

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96001537

Date Listed: 1/16/97

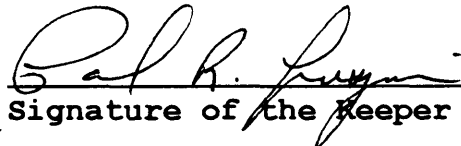
Bixby-Bryant Ranch House
Property Name

Orange
County

CA
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

2/4/97
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Significance:

The appropriate areas of significance are: Science/Botany and Conservation. [The nomination does not establish the significance of the property or the garden in the area of landscape design. Conservation--related to the preservation and management of natural resources--is recommended in its place.]

This information was confirmed with M. Lortie of the CA SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

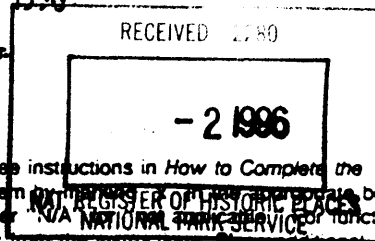
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

APR 10 1996

96-1507

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.



1. Name of Property

historic name BIXBY-BRYANT RANCH HOUSE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5700 Susanna Bryant Drive ☐ not for publication

city or town Yorba Linda ☐ vicinity

state California code ca county Orange code 59 zip code 92687

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 ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Harriet Alvey, Deputy SHPO 11/27/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Carl R. Ferguson

11/16/97

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant: Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th Century and Early 20th

Century American Movements,

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof asphalt shingles with wood under-

other two riverrock fireplaces, neath

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Bixby-Bryant Ranch House, located on a bluff overlooking the Santa Ana River, was built in 1912 by Susanna Bixby Bryant. A Craftsman Bungalow, the single-storied house is the only surviving building which represents the 6000-acre Rancho Santa Ana and the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens. The simple rectangular house, which will be restored for use as a house museum, is clad in medium-width clapboard siding and capped with a side-facing gabled roof. The two large river rock fireplaces are original to the house. The additions, including a small water heater shed, den, and back porch, all constructed in 1956, will be removed and the house returned to its original historic appearance. The adjoining eucalyptus grove contains some trees that are over 100 years old. It will

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be preserved as part of the historic viewshed. The ranch house retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and associations with the Bixby-Bryant Ranch, the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens, and Susanna Bixby Bryant.

General characteristics:

Rectangular in shape, the single-story Bixby-Bryant Ranch House is topped with a side-facing gabled roof with a smaller offset gabled roof on the east end. Constructed of redwood, with balloon framing, the 2,452-square-foot house boasts a spectacular setting on a bluff overlooking the Santa Ana River and Featherly Park, once part of the Rancho Santa Ana. It is adjacent to an old eucalyptus grove, which helps to create a sense of the property's ranching days. A simple version of Craftsman architecture, the house conveys the character of the typical 1910's ranch house. It features two large river rock fireplaces on the north side, one in the living room and one in the dining room. The house has been boarded up for several years and has been vandalized; however, the damage is repairable. It will be restored to its original appearance, using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and will be maintained as a house museum under the auspices of the Yorba Linda Historical Society and the City of Yorba Linda.

North Facade:

The north facade is really the back of the house, but typical of many farm houses, was used as the point of entry for those going inside. The most striking features of this facade are the tapered river rock fireplaces. The easternmost fireplace is centered in the offset gabled section on the east end of the house. A walk-in door, on the west side of the fireplace, and a double-hung window flank the fireplace. An open porch, with wide wooden steps, is located in the corner of the ell created by the offset living room section. The second fireplace, flanked by a pair of double-hung windows, is centered in the north wall of the dining room, to the west of the first fireplace. The two are identical in size and construction.

A small enclosed back porch, not original to the house, will be removed to expose the original kitchen/laundry room door, reached by wooden steps. Double-hung windows to the east of the porch are located above the kitchen sink. A small window to the west of the porch is a bathroom window. The 18' x 34' addition on the west end, built in 1956, reused some of the original siding and such features as the original triangular knee braces. The addition will be removed and as much of the original fabric as possible reinstalled on the west facade.

East Facade:

The gable end of the east facade features a wide plain frieze along the bottom, triangular knee braces, and a horizontal vent in the center. A

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pair of double-hung windows occupy the facade. Boards cover two spaces where the siding needs to be repaired. A front porch, recessed in the southeast corner, will be restored. It was supported at the southeast corner by a river rock pillar that matched the fireplaces.

South Facade:

The south side of the ranch house has a beautiful view of the Santa Ana River and the park which flourishes on the north side of the river. An orange grove, planted by Susanna Bixby Bryant, occupies the north section of the park. Placed on the diagonal, the house is located on the top of the bluff and appears to have been built in that location in order to take advantage of the view.

The original covered, recessed porch will be restored in the southeast corner of the south facade. To the west is a pair of windows that indicate one of three front bedrooms, and a small window that looks out from the bathroom. The water heater lean-to will be removed and the existing siding repaired. Two pairs of double-hung windows, to the west, denote the location of the two other front bedrooms. The 18' wide addition on the west end will be removed and as many of the materials as possible used in the restoration of the west facade.

West Facade:

An addition to the west end of the house, added in 1956, used some of the siding, knee braces, windows, and other materials from the original west facade. The plan is to remove the addition and reuse the materials to take the west side back to its original appearance. Triangular knee braces and horizontal venting decorate the eaves. Two double-hung windows and a door will be placed in their original locations.

Interior:

The original 2,452-square-foot interior features spacious rooms with a central hall plan running east-west from the living room.

The stone fireplaces are the most obvious character-defining features of the interior. The living room on the east end has the typical sand-finish plaster walls. The living room and dining room walls were covered with barn wood-type paneling in 1956. The paneling will be removed to reveal the original plaster and the river rock upper half of the fireplaces. The floors are three-inch-wide wooden planks and will be restored or covered. Vandals have sprayed the walls with paint and done some damage, all of which is repairable.

The central hall, which leads from the center of the west wall of the living room, will end in a door in the center of the west facade, as it did originally. Three bedrooms and a bath are located on the south side

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of the hall. The dining room, kitchen, laundry room, and bath are located on the north side. The original room plan will be preserved. Mr. Owen Johnson, who lived on the ranch during the 1920's, 30's and 40's, remembers the interior well because he lived in the house part of that time. He will be helping with the plans to restore the interior.

The developer of the surrounding property has set aside 1.3 acres for the preservation of the Bryant Ranch House, the setting, and the eucalyptus grove. The grandson of Susanna Bixby Bryant, Ernest Bryant III, has volunteered to provide cuttings from the plants at the Santa Ana Botanical Gardens in Claremont. Old-fashioned plantings, typical of the era when Susanna Bixby Bryant lived there, will be used around the house and yard.

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.)

Property is:

- ☐ 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture

Science: Botany

Period of Significance

1926-1946

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Bixby Bryant, Susanna

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Yorba Linda City Hall

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The Bixby-Bryant Ranch House is significant for its associations with Susanna Bixby Bryant, who built the house in 1912 and spent thirty-four years developing the Rancho Santa Ana and the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens. Although the 5,156-acre ranch had been in Susanna's family since her pioneer father purchased it in 1875, it was not until 1912 that Susanna decided she was tired of teas and luncheons and moved from Pasadena to the ranch. By developing the bare hills from cattle and sheep raising to citrus and row crops, she created a need for more employees, influencing the local economy. In 1926, Susanna founded a 200-acre botanical garden as a memorial to her father, John W. Bixby. The Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens became one of the few scientific institutions in the world specializing in native California flora. Mrs. Bryant brought experts such as Frederick Law Olmstead of Massachusetts, Dr. Walter Springale of Washington D. C., Dr. L. H. Bailey of New York, Dr. W. L. Jepson of the University of California at Berkeley, and Dr. Thomas Hunt Morgan of Caltech to help with the designing and implementation of the garden plan. Although the gardens focused on scientific study, they were also open to the public and to groups of school children and scouts. Educational and scientific organizations, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, met at the ranch. Susanna Bixby Bryant was actively involved in the gardens until her death on October 2, 1946. In 1951-52, the gardens were moved to Claremont to make them more accessible to the students at the Associated Claremont Colleges.

Context:

The Bixby-Bryant Ranch House is the only building which survives from the headquarters of the vast 5,156-acre Rancho Santa Ana. One of the few large ranches to survive into modern times, the Rancho Santa Ana stretched along the north side of the Santa Ana River, providing a scenic corridor through the Santa Ana Canyon. Susanna Bixby-Bryant planted the first citrus grove in 1913 and continued to develop the property, which had been in her family since 1875. The huge ranch provided employment for many local citizens through the years from 1912 to the 1970's and had a definite impact on the local economy. The ranch remained in operation until 1978, when it was sold for development and annexed to the City of Yorba Linda.

The Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, founded in 1926 by Susanna Bixby Bryant, was one of the few botanical gardens in the world that specialized in the native plants of California. On October 7, 1926, Mrs. Bryant began to correspond with Dr. Willis Jepson, considered the dean of California botanists. Writing to him at the University of California at Berkeley, she said, "the ambition I have for the native garden at Rancho Santa Ana is to make it the best and most complete botanical garden which we can develop for our California trees, shrubs, and flowers."

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Some of our country's most prominent botanists and scientists came to Orange County to participate in the planning, execution, and documentation of the gardens. Some of those who participated were Frederick Law Olmsted of Massachusetts, Dr. Walter T. Swingle of Washington, D. C., Dr. L. H. Bailey of New York, Dr. W. L. Jepson of U. C. Berkeley, Dr. LeRoy Abrams of Stanford University, Dr. Philip Munz of Pomona College in Claremont, and Miss Alice Eastwood of the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Dr. Thomas Hunt Morgan of Caltech, Dr. H. J. Webber of U. C. Riverside, Dr. D. D. Waynick of Anaheim, and Dr. Henry Eversole of La Canada were some of the scientists who were associated with the Gardens through the years. It was the second botanical garden in the nation to be credited as a museum.

Publications about native California plants, including thirty-four informational leaflets, were financed by the Dr. Ernest Bryant Publications Fund. Many of the large collection of botanical reference books were also purchased with money from this fund. One of the most famous persons to live and work at the ranch was Philip Munz, nationally renowned botanist who wrote The Manual of Southern California Botany, a work that remained for many years the standard taxonomic guide to southern California flora.

Among the many important groups of botanists and scientists who visited the gardens was the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Besides the focus on scientific study, the grounds were open to school children, scout troops and the general public. The popularity of the gardens soon gave the ranch national recognition in such publications as The Christian Science Monitor and Sunset Magazine. Mrs. Bryant, who led many of the tours at the gardens, died suddenly on a trip to Santa Barbara on October 2, 1946. Her son, Ernest Bryant Jr., inherited the property.

In 1950, an agreement was made with Claremont College to move the plants to a space owned by the Association of Claremont Colleges in that city. This move would allow the collection to become more accessible for scientific research and for students of the colleges. It took two years to move the thousands of plants and bulbs to the new site. Ernest Bryant III, Susanna's grandson, has connections with the Claremont Colleges and has offered to obtain cuttings for the grounds around the restored Bixby-Bryant Ranch House.

Historical Background of the Rancho Cañon de Santa Ana, Rancho Santa Ana, and Bryant Ranch:

The ownership of the Rancho Santa Ana/Bryant Ranch goes back to 1875, when John W. Bixby purchased almost 6000 acres of Bernardo Yorba's ranch, the Rancho Cañon de Santa Ana. Bernardo was granted the land by Governor Jose' Figueroa on August 1, 1834 and established a well-respected cattle ranch along the north side of the Santa Ana River. He died in 1858, leaving the property to his heirs.

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John W. Bixby, who had arrived in southern California from Maine in the late 1860's, went to work for his cousin, Jotham Bixby, at the Rancho Los Cerritos in Los Angeles County. There he met Susan Patterson Hathaway, Jotham's sister-in-law. After they were married in 1873, John and Susan purchased the Rancho Los Alamitos in Long Beach. John focused his time on the rebuilding of the Los Alamitos Ranch and was active in political and organizational circles in Los Angeles. In 1875 he bought the Rancho Santa Ana, with its rolling hills and steep canyons, and developed it as a stock ranch. While living at Rancho Los Alamitos, John and Susan had two children, Fred Hathaway Bixby and Susanna Patterson Bixby. John Bixby died of appendicitis in 1887, at the age of 39. His will left half of his estate to his widow and a quarter each to his children. Mrs. Bixby died in 1907, leaving her assets to be divided equally between her son and Susanna. In 1925 Susanna purchased her brother's half of the Rancho Santa Ana.

Susanna Bixby Bryant:

In 1912, Susanna, who had married Dr. Ernest Bryant in 1904, and was living in Pasadena, stated that she was "tired of women's luncheons and teas, committee meetings, and benefits." She decided to take over the management of the Rancho Santa Ana and built the house to serve as her home while at the ranch. It soon became the center of ranch activity. She planted the first citrus orchard on the property in 1913, and changed the focus of the ranch from cattle and sheep raising to citrus and row crops. This development added to the local economy, creating jobs.

Mrs. Bryant, who was a dedicated conservationist, was ahead of her time. She pointed out, through press releases and printed tracts, the urgent need to preserve southern California's native plants. She was particularly interested in water conservation, xeriscape planting, and the preservation of the environment. In February of 1926, Mrs. Bryant began to put all of her energies into the establishment of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens, which she dedicated to her father, John W. Bixby. Dr. Willis L. Jepson of U. C. Berkeley, said about Susanna, after visiting the ranch for the first time, "Mrs. Susanna Bixby Bryant is very sure of herself. She is able, keen, intelligent, shrewd, and obviously a keen business woman, for she told me at considerable length in what manner she had handled the Rancho Santa Ana. Experts tell her that the 300-acre Valencia orange orchard on the Rancho Santa Ana is one of the finest in the U. S."

After Susanna died on October 2, 1946, the garden staff, including twenty-two gardeners, continued to maintain and operate the gardens until they were moved to Claremont Colleges in 1951-52. Ernest Bryant III, Susanna's grandson, moved into the ranch house in 1956. The ranch remained in operation until 1978, when it was sold to a development company and annexed to the City of Yorba Linda. The City has included the Bryant Ranch House in its Historical Element, listing it as worthy of preservation and restoration.

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Susanna Bixby-Bryant's associations with the ranch house:

Susanna Bixby Bryant built the ranch house in 1912. As can be seen in the list of buildings at the end of this section, there is evidence that only one building existed before 1902, when the ranch was used for cattle and sheep raising. A bunkhouse and cookhouse were added about 1903. As noted in the SRS report, the ranch only began to develop after Susanna built the house and set about changing the ranch from cattle to citrus and other crops.

Mrs. Bryant decided, in 1912, at the age of 32, "that she was tired of women's luncheons and teas, committee meetings and benefits...she decided to take on the management of the Rancho Santa Ana." (a quote from her daughter Susanna Bryant Dakin).

She built the Bixby-Bryant Ranch House, hired a full-time housekeeper, and spent a lot of time at the ranch. She always brought her cook along when she came, even for a few days. She had a chauffeur to drive her wherever she wanted to go. Her children, Susanna and Ernest Bryant Jr. sometimes came with her, but stayed in Los Angeles with hired help the majority of the time. Mrs. Bryant was not tied down by the usual household and childraising chores, and could therefore put all of her energies into the development of the ranch and the botanic garden. Her wealth enabled her to travel as much as she wanted, visit botanists and garden experts in the United States and Europe, and spend whatever was necessary to meet her goals for the botanic gardens. Owen Johnson, whose father was employed by Mrs. Bryant, remembers that the gardens were an obsession with her.

The Bixby family owned several properties. Her parents owned the Rancho Los Alamitos as well as a ranch in Santa Barbara. The Bryants lived on 28th Street in Los Angeles until 1917, when they moved to West Adams in the same city. The Bryants had full staffs at each of their residences.

Context of the Bixby-Bryant Ranch House

The Bixby-Bryant Ranch House is the only surviving historic building for several miles in each direction. The ranch house and the assembly hall were the only two buildings surviving on the entire ranch after the demolitions of the 1980's. Both buildings were scheduled to be preserved, but the assembly hall burned to the ground about ten years ago, leaving the ranch house as the sole surviving historical building from the almost-6000-acre Rancho Santa Ana.

The nearest historic landmark is the Yorba Cemetery, about six miles to the west. The nearest historical building is approximately nine miles to the west, in the town center of Yorba Linda. The land on which the ranch house sits was annexed to the City of Yorba Linda in 1987. The closest town to the east is Corona. The land on the south side of the freeway is still grazing land, with the exception of a gypsum mine.

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The Role Played by Susanna Bixby Bryant in the Establishment of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens:

The Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens were the focus of Susanna Bixby Bryant's life from the early 1920's until her death in 1946. It was her "brain child" and she was very involved in every aspect of the planning and implementation of what was to become a 200-acre garden. Most of the letters regarding the project have been preserved at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Library at Claremont, California. They tell us the story of Susanna Bixby Bryant's involvement in the establishment of the gardens.

The earliest known record indicating that Mrs. Bryant was seriously considering a garden of native California plants is a letter written to her by Theodore Payne, a well-known southern California botanist, on January 8, 1926, in which he used the term "Your Wild Garden project..."

Payne visited Mrs. Bryant on January 8, 1926 at the ranch. He wrote:

With reference to your Wild Garden project, I have been giving this matter a good deal of thought since my visit to your ranch about a week ago...You said you wanted every kind of wild plant that grows in California..."

In a reply to Mr. Payne, Mrs. Bryant wrote, "...At present (February 17, 1926) I am in the throes of installing an irrigation system for the new garden; which means building a reservoir and storage tank, putting in pipe lines etc. as well as grading roads and walks. When this foundation is completed, I will be ready to commence setting out trees and hope to do quite an appreciative amount of planting this coming winter. As soon as we are ready, you may be sure I shall appeal to you for your latest list and anticipate drawing heavily on your stock in the immediate future. Already I have aroused quite a bit of interest among the University professors, writers, and other California enthusiasts, and I can imagine nothing more fascinating than working out the details of a real botanical garden where California native flora is supreme."

On March 9, 1926, Mrs. Bryant wrote to Dr. Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927) at the Arnold Arboretum near Boston, saying:

"Several professors and others who are studying California flora have suggested that I should write to you about a plan I am working on to establish a botanic garden for the growing of our native trees, plants, and flowers..."

On my Santa Ana Canyon ranch, in the foothills between Los Angeles and Riverside, I am hoping to develop an arboretum ...and am anxious to make my plans in such a way that the whole scheme may work into a valuable contribution to others who are enthusiasts over our beautiful native plants; which grow wild in such great diversity and

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profusion through the length and breadth of the State... To start with, we are setting aside approximately one hundred and sixty-five acres for development."

Soon after, Mrs. Bryant traveled to Boston to visit Dr. Sargent at his arboretum. On April 17, 1926, he wrote her a letter advising her that she should plant a much smaller garden and only use plant materials that did not need irrigating. He told her he was sure she would not like his advise and did not expect to ever hear from her again.

Mrs. Bryant, on April 28, 1926, replied:

"In thinking over the hours spent with you and your assistants, and the Arnold Arboretum, I find from that rich storehouse I carried away a good deal of information which will be of real and practical value to me in the work I am trying to accomplish. I was much busier "brain-picking" than you realized."

"You gave me the impetus to go ahead with my own arboretum--both through your suggestion for the restricted field of desert plants and your sincere opposition to my larger plan. In the traditional feminine manner, I am going to compromise by going ahead with my original scheme. I shall develop your idea as fully as possible on non-irrigated land and also put quite an acreage under irrigation in order to bring many of our very beautiful northern trees, plants, and lillies down to this part of the State where we southern Californians may enjoy them all year round."

It was Dr. Sargent who suggested that Mrs. Bryant contact Ernest Branton of Los Angeles, a major influence in the horticultural world of southern California, through his work as professor of landscape gardening at U. S. C., as a Los Angeles Park Commissioner, and Chairman of the Los Angeles Board of Forestry. Dr. Branton wrote to Mrs. Bryant on September 8, 1926, about the need for the type of garden she was planning, citing a visit by Dr. Karel Domin, Curator of the National Botanical Museum in Czechoslovakia, and Professor of Botany at Charles University in Prague. Dr. Domin wanted to see all of America in regard to native plants, but unfortunately Dr. Branton could not find such a garden. He asked Mrs. Bryant, "When can we have the Bryant Botanic Garden to show visiting scientists?"

On September 25, 1926, Suzanna Bryant wrote Dr. J. W. Jepson of U. C. Berkeley, telling him that the reservoirs, pumping plant, pipe lines and roads would all be completed within three weeks. She wanted to hire an expert to help her select the plants, many of which she wanted to have in the ground by spring. Dr. Willis Linn Jepson (1867-1946) considered by many to be "the dean of California botanists", was active and enthusiastic conservationist, and the author of many taxonomic books.

Two days later Mrs. Bryant wrote to Dr. Jepson, inquiring what he thought about Dr. Branton. He replied that, "Dr. Ernest Branton is one of the ablest men in horticulture in California." Part of this letter reads, "It is staggering to think that California of

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all places in the world so desirable for a botanical garden, has not at the present time even one batanic garden that can truly be called "scientific". For the whold state of California, for its people at large, rich and poor, north or south, country dweller or city denixen, the benefits to be derived from such a garden are manifold and would encrease with the decades, and the little you suggest of your plans interests me vastly. I shall be happy to be at your service."

On October 16, 1926, Mrs. Bryant again wrote Jepson, this time inviting him and Dr. LeRoy Abrams (1874-1956) of Stanford University and an authority on California plants to visit Rancho Santa Ana. Part of her letter reads: "We are ready to start our first important plant-ing and I feel that your advice now would be invaluable to me. It would give Dr. Bryant and me a great deal of pleasure to have you and Dr. Abrams spend a weekend with us as our guests at Rancho Santa Ana; I am sure the ranch will interest you."

Dr. Jepson wrote back a few days later, telling Mrs. Bryant that it was important "for its highest usefulness and permanent prestige as a scientific garden; first, to increase knowledge of the native Calif-ornia plants, and second, to make that knowledge available both to botanists and the general public."

In Dr. Jepson's field notebook of April 20, he records, "Mrs. Susanna Bixby-Bryant is very sure of herself. She is able, keen, intelli-gent, shrewd, and cbviously a keen business woman, for she told me at considerable length in what manner she handled the Rancho Santa Ana. Experts tell her that the 300-odd acre Valencia orange orchard on the Rancho Santa Ana is the finest in the U. S."

Dr. Jepson pointed out to Mrs. Bryant that if she entered the commercial field, in an effort to make the garden self-supporting, she would put her garden out of the class of botanical gadens and into the class of commercial gardens. At that time he observed, "She laid it down as a guiding principle of her garden that it cannot progress, cannot go any further, than her understanding of it, that is in her life time." Taking his advice, Mrs. Bryant gave up the idea of a commercial garden. However, she did establish a private foundation in 1930, with herself as Founder and Executive Director.

Mrs. Bryant requested Dr. Ernest Branton to submit a letter embodying his offer to draw up landscape plans for the botanic garden. On November 10, 1926, he wrote to her, agreeing to design the plant layout. He mentioned that Dr. William Hertrich, at that time Director of the Huntington Botanic Garden, would be coming to Rancho Santa Ana the next Saturday to look at the beginning stages of the garden. He also had spoken to Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey and received an offer of help from him. Dr. Branton says of Dr. Bailey, " This means so much

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to me, for he has seen more botanic gardens than any man I know."

Mrs. Bryant must have discussed her plans for a botanic garden with Dean Ernest J. Jaqua, Dean of Faculty at Pomona College, and later the first President of Scripps College. He in turn talked to Dr. Phillip A. Munz, at that time Professor of Botany at Pomona. On October 29, 1926, Dr. Munz wrote to Mrs. Bryant and offered his assistance. She wrote back, accepting his offer and inviting him to the ranch. She told him that Dr. H. J. Webber, then Director of the Citrus Experiment Station at Riverside, California, had also written her of his interest in the project.

On December 11, 1926, Mrs. Bryant wrote to Dr. Jepson, telling him that there had been much progress in the garden, and that she would soon begin the building of the lathhouse and green house. She hired Bryon D. Stark, a very competent nurseryman.

During 1927 there was a great deal of correspondance between Mrs. Bryant, Dr. Braunton, and Dr. Jepson. Most of it was about the various species of plants that would be represented in the garden. Dr. Braunton told Mrs. Bryant that her first long list of plants included many that would have to be collected in the wild and cautioned her against buying plants from nurseries. Mrs. Bryant and her staff began to take trips all over the state, collecting plants, seedlings, and seeds from their natural locations. With Dr. Braunton's advice, they took great care to secure seeds only from native populations.

In October 1927, Mrs. Bryant visited Dr. Jepson in his laboratory at Berkeley. He write of that visit, "there stirred in my mind a natural curiosity as to why this remarkable woman should be coming all the way from Los Angeles to consult with me. My mind has never been fully made up about her; but I have deferred judgement because there is no need to hurry and appraise so unusual an individual. She came to my laboratory at 8:30 and stayed until twelve o'clock. She did most of the talking--as usual, I listened...Mrs. Bryant has discovered something which I feel sure, pleases her very much. As owner and successful manager of the Rancho Santa Ana she paid for whatever she got for the ranch use as all ranch owners do. As founder of a botanic garden, a scientific project, she discovered, to her delight, that so many persons do things for the garden for nothing; that all of us give seeds or plants, for example, without thought of any charge. She has told me of any number of gifts she has had, and many more to come...Shrewd, cool, calculating, yet Mrs. Bryant gives no suggestion of being "hard:", but takes you into her confidence in a way that, undoubtedly, with most persons, if not everyone, makes loyal supporting and even sacrificing friends for a botanic garden at Rancho Ana. She reiterated her position as to managing the garden. She means to manage it herself...she now plans to have a Board of Trustees... The actual ownership of the garden is, however, to remain in her family as generations pass..."

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Mrs. Bryant continued to play the main role in the management of the gardens throughout her life time. She was, however, informed by Dr Jepson in January of 1929, that "she could run a garden herself, but not a Scientific Garden, unless she hired a Scientific Director." The letter resulted in a strained relationship between Dr. Jepson and Mrs. Bryant. However, she appointed Carl Brandt Wolf as Botanist on September 1, 1930. She continued to involve several noted experts in the field, often showing them the gardens herself.

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List of buildings existing in 1983 (taken from a report prepared by Scientific Resources Survey Inc., dated September 14, 1983.

Pre-1903:

The only building shown on the map was a small house, possibly used by the ranch foreman or an employee of the Anaheim Union Water Co. Demolished before 1925.

1903-1919:

The main house (Bixby-Bryant Ranch House), bunk house, cookhouse. The only one to survive is the ranch house.

1920-24:

A 4096 sq. ft. barn, built in 1920, was demolished in the 1980's. Two large and one small sheds were built in the 1920's and demolished in the 1980's.

1925-1929:

During the four years between 1925 and 1929, there were nine buildings constructed; those four years were the prime years of the establishment of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Those listed are: a small board-and-batten house (1925); a Spanish style office Building (1927); a cow barn and stable (1927); a tractor shed (ca. 1927); a well shed (ca 1927); a carport for six cars (1927); a garage (1927); an oil storage shed (1927); a 638-sq. ft. garage (ca. 1927). Of these all but the tractor shed and well shed were still surviving in 1983. All were demolished shortly after the report was completed.

1930-1939:

A Spanish Colonial Revival house and garage, constructed in 1935, was built for the head irrigator. It was demolished in the 1980's.

Not listed in the report:

A Spanish Colonial Revival 1930 administration building, into which Susanna Bixby Bryant eventually moved, had been demolished in the 1950's.

A Spanish Colonial Revival Assembly Hall, which was supposed to be preserved, and was destroyed by an arson fire approximately ten years ago.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

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Talbert, Orange County Historical Volume II Santa Ana, CA 1963

Erickson, Mary Ruth, The Yorba Legacy Yorba Linda Public Library 1989

County of Orange, Bienvenidos Al Canon de Santa Ana! A History of Santa Ana Canyon County of Orange 1976

Mildred Yorba MacArthur, A Brief History of the Yorba Family, Yorba Linda Public Library 1960

McPherson, William, Spanish and Mexican Land Grants of Orange County Orange County History Series Volume 2 Orange County Historical Society 1932

Meadows, Don, The House of Bernardo Yorba, Orange County Historical Society 1963

Munz, Phillip, A Short History of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens Los Angeles, Ward Ritchie Press May 1947

Pleasants, Adelina, The Yorba Family, Orange County History Series Vol. 2, Orange County Historical Society 1932

Pleasants, Adelina, History of Orange County Volume 1, Los Angeles 1931, J. R. Finnell and Sons Publishing Co.

Stephenson, Terry, Camino Viejos Santa Ana, Ca., 1930

Lee Lentz, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1927-77

Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden, Aliso, Journal of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden Claremont, CA Vol. 9 No. 1 1977

Interview with Mr. Owen Johnson, who lived at the ranch from his birth in the 1920's until the 1940's. His father, Superintendent at the Ranch, lived there from 1912 until he retired in 1956.

Chain of Title for the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Orange County Title Company

California Garden Club Inc., Golden Gardens, official publication of the California Garden Club Inc. Nov. 1959

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.3

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 11 434 540 3748330
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

4

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diann Marsh

organization Yorba Linda Historical Society date March 15, 1996

street & number 321 E. Eighth Street telephone 714/541-2441

city or town Santa Ana state CA zip code 92701

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Pacific Heritage Development Co.

street & number 26300 La Alameda, Suite 340 telephone 714/367-1444

city or town Mission Viejo state CA zip code 92691

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet**Section number 10 Page 1**Geographical Data:****Verbal Boundary Description:**

Property is designated Lot B of Tentative Tract No. 15199

Starting at the corner of Camino de Bryant and "A" Street, go 160 west, to the corner of "A" Street and "C" Street. Turn south and go 31 feet, to the northwest corner of Lot 32. Go east for 84.95', then south for 206.28'. Turn west and go 68.72', turning northwest for 34.75', to "C" Street. Turning southwest, go 92.50 feet along the south curve of "C" Street. Go south for 97.50' to the point where the lot line turns southwest. Go east for 52.50' to the point where the lot line goes in a northeasterly direction for 123.61 feet. It then curves southeast for 120 feet, to Camino de Bryant Street. Turn north and go 374.75 feet to the point of beginning at the corner of Camino de Bryant and "A" Street.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the property in this application are the same as the legal boundaries of the parcel to be given to the City of Yorba Linda and the Yorba Linda Historical Society for use as a house museum and garden. It includes the house, eucalyptus grove, road to house, and landscaped area totalling 1.3 acres.

The boundaries encompass the remaining feature associated with Susanna Bixby-Bryant and its immediate setting.

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Bixby-Bryant Ranch House

Yorba Linda, CA 92687

Orange County

Photos Taken: March 1996

Photographer: Diann Marsh

Negatives: Nos. 1-10 Diann Marsh, 321 E. Eighth Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Nos. 11, 12 Don Dooley, City of Yorba Linda, 4845 Casa Loma Ave.
Yorba Linda, CA.

- No. 1: Taken from the northeast, this photo shows the east end of the east facade of the house on the left and the north side on the right. The living room is in the easternmost offset gabled section, and the dining room is to the west of the living room. Both are denoted by fireplaces.
- No. 2: Taken from the northeast, this photo depicts the east end of the north facade. The open porch and stairs lead into the west end of the living room. The dining room is on the right.
- No. 3: Taken from the northwest, this photo shows the area in the center where the back porch was added in 1956. The porch and steps will be removed to reveal the original back door. Plain wooden steps will lead to the door, which leads from the laundry room/kitchen. A bathroom window is located to the west of the porch, near the right hand border of the photograph. A west view of the chimneys is provided.
- No. 4: The north and west sides of the house, as seen from the northwest, shows the room added on to the west end. The triangular knee braces, siding, and a couple of windows were reused from the old west side of the house. The addition will be removed and the materials once again used on the west facade of the house.
- No. 5: The Bixby-Bryant Ranch House, as seen from the northwest. Note the hills in the background, across the river. The eucalyptus trees on the east side of the house can be seen near the left border of the photo.
- No. 6: The front of the house, as seen from the south, is situated on the brow of the hill, and appears to have been built to take advantage of the view. The west 18' of the house, as seen on the left, is the addition that will be removed.
- No. 7: The east facade of the house, as seen from the southeast. This close-up shows the medium-width clapboard siding, the triangular knee braces, and the location of the living room windows.
- No. 8: The house, as seen from the eucalyptus grove. The photo was taken from the northeast.
- No. 9: The eucalyptus grove located to the east of the house will be preserved as part of the 1.3 acre historical museum and gardens.

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Continuation Sheet**Section number Photos Page 2

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- No. 10: The view to the south, as seen from the house. The area below, including the orange trees planted by the Bryants, is part of Featherly Park and the Santa Ana River bed.
- No. 11: Owen Johnson and his sister in the living room of the Bixby-Bryant Ranch House during the 1940's. The fireplace can be seen on the left. The photo shows the northeast corner of the living room, the plain, wide woodwork, and the picture rail, typical of a Craftsman house. The interior will be restored to this period.
- No. 12: The fireplace of the Bixby-Bryant Ranch House at Christmas time, sometime in the 1940's. The woman and cat are not identified. The dark shadow above the mantel of the fireplace is made by greenery. This is probably the dining room fireplace, because the rocks do not match those on the other photo.

"A" ST

"C" ST.

Susanna Bryant Drive

NORTH

1" equals 50'

84.95'

160'

(32)

(31)

(30)

206.28'

PROPOSED LAINI7 DESIGNED ROAD

EUCALYPTUS GROVE

374.75'

92.50'

34.73'

68.72'

BIXBY-BRYANT RANCH HOUSE

LOT (B)

97.50'

28.77'

52.50'

123.61'

120'

Bixby-Bryant Ranch House

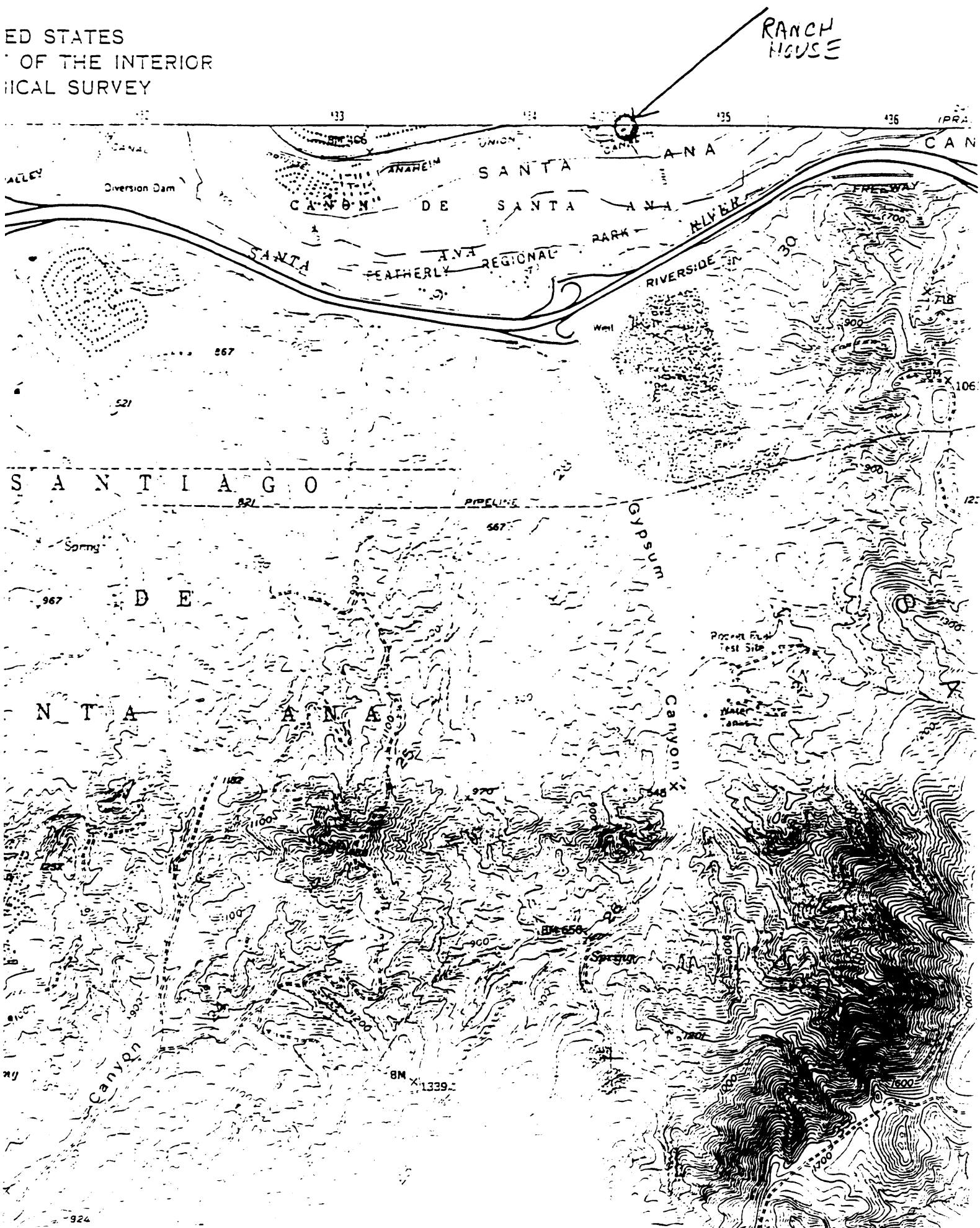
Yorba Linda, Orange County, CA

Sketch map traced from Tentative Tract map 15199

LA PALMA AVE

FEATHERLY PARK

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



RANCH
HOUSE