place was appraised by Karpe in 1938, the 160-acre property showed the following improvements: "A 20' x 20' deserted frame composition roof with a 12' x 12' unfinished lean-to addition" (Karpe 1938:359-361). A non-functional well was also recorded. In 1994, the site still displayed remnants of the original structures which can now be identified from the real estate appraisal photo. By 1938, the Beers place had already been abandoned (Karpe 1938).

The Poper adobe, (Figure 7) site EAFB-796, was a 160-acre homestead valued at \$1,055 in 1938 for its improvements of: "A cheap maverick type dwelling, frame construction stucco of adobe on metal lath. [The] kitchen [was] finished with adobe plaster. [The] living room and one bedroom interior [were] finished with building paper. Water is hauled. Total area 532 square feet." The property also included a "cheap 16' x 20' tin roof chicken shed", a "12' x 20' cheap frame cow shed," and a "partially constructed adobe frame badly washed by weather which has been assigned no value" (Karpe 1938: 335-337). Apparently, Mr. Karpe was not impressed by the property.

When the Poper place was surveyed, a well located north-east of a pile of structural remains was noted. However, the real estate appraisal stated that "no water had been developed" (Karpe 1938: 335-337). Was the well sunk after the Karpe survey, perhaps as an attempt to raise the property value prior to purchase by the Army Air Corps? The sequence of events which led to the ultimate consolidation of the base holdings is unclear. How much warning did the homesteaders have? Were there any opportunities to negotiate the conditions of the property purchases? How many people, if any, fought the Base expansion, and what were the political or social repercussions of that stance? The difference between the site of the Poper adobe as recorded in 1994, and its assessment in 1938, suggests that an undercurrent of research potential exists which needs to be explored.

As might be expected, homestead remains within the active portions of the Precision Impact Range Area show little structural integrity. Sites at the boundaries of the range, however, often display better site preservation in contrast to the leveled homesteads in the interior of the PIRA. The Edna Ellen Frost homestead (CA-LAN-1567H), near the southern range boundary, is comparatively well preserved (Figure 9). The 20-acre parcel had been developed primarily as a chicken ranch. The major improvements to the property centered around poultry production. Karpe described the house as "A California type frame dwelling, concrete foundation, composition roof, weatherboard siding with interior covered with building paper or boards. A 12 foot addition finished with beaver board. No plumbing. Total area 544 square feet" (Karpe 1938:116-120).

The most substantial building on the property was a "14' x 16' frame incubator house with galvanized iron roof and full rock basement" (Karpe 1938:116-120). The basement, now partially filled with debris, is at least six feet deep. The walls are constructed of a mortared fieldstone. The deep basement probably was cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and would have kept the eggs at a relatively steady temperature. Karpe identified additional outbuildings including a tongue and groove frame chicken house, a frame brooder house, a galvanized iron (probably tin) barn, a small shed, and a frame cow shed.

In addition to raising chickens and cattle Edna Frost engaged in limited agricultural cultivation. She was probably producing alfalfa as evidenced by the presence of irrigated fields and a "370 foot [deep] six inch well" (Karpe 1938: 116-120). Two shallow surface wells were probably for watering the cattle. Though the Frost homestead is 20 acres and one of the smallest homesteads recorded on Edwards AFB, the Frost place is a prime example of diverse commercial and subsistence activities which characterized life in the Muroc area.

Approximately 1.5 miles east of the Frost property was the original homestead of Charles E. and Jeanette Darr (CA-LAN-1721H). The Darr Homestead consists of a comparatively large house (1244 square feet—six rooms) with limited running water, two sheds, a tongue and groove chicken house, dirt floor garage, a grape arbor, and shade and fruit trees (Karpe

1938:186-89) (Figure 11). The water system on the slightly undersized lot (110 acres) consisted of "one well of approximately 300 foot depth equipped with a 10 foot Aeromotor windmill and galvanized water tank of approximately 2500 gallons capacity on concrete reservoir and an earth reservoir together with miscellaneous water pipes" (Karpe 1938:186-89). The water system, as it turns out, was overly ambitious in scope. Naoma Darr Spangenberg, a daughter of Charles and Jeanette Darr, spent a majority of her childhood at the homestead, and recalled in a 1994 interview: "We did have a well and later sold water to other people who came into the area... He [Charles Darr] did the improvements necessary, but there never was enough water to actually have any agriculture of any kind" (Spangenberg 1994). Spangenberg also related that the earthen reservoir "was never utilized because there was never that much water. I remember we used to ride our bikes up and down over the hills and the bankment and had campfires. We'd have parties out in the middle of this thing" (Spangenberg 1994).

Though the over development of the Darr water system was an additional source of income for the family, both parents worked off-homestead. Charles worked at Pacific Coast Borax as a carpenter and Jeanette drove the Antelope school bus. However, "their income was very meager, really, except the water" (Spangenberg 1994). The Darrs sold water at the price of \$1.00 per month to people who hauled it up to ten miles away (Spangenberg 1994). It appears to have been an important economic resource for the family.

When the Darr homestead was purchased by the US Army in the late 1930's, the family relocated to an existing adobe. This structure is identified as the Bacon-Darr Adobe and has been recorded as an archaeological site (CA-LAN-1386H) (Greenwood *et al* 1980). The new Darr home was "across the street" and about a mile west of the family's original homestead, it was literally just south of the property purchased by the military during the expansion of Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range.

The Bacon-Darr Adobe and the adjoining Lansford Adobe (EAFB-123) (Figure 13) to the west are two of the most impressive homesteads at Edwards Air Force Base. The structures are embellished with Arts and Crafts and Craftsman details, popular in the 1920s. The Bacon-Darr homestead was described as, "A residence and associated buildings. The main complex is laid out in a Spanish design with a courtyard opening to the east. The north side consists of the residence, south side consists of the pool complex and garage...and the west side has [an] incinerator and cellar building. Space between buildings along the west side is filled in with stone walls. Ei-

ther adobe or the ornamented stone (similar to flagstone) was used" (Greenwood *et al* 1980). The house had at least seven rooms, indoor plumbing, a porch, and a view of Rogers Dry Lake to the north. Gardens are on the south side of the adobe.

It is unknown whether the Darrs continued to sell water from the new home's abundant supply. The Darrs did, however, reap additional income during World War II by bringing in small cabins to the property and renting them to Base personnel and others (Spangenberg 1994).

The Lansford Adobe is located approximately 350 feet west of the Bacon-Darr place, and exhibits the same architectural detailing as the Bacon-Darr Adobe, both adobes were likely built by the same builder in the teens or early twenties. The Lansford place is a smaller dwelling than the Bacon-Darr. It has a four room plan and likely had a porch on the north elevation. The property fence enclosed a comparatively large house lot and a series of outbuildings, which suggests a commercial use of the Lansford property. The relationship of the two unique properties to each other and to the larger community of Muroc, needs to be addressed in future research.

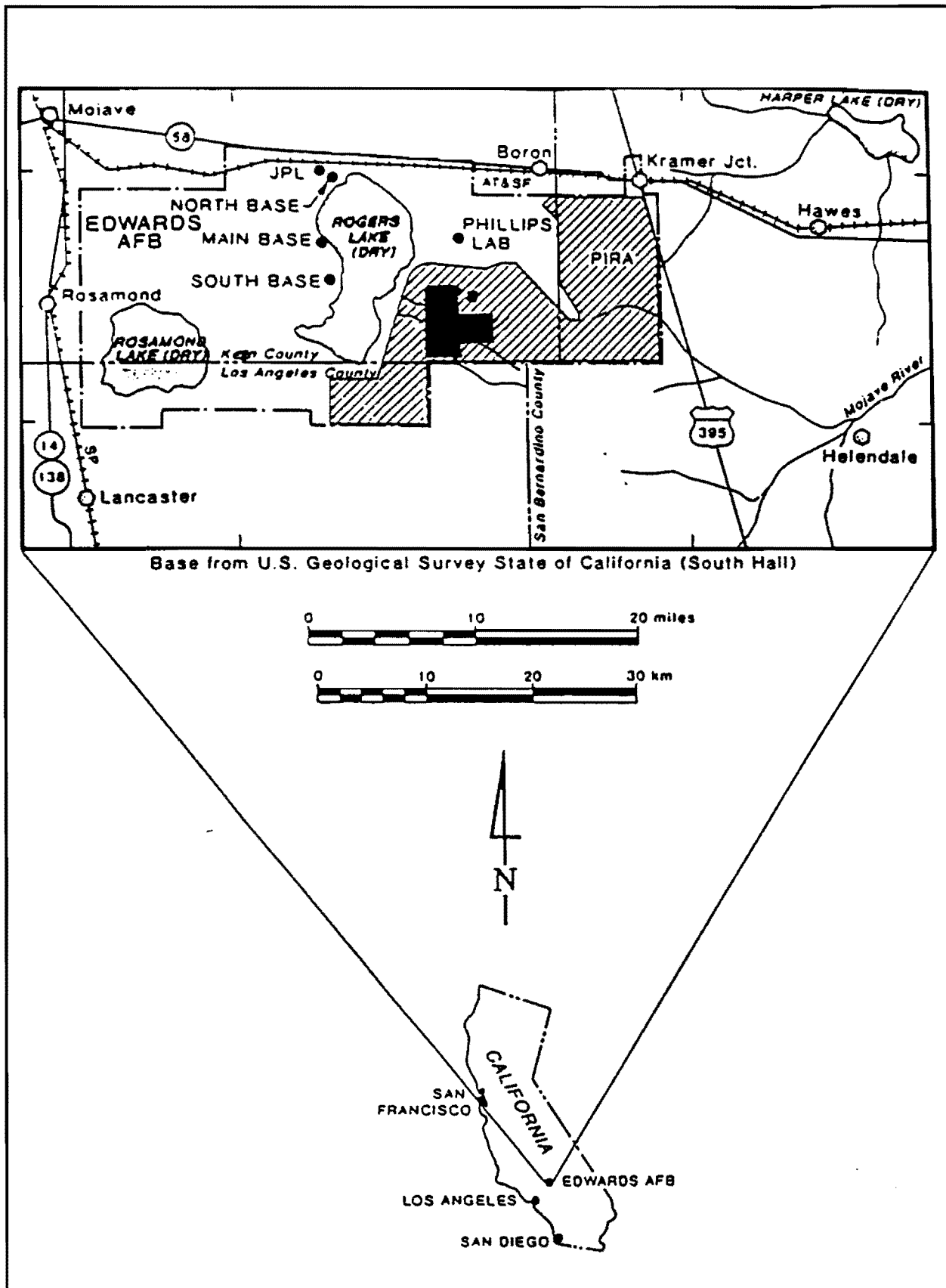
Conclusions

A combination of factors thus spurred the early twentieth-century homesteaders: the apparently diminishing supply of public land and farm products, the high prices for agricultural land and farm products, the expansion and promotional activities of the railroads, the publicity surrounding irrigation and dry farming, and, eventually, the Panic of 1907 and the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act. The result was that more land was homesteaded between 1898 and 1917 than in the preceding thirty years (100 million vs. 70 million acres). In fiscal year 1909-10 alone, more than eighteen million acres were taken up, the largest yearly aggregate of land covered by entries in the history of the homestead law (Allen 1987:136).

Today, the material remains recorded, or still to be recorded, as archaeological homesteads on Edwards AFB reflect the culmination of all the factors which pushed or pulled settlers into the Mojave Desert in the early 20th century. Their continued study is imperative to an understanding of development of Muroc and its surrounding areas. More importantly interdisciplinary research into the homesteading of the western Mojave Desert will provide a focal point upon which to study the grander economic, social and philosophical undercurrents of southern California in the early 20th century.

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Base from U.S. Geological Survey State of California (South Hall)

Figure 1. General vicinity map (approximate PIRA project area shown in black).

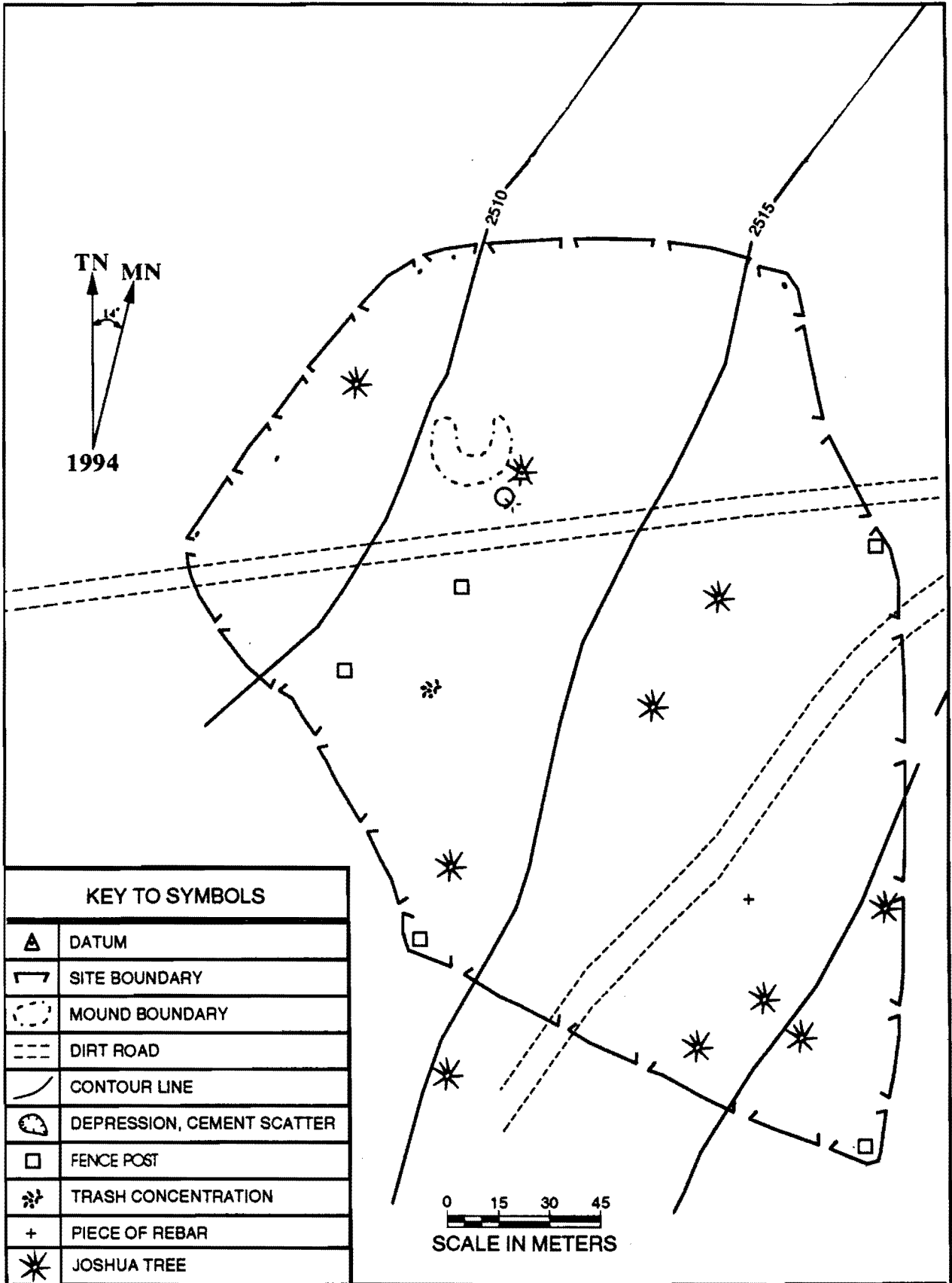


Figure 2. Site map of EAFB-1079 (Silsbee et al 1994a)

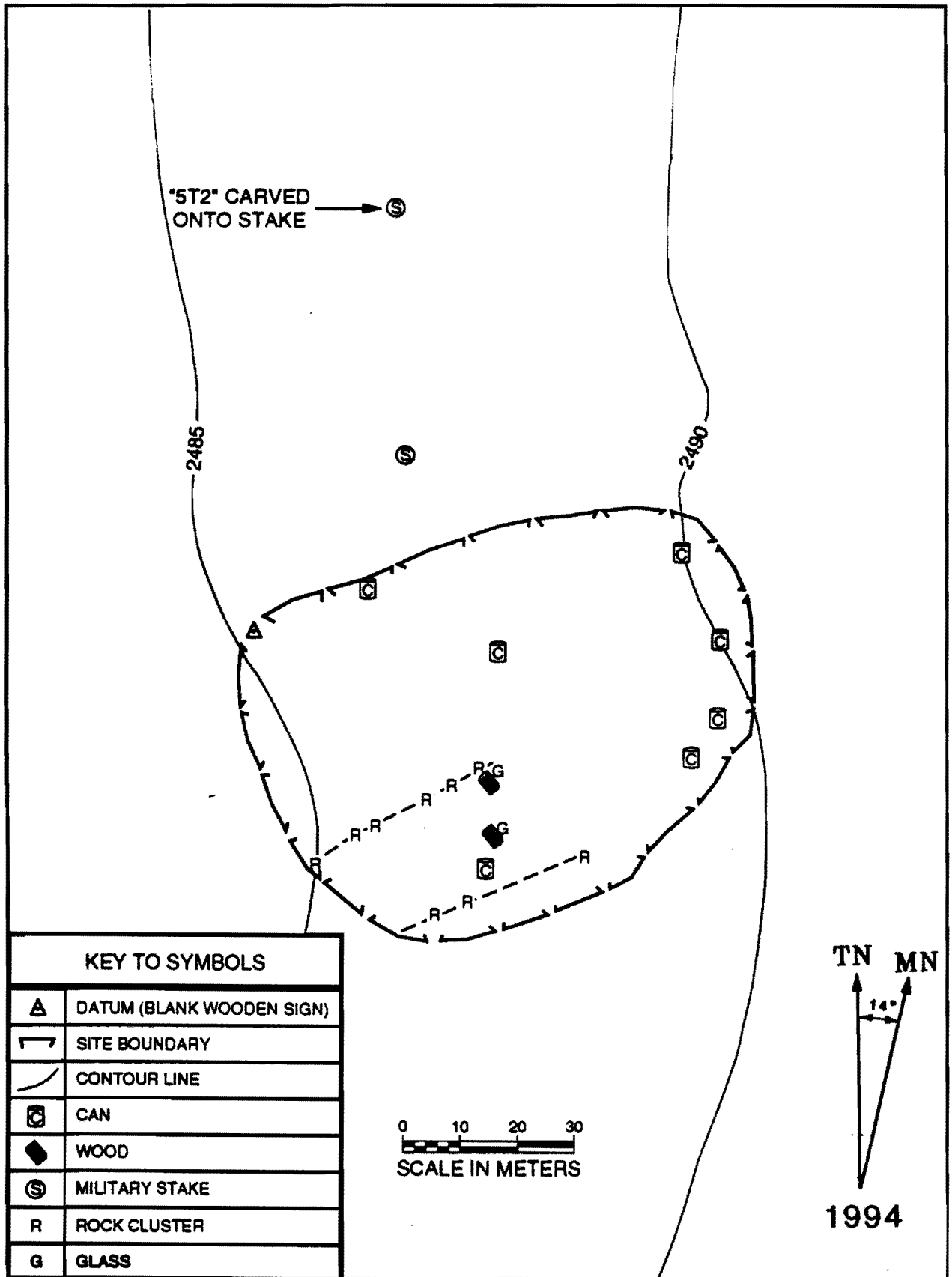


Figure 3. Site map of EAFB-1618 (Silsbee et al 1994)

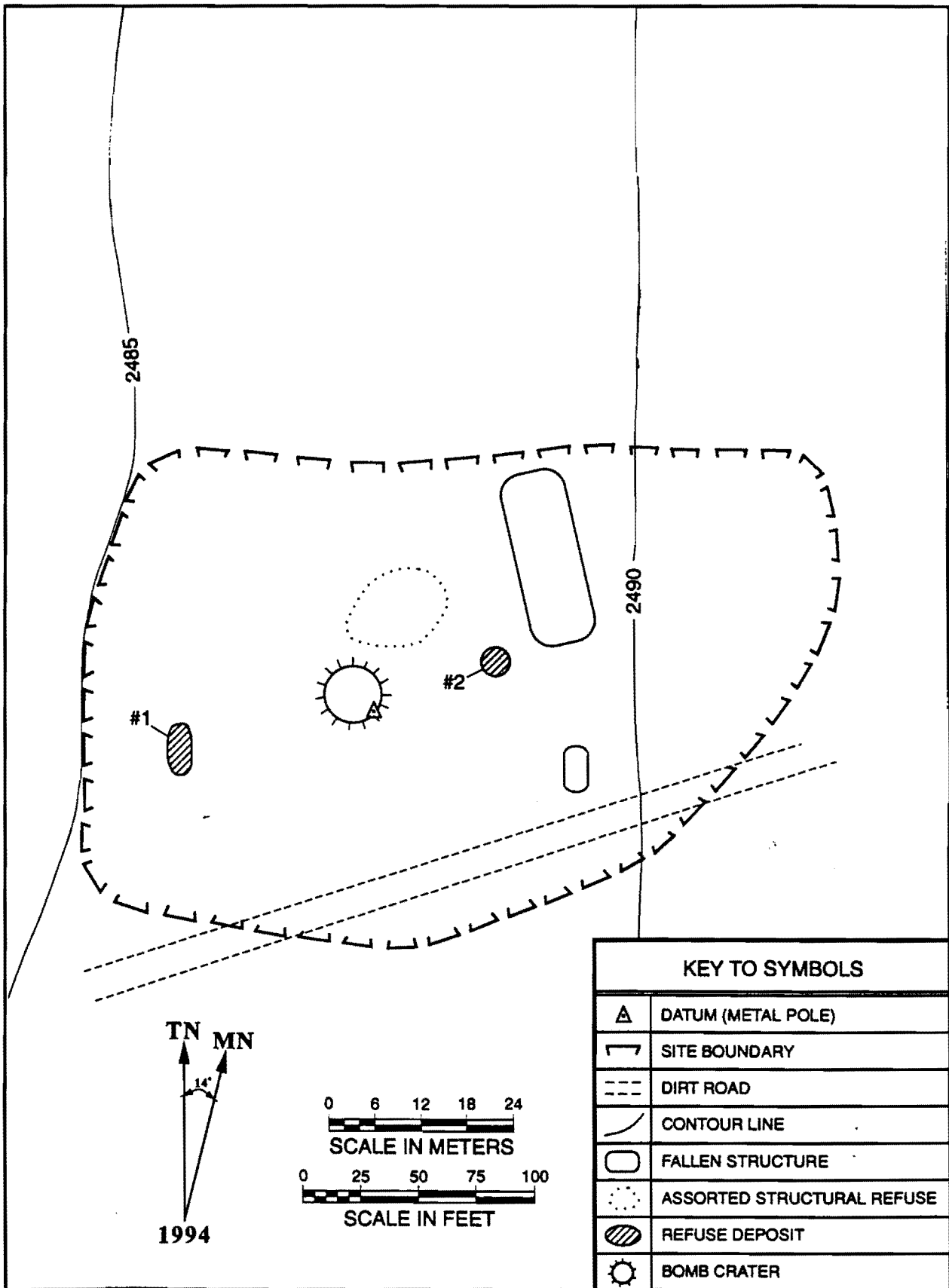


Figure 5. Site map for EAFB-1111 (McGetrick et al 1994)

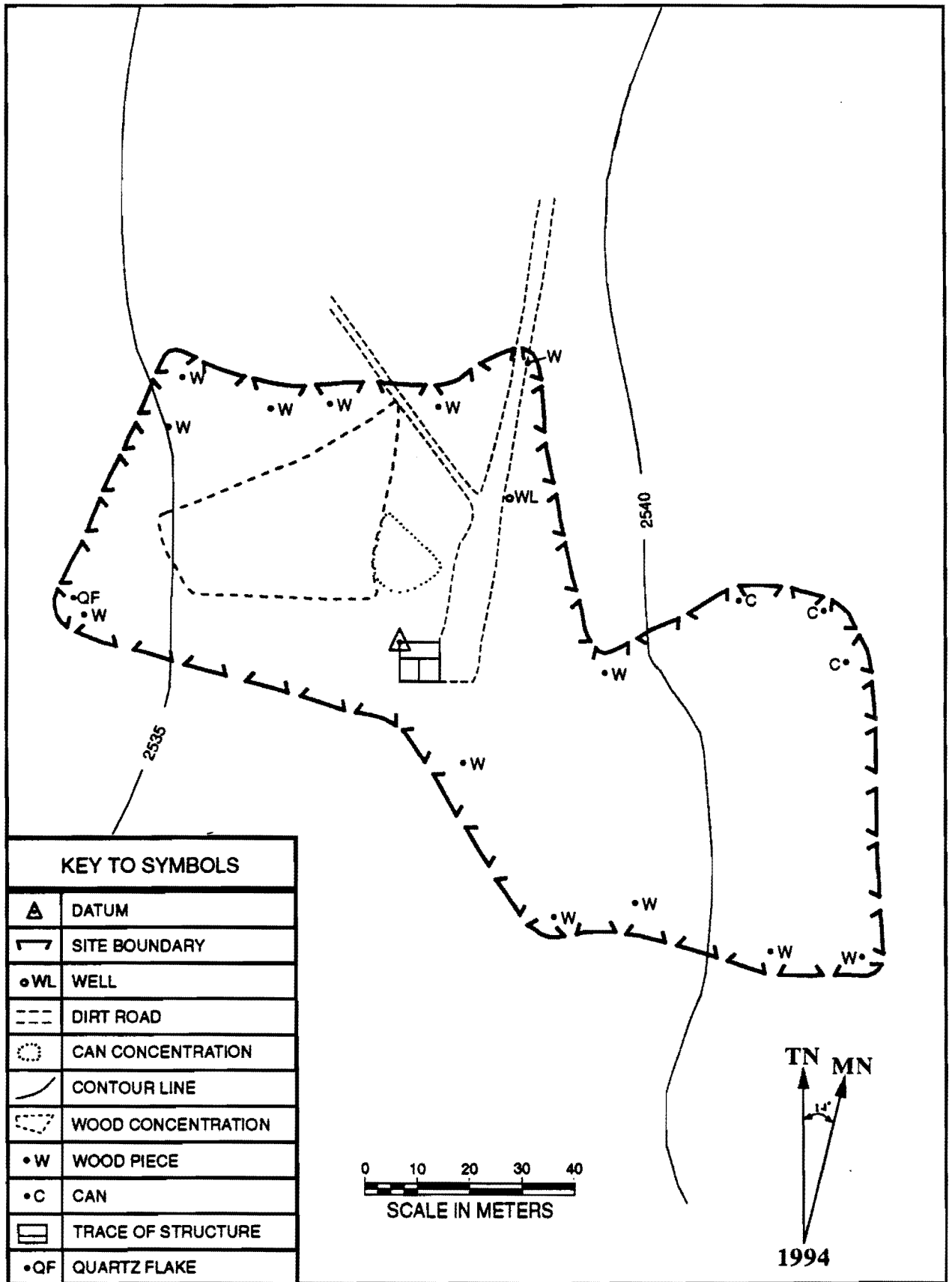


Figure 7. Site map of EAFB-796 (Wear et al 1994).

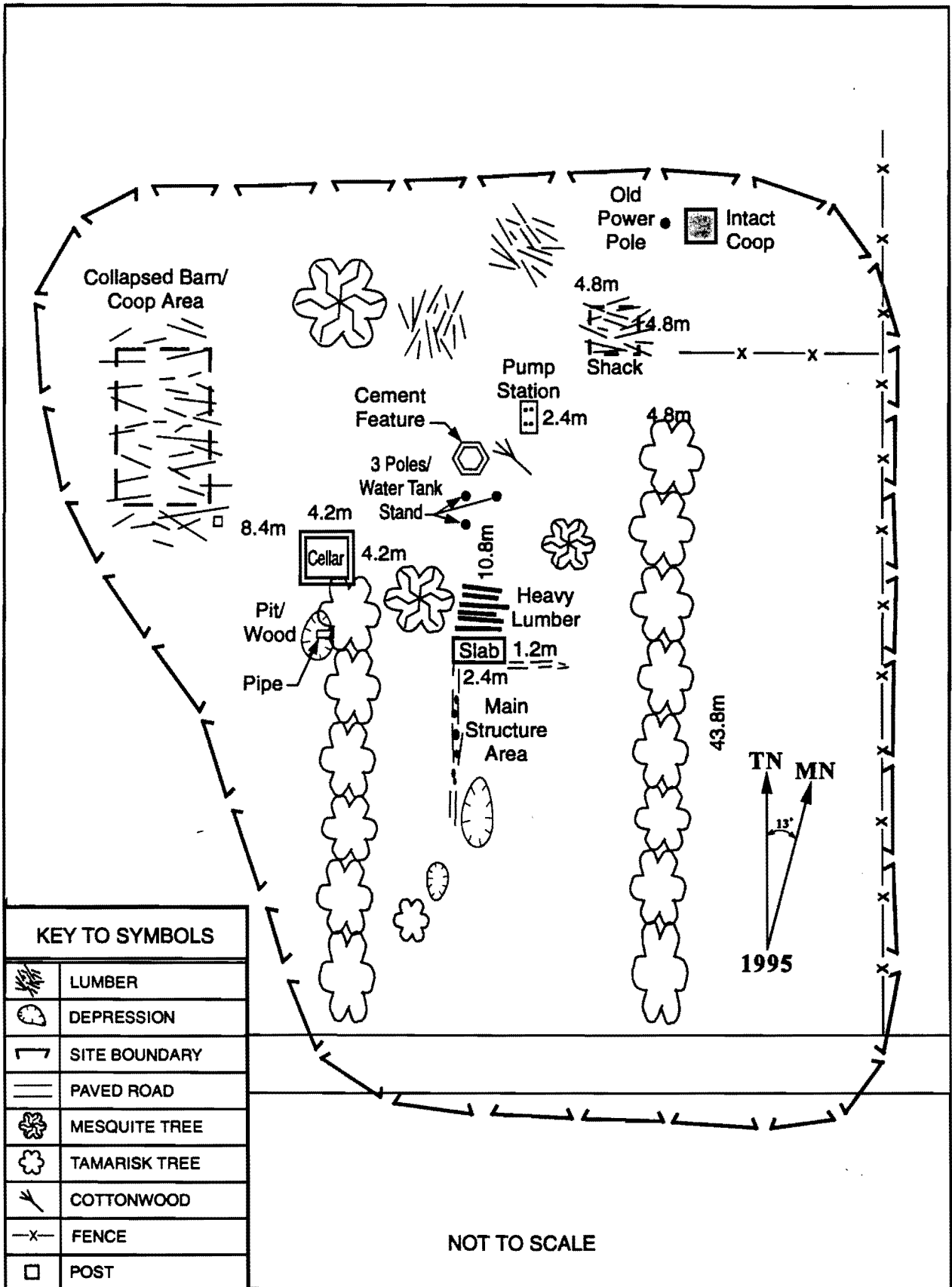


Figure 9 Site map of CA-LAN-1567H (after Norwood 1989).

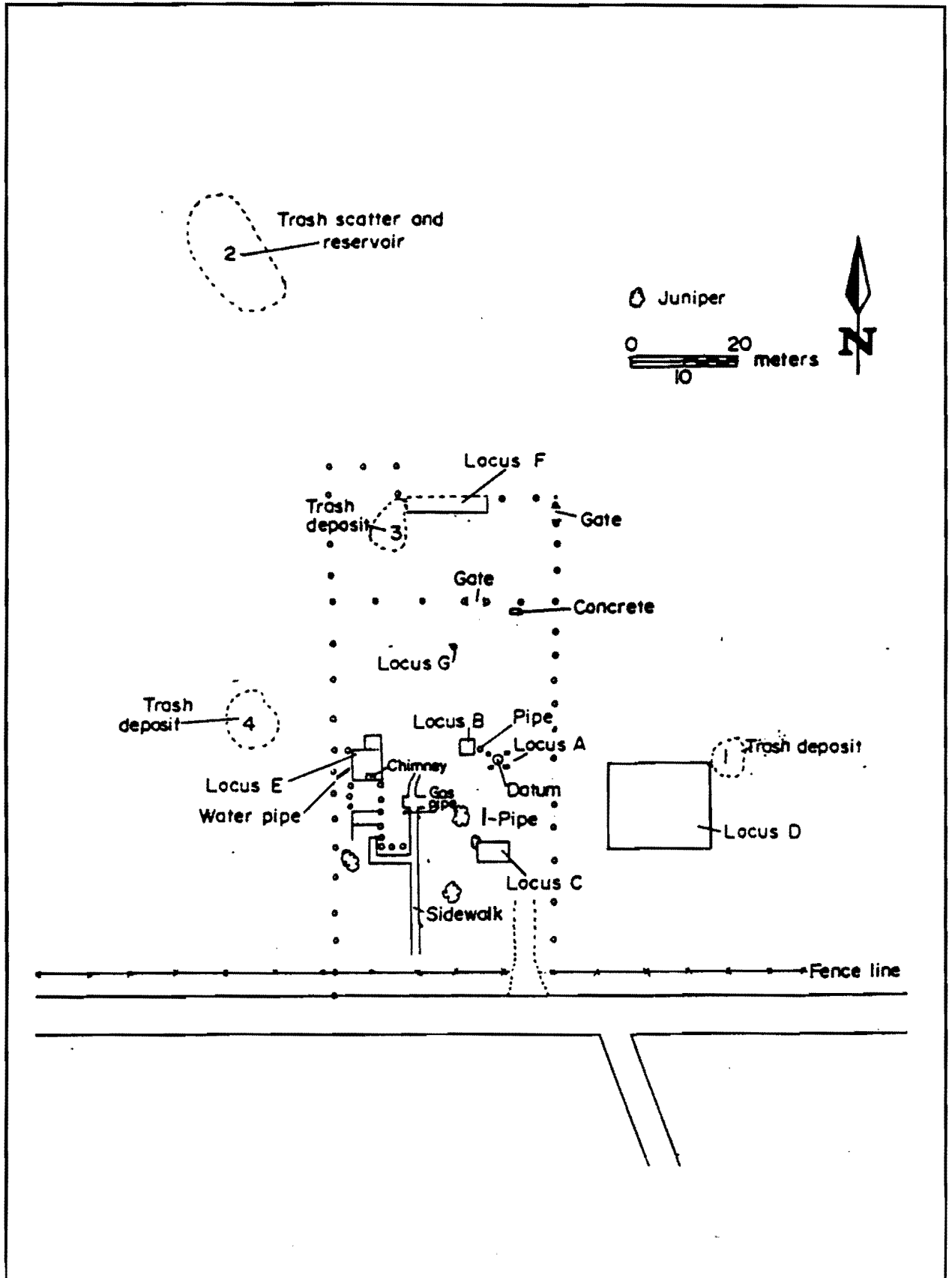
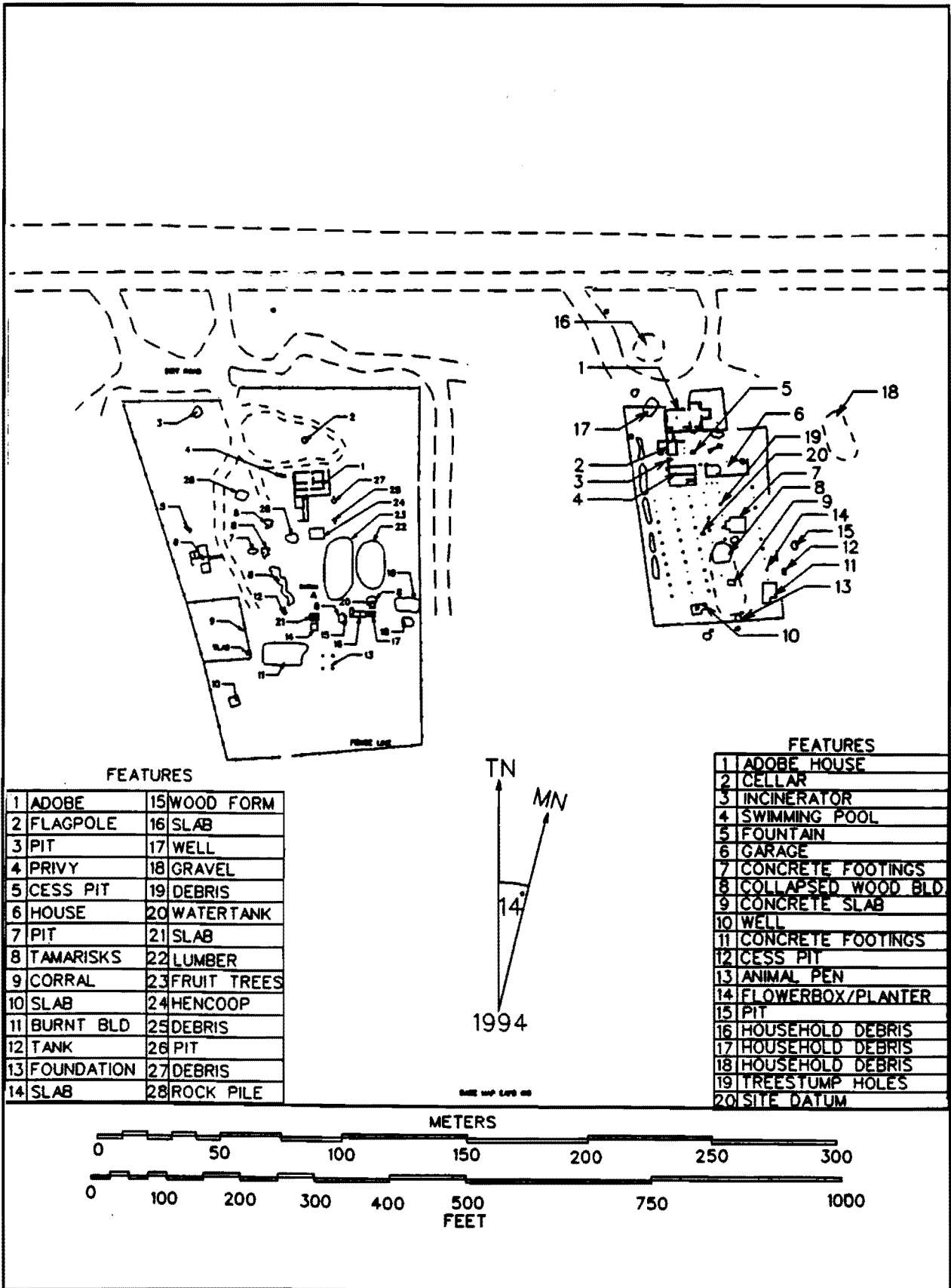


Figure 11 Site map of CA-LAN-1721H (McIntyre et al 1980).



FEATURES

1 ADOBE	15 WOOD FORM
2 FLAGPOLE	16 SLAB
3 PIT	17 WELL
4 PRIVY	18 GRAVEL
5 CESS PIT	19 DEBRIS
6 HOUSE	20 WATERTANK
7 PIT	21 SLAB
8 TAMARISKS	22 LUMBER
9 CORRAL	23 FRUIT TREES
10 SLAB	24 HENCOOP
11 BURNT BLD	25 DEBRIS
12 TANK	26 PIT
13 FOUNDATION	27 DEBRIS
14 SLAB	28 ROCK PILE

FEATURES

1 ADOBE HOUSE
2 CELLAR
3 INCINERATOR
4 SWIMMING POOL
5 FOUNTAIN
6 GARAGE
7 CONCRETE FOOTINGS
8 COLLAPSED WOOD BLD
9 CONCRETE SLAB
10 WELL
11 CONCRETE FOOTINGS
12 CESS PIT
13 ANIMAL PEN
14 FLOWERBOX/PLANTER
15 PIT
16 HOUSEHOLD DEBRIS
17 HOUSEHOLD DEBRIS
18 HOUSEHOLD DEBRIS
19 TREESTUMP HOLES
20 SITE DATUM

Figure 13 Site map of CA-LAN-1386H (EAFB-123 and EAFB-124; Valdez et al 1994).