

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Montecito Ranch House

Other names/site number: Montecito Ranch; Montecito Adobe; CA-SDI-12476H

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 1080 Montecito Way

City or town: Ramona State: California County: San Diego

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A      \_\_\_ B      \_\_\_ C      \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></p>	

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation CONCRETE, Walls ADOBE, Roof ASPHALT, Other: Porch WOOD, Chimneys BRICK, Doors WOOD, Windows GLASS

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Montecito Ranch House is a single story Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style adobe brick house constructed sometime between 1887 and 1897 during the settlement of Ramona. The rural rancher's residence sits alone on a hill among a rural grasslands preserve on the outskirts of Ramona, California. The rectangular home measures 47 feet by 35 feet with an 8 foot wide elevated concrete porch surrounding the dwelling. The extra thick adobe brick walls are in excellent condition as they are plaster coated and well protected by a hipped roof that branches out and shades the porch. There are two historic brick chimneys providing multiple fireplaces to the ranch home. Fixtures and wood trim work show many structural details of the period of construction. The house is an excellent local example of late 1800s adobe ranch home construction with its high ceilings, symmetry, large porch, and hipped roof. Two prominent palm trees frame the front entrance to the house just as they did in their infancy in a much publicized local historic photo taken in 1897 (**Figure 1**). The adobe retains integrity and reflects the history of a rural San Diego ranching community tucked in the hills of the Santa Maria Valley.

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### Narrative Description

Montecito Ranch House is a single-family adobe dwelling believed to have been built between 1887 and 1897 (Gallegos & Associates, 1992) that has served through the years as a ranch

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caretaker's house (**Figure 1**). Its builder could have been Augustus Barnett, a Ramona forefather (Carrico, 2011) or Theophile Verlaque, architect builder of the first Ramona home (National Register-listed Verlaque House). The building is larger than most found on a ranch from that period and is built with thick adobe brick with tall windows and tall ceilings giving it a grand feel. A long driveway leads up to the ranch house with sparse landscaping and a few prominent old trees. The rural desert landscape is typical in the inland mountain-rimmed Santa Maria Valley 36 miles from San Diego and 20 miles southeast of Escondido. Large rock outcroppings can be seen on surrounding hills and even slopes just a few hundred yards from the home.

The single-story ranch house, framed by two distinct palm trees on the south side, displays the clean lines of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture with its thick adobe brick (26") and defining symmetry. Unique to this home is its hipped roof. The home measures 47 feet north/south by 35 feet east/west (**Photos 1 through 8**) and stands tall in an area with no other homes nearby, just as it was when it was built sometime before 1897.

The foundation of the Montecito Ranch House is comprised of original stone masonry with random sized stones set in concrete mortar. The foundation is visible in the walk-in cellar on the north side and appears to be in good overall condition (**Photo 9**).

The exterior porch may be accessed by four sets of concrete steps on each of the four sides of the dwelling. The porch was rebuilt sometime between 1920 and 1950, replacing the original wood floor with a concrete platform and replacing the original wood posts and roof structure with new wood framing. Otherwise the historic adobe construction, including the original interior wall configuration, retains a high degree of integrity with only minor modifications. Many of the original character-defining features remain intact, including the adobe walls, stone foundation, brick chimneys, double-hung wood windows, and some wood doors.

Various additions have been added on the porch starting early in the building's history. A circa 1897 photograph (**Figure 1**) shows what appear to be the first porch additions on the southeast and southwest corners of the porch; these additions no longer exist. Subsequent additions on the southwest and northwest corners provided bathrooms and a laundry room. The bathroom at the southwest corner of the porch appears to have been added sometime between the 1920s and the 1950s. This estimate is based on the pink and burgundy tile wainscot. The tile detail and tile style are consistent with prevalent architectural detailing from the 1920s to 1950s. The bathroom and laundry room addition on the northwest side porch appears to be more recent. The fixtures and finishes in the laundry room and bathroom do not reflect the historical character of the ranch.

Exterior walls of the house are constructed of adobe brick and finished with cement plaster. The walls are some of the best adobe specimens in the area, being structurally sound with no significant signs of deterioration or deficiency. They are roughly 26" thick. Blocks are visible in one small area on the north façade. Visible blocks and associated cement mortar appear to be in good condition. The exterior plaster finish is also in good condition for this age with only some minor expected paint deterioration.

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The exterior roof is hipped, wood-framed, and appears to be in fair condition with no evidence of structural settling or deficiency. The structural framing and sheathing is not readily visible. At an unknown date, possibly when the porch was replaced, wood roof shingles were replaced with asphalt composition roofing that has been patched several times and is in poor condition.

Exterior windows are present on all four sides of the dwelling and many are the original 2/2 double-hung wood windows. Most of the original windows include the historic sash locks and sash pulls which are cast with Victorian detailing. The front (south facing) double window was replaced (date unknown) with a large fixed glass window.

The other window on the south façade (bedroom 1) is the original 2/2 double-hung window and it includes the historic sash lock and sash lift. Both windows on the east façade (living room and kitchen) are original. The living room window is a paired 2/2 double-hung wood window and it includes the original hardware. The kitchen window on the east façade is an original 2/2 double-hung wood window and it includes the original hardware.

The kitchen window on the north façade was replaced prior to 1950 with a smaller window that has a higher sill height to accommodate the kitchen cabinets below the window. The original sill is still visible on the exterior side of the window and the original interior trim has been cut for the new window size. The dining room window on the north façade also appears to have been replaced. The window size and 1/1 configuration does not match any of the other windows. All four of the windows in the three bedrooms are the original 2/2 double-hung wood windows. Some of the original hardware on these windows has been damaged or is missing. The windows on the porch additions are wood 1/1 double hung windows with more recent hardware. Original interior window trim which includes 6" mouldings and 6" corner blocks remains on all of the original windows.

The exterior doors at Montecito Ranch appear to have been altered to replace the upper wood panels with glass lites, in order to add more lighting to the home. The wood stops that hold the glass in place have a quarter-round profile which does not match any historic trim in the building. Additionally, the size of the mullions are very wide. Glass lite doors from the original period of construction usually had narrow mullions (similar to the windows). The original doors appear to have been 4-panel wood doors. The exterior doors still have the operable single-lite transom windows above the doors. Original door hardware includes steeple-tip hinges, rim locks, brown mineral exterior knobs, and white porcelain interior knobs.

The only remaining rim locks and knobs are located on the exterior kitchen door and the door to the pantry. Various doors still include the original steeple-tip hinges. All other door hardware has been replaced. Original interior door trim which includes 6" mouldings and 6" corner blocks, matching the window trim, remains on most of the original door locations including interior doors.

Exterior chimneys adorn the roofline with two distinct brick chimneys. One serves the main fireplace and a bedroom and one serves the kitchen cooking area. The main chimney is visible in

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the 1897 photo (**Figure 1**) while the kitchen chimney is not visible due to the angle of the photograph. Both brick chimneys appear to be in fair condition although some loose bricks and a large crack are visible on the main chimney.

The cellar is accessed on the north side of the building and extends beneath the kitchen. There is an earthen floor, exposed stone masonry foundation walls, and ability to see exposed floor framing above. Other under-floor areas below the adobe are partially excavated crawl spaces that provide a breeze below the home for natural cooling. Vents can be seen in the porch surrounding the home exterior.

The ranch house interior has solid wooden floors throughout which have been carpeted in most rooms over a wood flooring (3 ¼" x 1" tongue-and-groove wood flooring). The interior walls' adobe bricks have a plaster finish and the plaster appears to have been recoated with a skip-trowel texture. Photos of the interior taken prior to the 2007 renovation work showed that original plaster had a smooth finish and there was also an ornate wood picture rail on the walls. The original 1"x8" wood baseboard remains on the walls. The interior feels grand and spacious with an 11 foot ceiling height throughout the main rooms. The ceiling finish has been repaired with smooth plaster applied over wood lath in a skip-trowel texture that has been added to all walls and ceilings throughout. The general appearance of the interior Montecito Ranch House is good and has had ongoing maintenance since 2007.

Dominating the living room is a large brick fireplace which appears to have been added or altered before 1950 as the bricks do not match the exterior chimney. Based on the mismatch, and a fireplace hearth and mantle larger than consistent with circa 1890 construction, it appears the hearth and mantle were enlarged. The wall, door, and window configuration do not appear to have been altered since its original construction. The three interior doors, leading to bedroom 1, bedroom 2, and the kitchen have been removed, although the original interior door trim, which consists of 6" mouldings at the top and sides with 6" square corner blocks, remains.

All 3 bedrooms are similar in size. The wall, door, and window configurations of these rooms do not appear to have been altered since its original construction. The firebox behind the new brick surround in Bedroom 2 appears to be older, suggesting the fireplace location may be original although it would have had a different mantel (likely wood) instead of the later brick fireplace mantle and surround configuration. Several interior doors retain the original transom windows and steeple-tip hinges and interior trim.

The interior doors to the living room have been removed, and the original trim remains. The door leading to the bathroom has been modified from an original tall opening with a transom window above the door to a shorter opening, eliminating the original transom window for added privacy.

The dining room is approximately 9'-9" x 9'-6" and the kitchen is approximately 15' x 10'. Resilient flooring was installed, most likely in the 2007 transition between caretakers. The kitchen door on the north wall includes the original steeple-tip hinges, rim lock, and knobs. The exterior knob is a brown mineral knob and the interior knob is white porcelain. The wall and

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door configuration in the kitchen appear to be original. The window on the east wall is an original 2/2 wood double-hung window with the original sash lock and sash lift.

The pantry is a small 4'-11" x 6'-7" space with an 11' ceiling and a single early-period exposed-bulb fixture with cloth-wrapped wire. The door on the north wall leading to the dining room has been filled in. There are built-in wood shelves on the walls. The door on the east wall leading to the kitchen is an original 4-panel wood door and it still has the original steeple-tip hinges, rim lock, and white porcelain knobs.

Bathroom 1 is approximately 11'-10" x 7'-6" with shorter ceiling height of eight feet. This is one of the additions. It appears to have been added to the building sometime between the 1920s and 1950s. This estimate is based on the ceramic tile wainscot that features 4" pink tiles with burgundy tile accents. The tub also appears to be from the same era. The sink, toilet, and flooring were replaced circa 2007.

Bathroom 2 and the laundry room are 7'-6" x 15'" while the ceiling height varies with its exposed framing. Exposed adobe and exterior plaster remains on the south wall, the original exterior wall. There is an original 4-panel wood door on the east wall which appears to have been salvaged from another location.

### Alterations

Precise dates of various exterior and interior changes to the property are not known due to the absence of photographic documentation or drawings between 1897 and 2007. The following estimates are based on the visual inspection that was completed in 2015 by Heritage Architecture & Planning and an understanding of the prevailing architectural styles and materials that were commonly used in construction between the 1890s and 2015. The information available indicates this approximate chronology:

**Prior to 1897:** Early porch enclosure at the southwest and southeast corners of the building. The wood framed rooms are visible in the historic photograph dated 1897 (**Figure 1**). The additions have wood-framed walls with tall 1/1 double-hung wood windows and vertical wood siding.

**Prior to 1950:** The original wood-framed porch and early porch additions were removed. A new concrete porch platform was constructed. A bathroom was added on the southwest corner of the porch. The bathroom has wood framed walls with stucco cladding on the exterior. The interior of the restroom has a pink and burgundy ceramic tile wainscot that appears to date from the 1920s-1950s. The exterior window on the north wall of the kitchen was modified to fit a smaller window with a higher sill, creating space for a base cabinet and sink in the kitchen. One remaining section of upper cabinets in the kitchen appears to date to the 1920s-1950s indicating that this change may have been completed around the time that the bathroom was added.

**Prior to 1986:** The brick fireplace in the living room appears to have been altered. The existing bricks do not match the original brick on the two historic chimneys that are visible above the roof line. The date of these alterations is not known. A second bathroom and a laundry room



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were also added on the north side of the porch. The walls are wood-framed with stucco cladding on the exterior and exposed framing on the interior.

**1986-2007:** The ranch house remained vacant for several years following the death of James Cagney while plans were prepared for a new housing development.

**2007:** Some interior remodeling was completed, including the installation of new kitchen cabinets and counter tops, installation of new kitchen appliances, installation of a gas fireplace unit in the living room fireplace, the addition of a second brick fireplace in the southeast corner of the north bedroom, interior paint, plaster repair, and installation of new interior light fixtures, ceiling fans, and plumbing fixtures.

### **Integrity**

The *location* for this ranch house is a rural area of Ramona. The town developed through a variety of agriculture ventures and grew into a quiet farming community of individuals tied together through the geographical boundaries of the Santa Maria Valley. The valley sits somewhat isolated from San Diego and other communities. The ranch house depicts the story of ranching and farming and the development of Ramona. It is one of 6 or 7 homes remaining from that era. The Verlaque House adobe located on Ramona's Main Street was granted National Register recognition in 1991. Montecito Ranch is located a few miles from that resource.

Thoughtful *design* considerations led to the ranch house's high ceilings and large rooms, multiple fireplaces and the large overhanging porch which protects the home and its inhabitants from the elements. The thick bricks keep it warm in the winter and cooler in the summer. Placing this home on knoll provides for a breeze in the hot summers here in the desert foothills. These design considerations are features that would have been a greater expense than normal and not what is typical for adobe homes of this era.

In its rural *setting*, apart from any immediate neighbors, the house sits on a knoll where it receives excellent ventilation on hot days as well as protection from floods during heavy rains. From this vantage point a ranch overseer had a great view of all activity, including a visitor's approach long before arriving at the front door.

The primary *materials* for this type of building in the 1890s were adobe brick and wood. The California missions were built this way using more dirt than wood. In this climate the adobe construction keeps cooler in the summer and warmer in the winters. Adobe construction is an ancient building material, essentially a dried mud made with tightly compacted earth, clay, and straw, formed into bricks and dried or baked in the sun. This specimen was constructed with extra thick adobe and plastered over for added protection. It differs from the early adobes in that it has symmetry and crisp lines and the adobe materials were not formed by hand.

The ranch house *workmanship* is evident in the large building with a hipped roof shape on a grand scale for this setting. Additionally, the trim work on the interior and extra windows and doors and trim with ornate finishes is evidence of extra time and care.

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There is a definite rural ranch *feeling* at the Montecito Ranch of a simpler time when life moved a little more slowly. The ornate doorknobs and window trim, original window glass, and old wooden floorboards add to the old ranch feel.

This house played a role in developing a rural farming community of entrepreneurial pioneers and settlers when Ramona was founded in 1886. The working ranch *association* remains, including rural vistas and the presence of horses.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1887-1897

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Montecito Ranch House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement for its association with the early development of Ramona's ranch lifestyle. The property is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent local example of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. The period of significance is 1887 to 1897, from the establishment of the Montecito land tract in 1887 through the latest possible construction date of the building, including additions, identified as 1897.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Criterion A: Exploration/Settlement**

Montecito Ranch is associated with the early development and settlement of the Santa Maria Valley and Ramona as a rural agricultural rancher community. Formal settlement began in 1843 when José Joaquin Ortega and his son-in-law, English Captain Edward Stokes, were granted the Rancho Santa Maria o Valle de Pamo consisting of 17,708 acres. The community of Ramona and Montecito Ranch were once part of that property.

“The steady flow of Yankee settlers into California began to reach the Santa Maria Valley by the 1880s. During the late 1880s, San Diego and all of Southern California experienced an economic boom. Land speculation provided the real stimulus to the economic boom. Land speculation fever seized San Diego in the spring of 1887. Speculators formed land companies and subdivided town sites throughout the county, including Escondido, Ocean Beach, El Cajon, Lakeside, and Ramona” (Pourade, 1964, pp. 167-191).

Farms were bought and sold, and divided with a variety of crops and livestock being the backbone of this ranching era. Ranching constitutes an important heritage of San Diego County and Montecito Ranch was a stabilizing part of the story of the new settlement of Ramona.

During this time, the valley was a part of a travel corridor to San Diego with several trails across this land. The ranch house complex is part of an agricultural heritage of the inland hills of San Diego and may still yield information important in prehistory or history.

Beginning in 1886, (Bernard) Etcheverry began to sell off large tracts of the Santa Maria Rancho to land speculators. In 1886, Milton Santee, an engineer and land speculator, was part of an investment group that bought 6000 acres of the rancho, subdividing it into the community of Ramona as well as smaller tracts for ranches and farms” (Pourade, 1964).

This backcountry boom brought increased settlement to the Ramona area by pioneer farmers. While there were barely a dozen families in the Santa Maria Valley in 1880, there were 115

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households by the end of the 1890s. Family farms and ranches that encompassed the area of today's Montecito Ranch were many of the valleys most successful farms.

In the late nineteenth century, the Santa Maria Rancho was owned by absentee owners who leased the land to several area farmers.

In the 1890s, the ranch property supported a large-scale citrus and wheat operation run by local families for Detroit businessman and absentee owner, George W. Bissell. Previous research conducted for the property suggests that the Montecito Ranch House was built about this time, likely between 1887 when Montecito became a separate tract from Rancho Santa Maria, and 1897 when a deed references improvements on the property (Van Wormer, 1995).

In 1887, Bernardo Etcheverry sold additional large acreages, and included in those sales were the 3000 acres in the western portion of the rancho that formed the core of Montecito Ranch (Van Wormer, 1995).

A map of the Rancho Santa Maria dated May 25, 1900 clearly shows the Montecito Ranch House in sections 29 and 20 with four outbuildings grouped around the main structure (Gallegos & Associates, 1992). The building corresponding to the location of the Montecito Ranch House appears on the 1901, 1903, 1909, 1911, 1928, 1941, 1942, 1948 USGS Ramona Quadrangles (Gallegos & Associates, 1992).

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

Montecito Ranch House is an excellent local example of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture. The adobe ranch house was built to suit the region and its purpose, and the overall form, scale, and massing of the building sets it apart from other adobes. The hipped roof form is uncommon and thick adobe construction elevates the home. Windows are found on all sides with 2/2 hung windows coupled with interior details including windows sashes, wood trim at baseboards, windows, and doors, and ornate fixtures. The adobe construction has survived in part due to the protection offered by the massive porch.

The ranch house is one of six remaining prominent adobe houses in the area. The other five include, in order of construction, Santa Teresa Ranch House (1859-60), Stokes House (1871-73), Barnett Ranch House (1877), Sawday House (1881), and Verlaque House (1886).

### **CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT DATES (DEVELOPMENT AND USE)**

The following is a chronology of development of the Montecito Ranch property as compiled from available historical data. A title search was performed during James Cagney's ownership (**Figure 8**).

1833 Narciso Botellohe, a Mexican soldier was provisionally granted four square leagues, or 17,706 acres, of the Rancho Santa Maria de Los Peñasquitos. Because he "failed to fulfill the requirements," the rancho could not remain in his possession.

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- 1843 The 17,708-acre Rancho Santa Maria or Valle de Pamo was granted to Jose Ortega and son-in-law Captain Edward Stokes.
- 1870 Adolpho Stokes, son of Edward Stokes and Refugio Ortega, bought out his two brothers to become the first to own complete and uncontested claim to the Rancho.
- 1872 Stokes sold 1,000 acres of land to Juan B. Arrambide. In partnership with Arrambide, Bernardo Etcheverry developed the land as fruit orchards, grain fields, and grazing lands.
- 1886 Etcheverry sold large tracts of the Santa Maria Rancho to land speculators.
- 1887 Etcheverry sold 3,000 acres of the western portion of the rancho forming the core of the Montecito Ranch property. Agricultural use of the land continued, managed by various absentee owners.

The construction of the Montecito Ranch House is believed to have occurred sometime between 1887 and 1897. The original building was constructed of adobe with a wood-framed porch and a hipped roof with ornate ridge crests at the top.

- 1897 Improvements (dwellings or structures) were referenced in a legal deed constituting the first known written evidence of the existence of the Montecito Ranch House itself.

Earliest known photograph of the Montecito Ranch House is dated 1897 (**Figure 1**). The photo shows the south façade of the house. Wood-framed walls can be seen on the southwest and southeast corners of the porch.

- 1903 Montecito Ranch House was documented on the U.S.G.S Ramona Quadrangle Map (**Figure 4**).
- 1970 Montecito Ranch was purchased by actor James Cagney for a vacation home.
- 1986 James Cagney died on March 30. The ranch property was subsequently sold to Chevron Land and Development Company and plans were established to subdivide the land for residential development.
- 2007 A massive wildfire scorched the property surrounding the ranch house. The ranch house, nearby barn, and prominent trees (including two palms on the south side) were saved by the heroic efforts of firefighters.

The period of significance is 1887 to 1897, from the establishment of the Montecito land tract in 1887 through the latest possible construction date of the building. During this decade, Ramona, a brand new township, was beginning to flourish and memories of the bloodiest battle fought on California soil, the 1846 Battle of San Pasqual just 10 miles away, faded into the surrounding hills.

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As a result of previous significance determination studies and as identified in the Ramona Community Plan, the Montecito Ranch House property is a designated preservation area for the township. Because it is a significant site as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act, the County Resource Protection Ordinance, and a preservation area in the Ramona Community Plan, the Montecito Ranch development project addresses the building's preservation and historical resource designations. The project anticipates preservation of the historic character and fabric of the ranch house, an interpretive experience, and utilization of the historic building as a community meeting place and resource.



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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carrico, Richard L. *Ramona, Images of America*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Gallegos & Associates. *Historical/Archaeological Survey Report for Montecito Ranch Property, Ramona CA*. 1992.

Heritage Architecture & Planning. *Historical Structures Report for Montecito Properties LLC*. San Diego, 2015.

MacMullen, Jerry, ed. *The Journal of San Diego History: San Diego Historical Society Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1960).

Pourade, F. F. *The Glory Years, Booms and Busts in the Land of the Sundown Sea*. San Diego: Copley Press, 1964.

Van Wormer, S. R. "Montecito Ranch History." Chapter III in *A Cultural Resources Evaluation of Montecito Ranch*. Prepared for Chevron Land and Development Company, San Diego, 1995.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: San Diego Site Board

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.053565 Longitude: -116.905965

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A rectangle drawn around the ranch house, fifteen feet from the edge of the resource to the west, north, and east, and twenty-five feet to the south.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Reasonable limits are appropriate for a rural property in the absence of a house lot, or natural or cultural features to use. The boundary is extended to twenty-five feet from the house to the south in order to encompass the historic palm trees that remain as part of the setting.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Davis, Winwood Design; Revised by Todd Fulks, Blue Marine Tech  
organization: Land Development Manager for Montecito Ranch  
street & number: 2831 Via Conquistador  
city or town: Carlsbad state: CA zip code: 92009  
e-mail winwood.davis@gmail.com telephone: (619) 987-7780  
date: October 2016; Revised January 2017

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## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Montecito Ranch House

City or Vicinity: Ramona

County: San Diego

State: California

Photographer: Winwood Design

Date Photographed: October 2016, unless otherwise noted

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**EXTERIOR**

- 1 of 21 View of the Montecito Ranch House site from the main gate entrance looking up the hill (camera facing north)
- 2 of 21 View of south façade and porch of ranch house which replicates similar view as Figure 1 (camera facing north)
- 3 of 21 View up the dirt driveway showing the east and portion of north façade of ranch house along with temporary carport awning and water tank (camera facing west)
- 4 of 21 East façade porch and stairs (camera facing southwest)
- 5 of 21 East façade porch and stairs; note historic pair of 2/2 double-hung wood windows in center (camera facing northwest)
- 6 of 21 **Back of the house, west façade, with additions on both ends of porch for bathrooms (camera facing east)**
- 7 of 21 **West façade looking south along the porch toward added bathroom for south end master bedroom 1 (camera facing southeast)**
- 8 of 21 North façade looking at kitchen entrance on left, bathroom/laundry room addition and hot tub on the right of the porch (camera facing south)
- 9 of 21 North façade cellar entrance (camera facing south)
- 10 of 21 Inside walk-in cellar that extends under the kitchen, showing the random sized stone and concrete mortar foundation (camera facing south); May 2015 courtesy Heritage Architecture & Planning
- 11 of 21 South porch veranda (camera facing southwest)

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**INTERIOR**

- 12 of 21 Living room looking toward windows on eastern side wall from southern doorway or bedroom 1 doorway; note high ceilings (camera facing northeast)
- 13 of 21 Interior of living room showing large front window and brick fireplace (camera facing southwest)
- 14 of 21 Interior of living room facing south toward the south and east corner of home, showing east side's 2/2 windows and doors with glass lites (camera facing south)
- 15 of 21 Bedroom 1 facing bathroom addition on west side (camera facing northwest)
- 16 of 21 Bedroom 2, standing with fireplace to the left, looking from doorway toward the back of house or western façade (camera facing west)
- 17 of 21 Bedroom 3 looking from doorway of bedroom 2 toward north laundry room door (camera facing north)
- 18 of 21 Bedroom 3 looking from north wall toward bedroom 2 doorway (camera facing south)
- 19 of 21 Kitchen area on north end of house (camera facing northwest)
- 20 of 21 Kitchen area looking toward living room (camera facing south)
- 21 of 21 Kitchen light fixture with decorative plaster medallion (camera facing upward and north)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

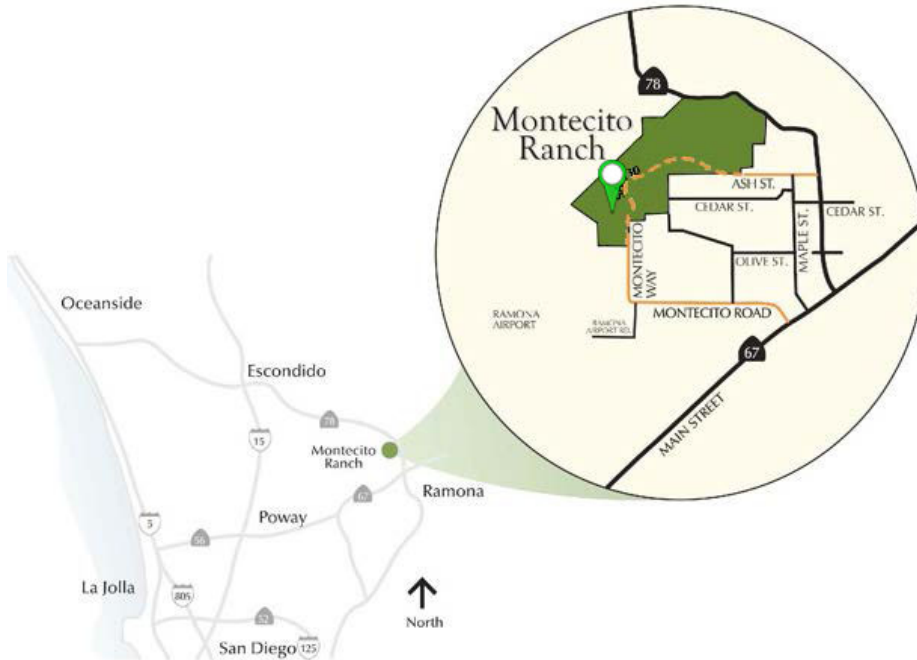
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### Location Map



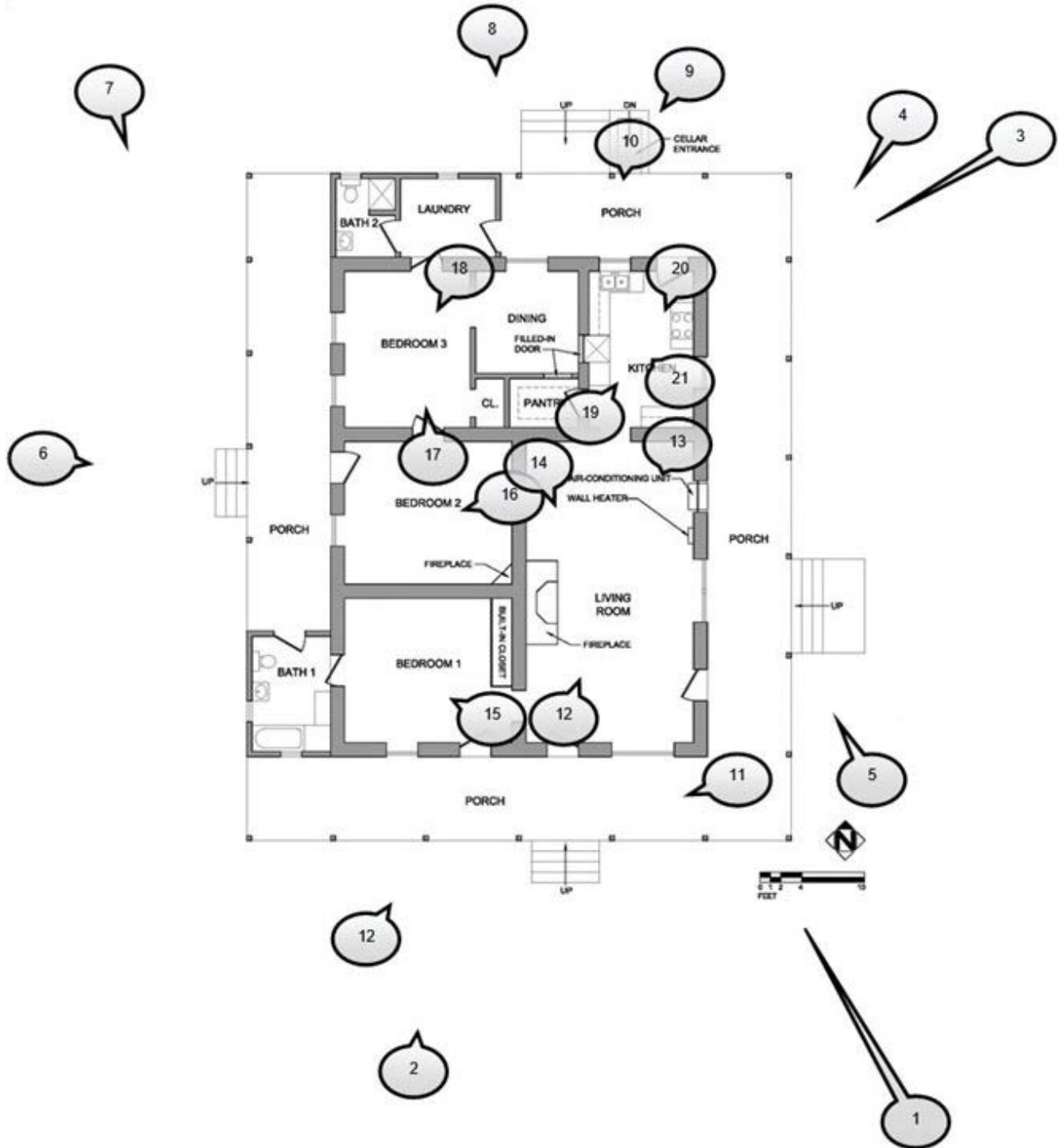
### Site Map



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Sketch Map/Photo Key





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**Figure 1.** Montecito Ranch House south façade circa 1897. Porch had a wood framed floor and the top of the porch roof aligned with the bottom edge of the main roof's eaves. Also note the arched detail between the porch posts. Wood-framed additions were added at the southeast and southwest corners of the porch with vertical wood siding (camera facing north). *Photo courtesy of the Guy B. Woodward Museum, Ramona.*



**Figure 2.** Montecito Ranch circa 1890s. Ranch house visible in cluster of tall trees in left-center distant background; orchard no longer extant. *Photo courtesy of the Coons Collection.*



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**Figure 3.** Aerial photo of Montecito Ranch after 2007 wildfire. The land and trees around the building were burned, and the ranch house and barn were saved through heroic efforts (camera facing southeast). *Photo courtesy of the Coons Collection.*

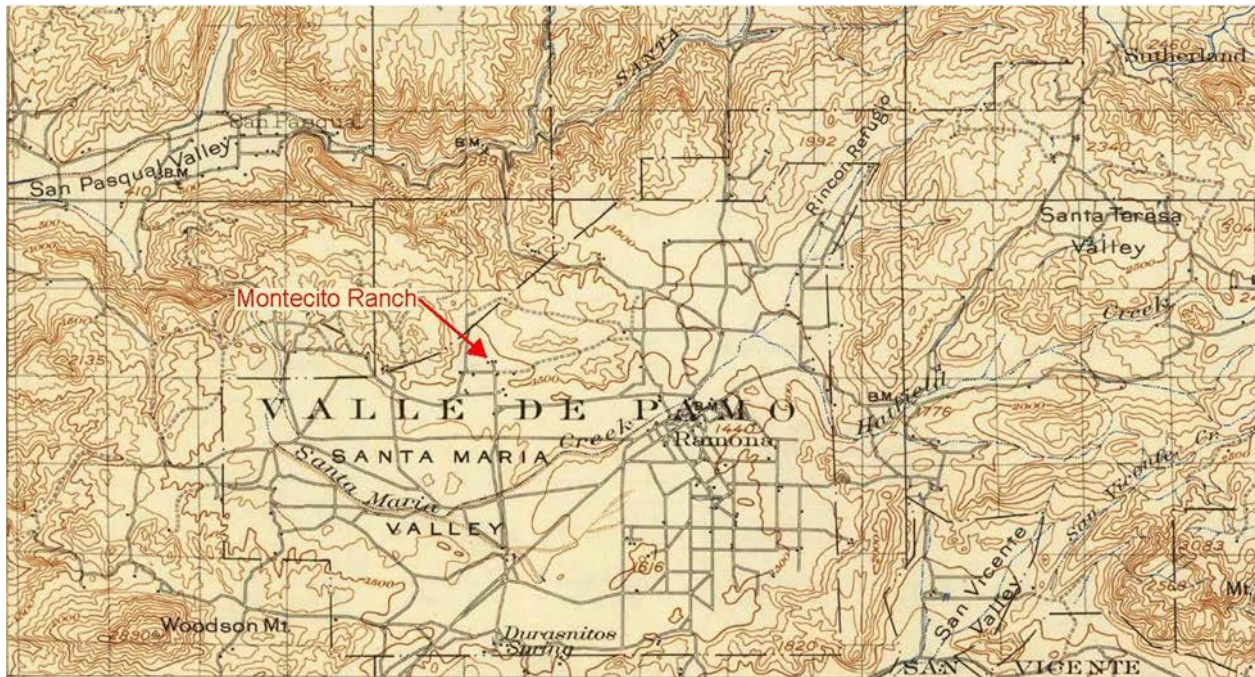




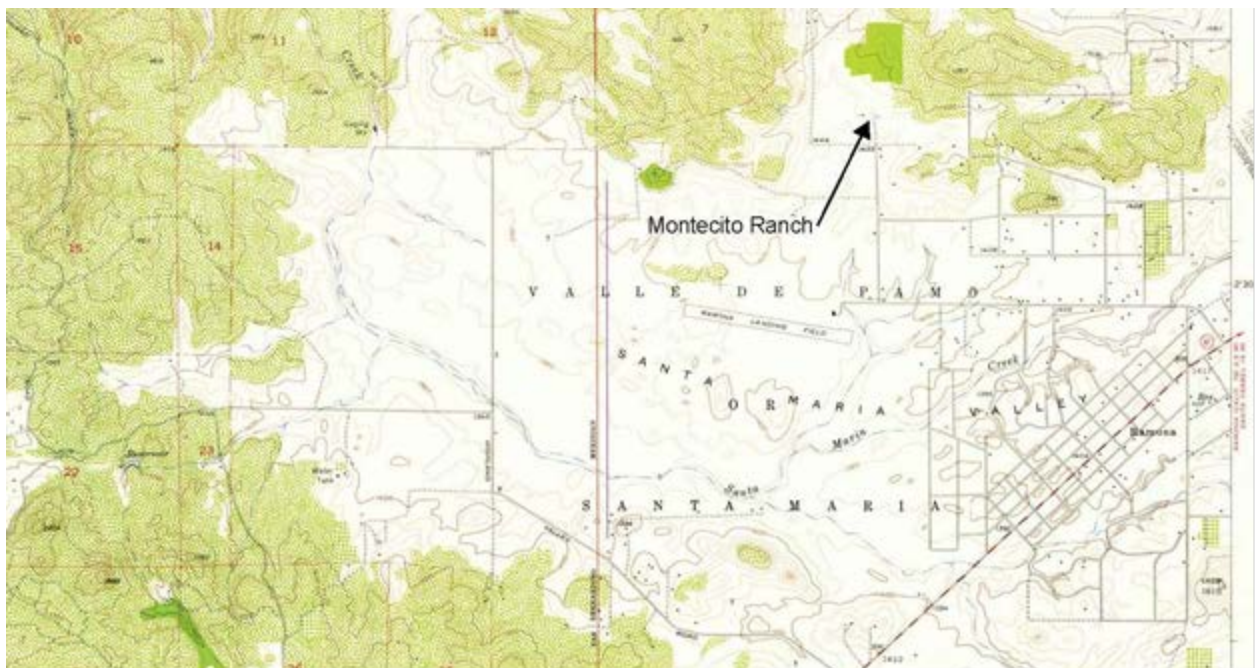
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**Figure 4.** 1903 USGS Ramona Quadrangle Map. Three small blocks indicate the ranch house, barn, and a third building (probably another barn). The third building was removed prior to the 1954 mapping.



**Figure 5.** 1954 USGS San Pasqual Quadrangle Map. Two small blocks indicated the ranch house and barn.

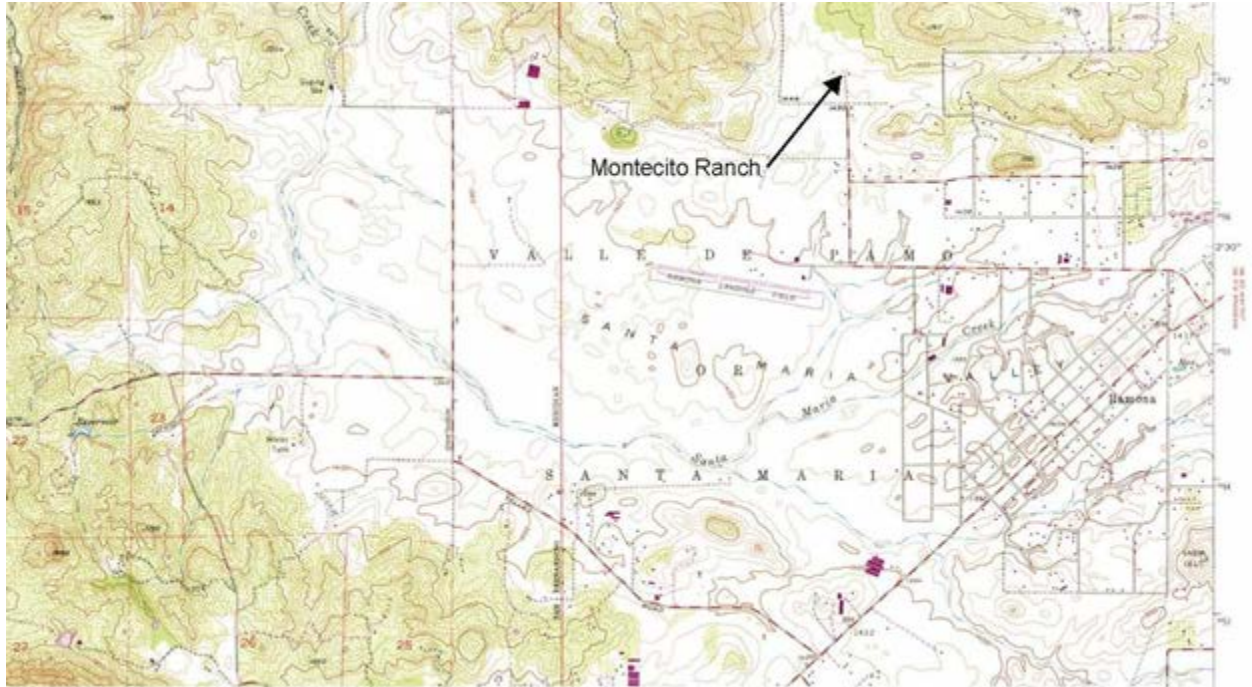




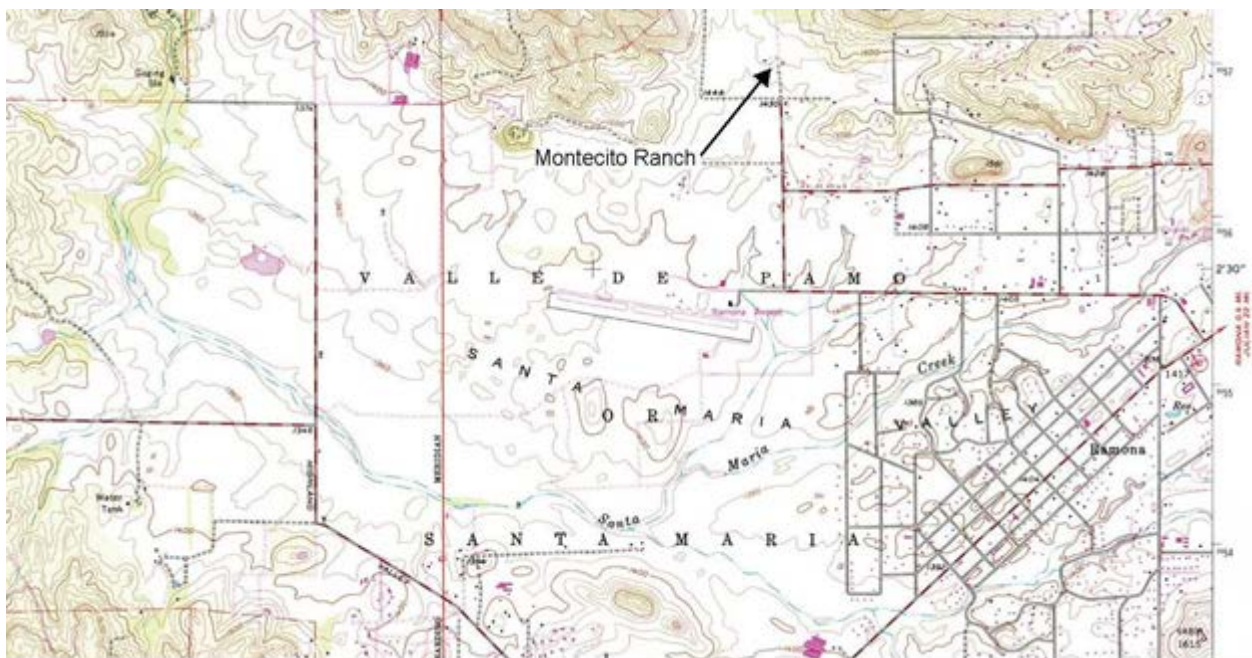
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**Figure 6.** 1954 USGS San Pasqual Quadrangle Map photorevised in 1971. Two small blocks indicated the ranch house and barn.



**Figure 7.** 1954 USGS San Pasqual Quadrangle Map photorevised in 1982. Two small blocks indicated the ranch house and barn.



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**Figure 8.** Title search summary, prepared for James Cagney.

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A Title Search on the portion of the Montecito Ranch which includes the ranchhouse has been made by Title Insurance Company for the present owner, James Cagney. It is summarized as follows:

Patent Deed from U. S. granted to Jose Joaquin Ortega	2-24-1873
Adolfo Stokes (various degrees of interest) 10-3-68, 1-4-69,	2-9-1870
James McCoy, Sheriff to G. Geddes	10-31-1871
John H. Williams	4-29-1872
George Hugh Smith	6-12-1872
W. Jeff Gatewood & William T. McNealy (1/3 interest)	6-12-1872
Adolfo Stokes (2/3 interest)	7-3-1872
James McCoy (1/6 interest)	10-10-1872
Adolfo Stokes (1/3 interest)	11-9-1872
J. B. Arrambide	11-11-1872
Bernard Etcheverry	12-9-1878
B. H. Davis, Charles Davis, Thomas J. Beall, E. D. Rogers, and Chapel Q. Stanton	12-30-1887
Chapel Q. Stanton	5-7-88, 10-1-1888
John Sherman	9-10-1890
W. E. Allis (1/2 interest)	2-17-1891
W. W. and Emma Thomas	2-27-1892
Mary Thomas	2-27-1892
George S. Davis	9-2-1893
Charles R. and Cora I. Brown	9-16-1895
Henry M. and Cornelia Ferry	2-10-1896
George S. Davis	7-25-1896
Elizabeth C. D. McVittie	9-25-1896
George S. Davis	8-23-1897
George W. Bissell	8-23-1897
Mary E. Davis, Irene D. Walker, Charles B. Davis, Alice D. Walker	7-1-1904
Fred M. Jennings	3-16-1905
D. C. Collier	8-3-1906
Santa Maria Land and Water Co.	9-3-1908
Malcolm McDougall	1-7-1911
Thomas A. McDougall	3-23-1917
Patterson Pogue and William F. Pogue	5-7-1918
Warren N. Carter	1-26-1920
Ransom and Eunice A. Reid	1-5-1921
C. W. Freeman	12-5-1925
C. L. Freeman	5-29-1926
S. B. and Lillian M. Edwards	6-8-1931
Lloyd P. Dolan	4-1-1944
Lloyd P. and Alice M. Dolan	5-22-1944
Winona B. Stevens	5-12-1945
Norman F. and Winona B. Stevens	11-18-1947
Rex I. and Elsie S. Officer	8-17-1950
Richard B. and Barbara L. Mears	6-25-1958
TI (trustee)	7-21-1966
William J. Cagney	12-7-1966
James Cagney, trustee	4-27-1970