

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED DEC 12 1978  
DATE ENTERED APR 2 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

China Camp

RECEIVED

AUG 24 1978

AND/OR COMMON

China Camp State Park

OHP

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

247 North San Pedro Drive

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

San Rafael

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

05

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Marin

CODE

041

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2390

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Records Office

STREET & NUMBER

Marin Civic Center

CITY, TOWN

San Rafael

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- TITLE
- 1) The San Francisco Bay Mounds - Nelson, N.
  - 2) China Camp Project Inventory of Features

- DATE
- 1) 1909
  - 2) August 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Department of Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE

CA

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The remains of the China Camp shrimp fishery are located within two coves and on an intervening ridge; this ridge also contains a prehistoric shellmound. These areas constitute the nominated property, with the inclusion of several hundred feet of adjacent tide land containing the archeological remains of China Camp and the existing pier.

The Native American shellmound, designated CA:MRN:110, was originally recorded in 1907 as being a small temporary campsite. A survey in 1977 estimated that 90% of this site has been destroyed by impact from the early Chinese settlement and modern parking and footpath facilities.

The cove just west of Rat Rock was one site of the historic Chinese shrimping community. Archeological remains including foundations, bricks, ceramic ware and glass, testify to the extent of the settlement. In addition, the sea bed in the cove contains the hulls of three redwood vessels, presumably sampans. An 1888-89 photograph shows at least 24 standing structures and several piers; however, no structures stand today.

The cove south of Rat Rock contains extensive archeological and historic architectural remains of the once-thriving shrimping community. Of sixteen structures which are presently in this cove, six can be dated to the early (pre-1900) days of the village; most of the remainder were built in the first quarter of this century. (Five of the structures, none of which are historically significant, will be razed to enhance the village scene.)

The south cove contains the following historic structures (see detailed site map):

Structure 8 - This is a long narrow composite building with an original brick shed (ca. 1880-90), which was used for drying shrimp, and a redwood frame addition off the north end (ca. 1910-20). The entire building measures 10 x 34' and has a low gabled roof with corrugated tin covering.

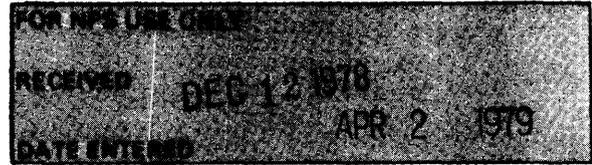
Structure 9 - The "shrimp shed" is on pine pilings over the tide line. It dates from approx. 1870-90 and is constructed with redwood planking. Originally, the gabled roof, as with all the historic buildings, was covered with split redwood shingles. Now corrugated tin covers the roof, while much of the redwood siding is still in place; overall dimensions are 40 x 25'.

Structure 10 - The 305' pier has been lengthened since the early days of the camp and the original shed was about 35' wider and 75' longer than the existing wood frame shed (which has a recent corrugated roof).

Structure 11 - The existing camp store encloses the frame and siding remnants of a shrimp grinding shed which dates from the earliest period (i.e., late 1860's-1880). (The power train and blower apparatus are still in the rafters.) The enclosing building has a pier foundation and redwood plank frame and siding (board and batten). The 34 by 45' store has double sash and casement windows.

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7. Description

Structures 12 & 13 - Both were constructed around 1900 as floating houses; they are now beached. Building 12 has a pier foundation, board and batten siding, various windows and a tar and corrugated, low gable and hip roof combination; building dimensions: 18 x 41'. Structure 13 has a round pile foundation, lap siding, casement and sash windows and a tar paper mansard and gable roof combination; overall dimensions are 29 x 35'.

Structure 14 - This was a sportsman's cabin erected in 1920-25. The wood frame building has a round pier foundation, board and batten siding and a shingled gable roof. High tides removed a front wooden porch in years past.

Structure 5 - This old residence (ca. 1920's) has a pier foundation, wood frame and siding, fixed windows and a low gable tar roof. Numerous additions have been fixed to the original structure; overall dimensions are 48 x 30'.

Structures 15 & 16 - Both were residences built in the 1920's. Building 15 has a pier foundation, board and batten siding, fixed and casement windows and a tar paper roof; dimensions: 15 x 16'. Building 16 is of similar construction (some shingle siding and a shingled gable roof); dimensions: 27 x 15'. A wooden outhouse is off the west end of No. 16.

Structure 6 - An old shrimp drying platform on a pier foundation served as the base for a wood frame, board and tin sided structure which was erected in 1954 for the John Wayne film "Blood Alley". The "porch" of this building is a remnant of the drying platform.

Photographic records indicate that at least 28 structures stood in the cove prior to 1900; which is substantiated by the archeological evidence. The hillsides above both coves were cleared and used as shrimp-drying fields in the early days of the fishery. Today the hills are overgrown with introduced vegetation, with no evidence of the drying fields remaining.

The low ridge between the coves was also the site of several historic structures related to the fishery. These were situated on the bluff and along the rocky shoreline. Only archeological evidence of these structures remains, however, as the hill has been used for parking, and erosion has removed the soils in most areas.

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PAGE 3

7. Description

All of the historical structures have been variously modified to extend their useful life and to accommodate the changing needs of the shrimp industry. The original wooden components of the early structures are deteriorated. At least two of the buildings are in danger of collapsing, and the pier is unsafe for general use. (The State is planning to preserve the significant structures in China Camp.) However, these structures have retained their historical integrity and functional usefulness over the hundred year span of the shrimp village.

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This data was compiled during a historic building survey of the China Cove area on August 8, 1977. The survey was conducted by historians and archaeologists from the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The survey involved extensive interviews with Mr. Frank Quan, who was raised in China Camp.

Structure 1 - This building was constructed around the 1930's to 1950's. It is located at 247 North San Pedro Road, on the northwest side overlooking San Pablo Bay. A concrete perimeter serves as the foundation for the structure. The exterior siding is of plysheet and batten, with balloon framing which supports a cross gable roof. The interior floors, walls and ceiling of the building are all constructed of plywood. Building No. 1 has no historic significance to the China Camp period.

Structure 2 - This building was constructed around the 1930's to 1940's, by Judge de Moñitana of San Rafael, and was used as a weekend fishing retreat by the Judge. Frank Quan's cousin, Georgette, bought the structure from the de Moñitana family in 1955 or 1960, and she and her husband used it as a weekend retreat also. The partially burned building stands 100 meters northwest of structure No. 1. Wood piers serve as the foundation for the structure. The exterior siding is constructed of batten, narrow lap, and plywood attached to a balloon frame. A shed type roof, constructed of tar and paper, and verticle bottom hinged windows are also contained within the structure. The interior floors are tongue-and-groove; interior walls are redwood lap; and the interior ceiling is gone. Structure No. 2 is not significant to the historic shrimping industry.

Structure 3 - This building was constructed around 1940, and is located at 240 A, North San Pedro Road. Four-by-four concrete pilings serve for the foundation of the building. The exterior is coated with stucco and balloon framing supports a low gable roof. The interior walls and ceiling are of plywood, with the floors constructed of tongue-and-groove. A structure at the rear has corrugated siding. There is a chimney with an aluminum extension and a corrugated iron water break at the base of the structure to check tidal erosion. No. 3, has no historic significance to the China Camp period.

Structure 4 - This building was constructed around 1940. It was used as a shed and out building for Structure No. 5. Four-by-four concrete pilings serve for the foundation of the building. The exterior siding is of lap and asphalt shingles with internal balloon framing that supports a low gable roof. The interior walls and ceiling are of plywood, with floors constructed of tongue-and-groove. The structure was determined to have no historic or architectural significance.

Structure 7 - This building is of recent construction and it contains two restrooms for the patrons of China Camp. The restroom is located at 243 North San Pedro Road. Concrete pilings serve as the foundation for the structure. The walls are cinder block, seven feet high, with a screen frame above that. The

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

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roof, tar and paper, is a basic shed type. Interior floors and walls are of concrete, with the ceiling being of open wood. This is a recent structure with no historical significance.

# 6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1865-1925

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Chinese Shrimp Fishermen

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The prehistoric shellmound (MRN:110) is a site which was used by the Coast Miwok Indians as a shellfish collecting camp. Though damaged, the site retains its intrinsic scientific, interpretive and cultural values. Very few of the once numerous shellmounds have survived the impact of urban growth; a survey of the San Francisco Bay Area in 1907 estimated 425 mounds. Our knowledge of the prehistory of this region is limited, and the remains of MRN:110 likely hold significant data which reflect the aboriginal lifestyle as adapted to this unique area in California.

Chinese fishermen began taking shrimp in California probably as early as the mid-1860's. Numerous villages were established on the shores of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays in the 1870's and 1880's. China Camp was one of the largest settlements of this type and it is the last operating vestige of the Chinese shrimp fishery in the state.

Chinese immigrants arrived in California with the intention of remaining the shortest time possible. As a consequence, acculturation with western ways was minimal and traditional technology was employed for decades. Thus, the early component of China Camp reflects Chinese fishing technology and life style as transported from the Pearl River delta of the Kwangtung Province.

Records indicate that China Camp was probably well established by the latter 1860's. The 1870 census lists 77 male shrimp fishermen living in 15 "dwelling units"; the 1880 census lists 469 people. The village had three general stores, one marine supply store and a barber shop. Photographs from 1888 show both coves congested with structures, piers, vessels, and shrimp drying areas. The nominated district contains significant archeological and structural remains from this era.

Despite racially discriminatory regulations, export bans and the far reaching effects of World War II, the fishery survives today with a lone descendent of an early immigrant Chinese fisherman, who operates from the remaining pier and buildings in China Camp. The Department of Parks and Recreation and local cultural groups have assured the continuation of this unique historical industry.

The significance of the archeological and structural remains in the nominated district cannot be overestimated. Four structures in the village date from the earliest days of the settlement (i.e., the late 1860's through 1890). Two structures, originally built as "house boats", date from around 1900 and five structures, plus a wooden trawler, date from the first three decades of the 20th century. The shrimp fisherman occupying China Camp today has considerable knowledge concerning the architectural, technological and social history of the settlement.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Meighan, C.W., 1953 - Preliminary Excavations at the Thomas Site (MRN:115) Marin County, UCAS Reports, 19:1-14  
 Nash, R., 1973 - The Chinese Shrimp Fishery in California. Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA  
 Kroeber, A.L., 1925 - Handbook of the Indians of California. Berkeley, CA

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 30 75

QUADRANGLE NAME San Quentin & Petaluma Point

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 min.

UTM REFERENCES 360

A	1,0	54733,0	420619,0	B	1,0	54790,0	420547,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,0	54781,0	420540,0	D	1,0	54733,0	420565,0
E	1,0	54696,0	420611,0	F	1,0	54694,0	420640,0
G	1,0	54719,0	420627,0	H	1,0	54725,0	420621,0

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property, which encompasses two coves, is on the southwestern shore of San Pablo Bay; 2.2 km. northwest of San Pedro Point. It is approximately 40 min. north of San Francisco (via U.S. 101) and 4.8 km. northeast of San Rafael.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	N/A	CODE	COUNTY	N/A	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY		CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jeffery C. Bingham, State Park Archeologist

ORGANIZATION

Cultural Heritage Section, State Department of Parks & Recreation 8/22/78

STREET & NUMBER

1416 - 9th Street

TELEPHONE

(916) 322-8578

CITY OR TOWN

Sacramento

STATE

CA

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Knorr Mellon*

TITLE

DATE

12-4-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 ATTEST: *[Signature]*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION *[Signature]*

DATE

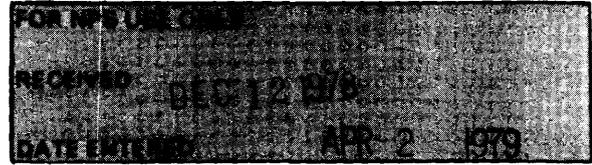
4-2-79

DATE

3/30/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

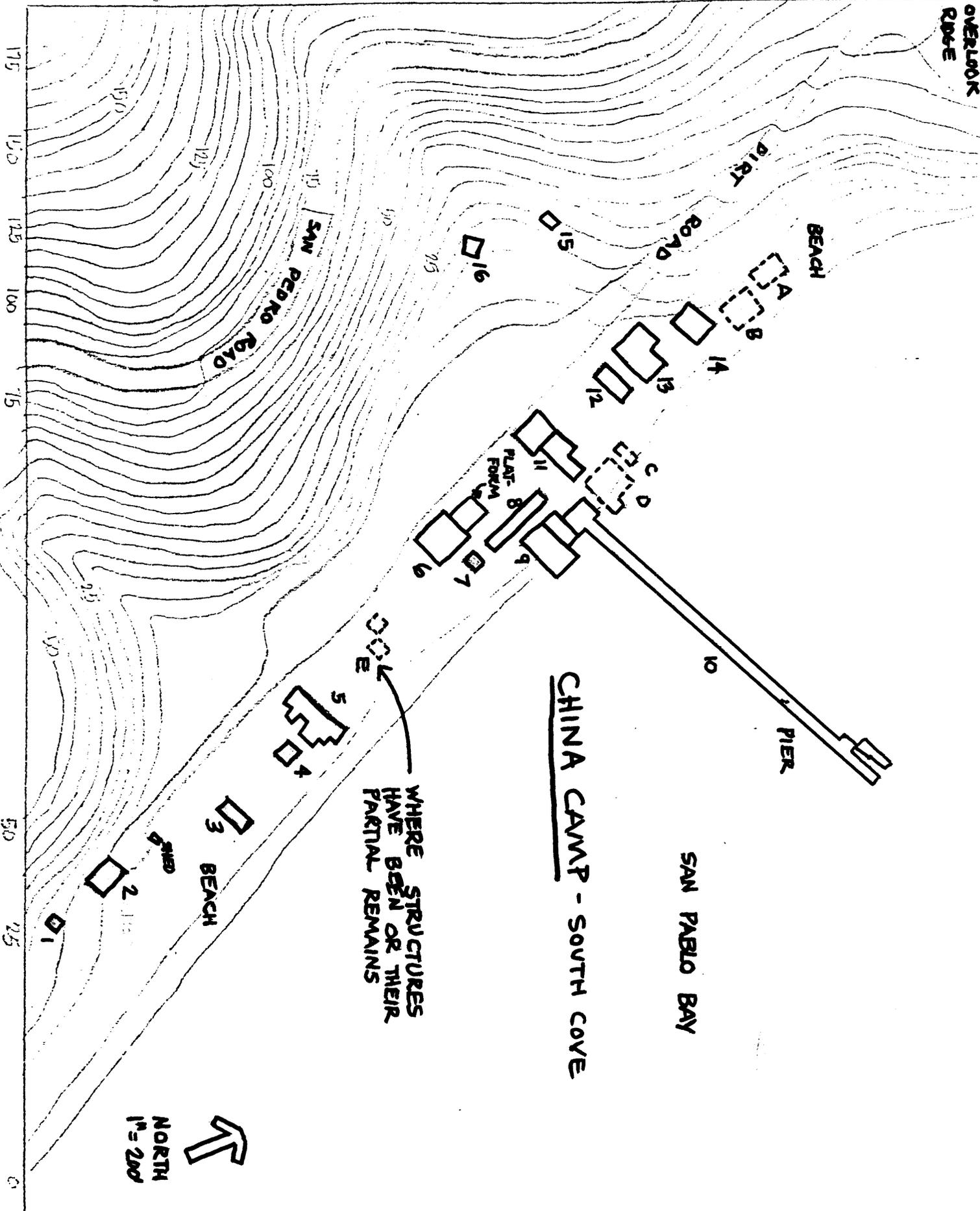
ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

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8. Significance

Many artifacts from the early period remain in China Camp; these include: the sampan hulls, pier and building foundations, shrimp drying tables and platforms, a wooden fan mill for separating the meats and shells, a wood frame shrimp sorting machine, boiling kettles, wooden water towers, the shrimp grinding machinery in Structure No. 11, and numerous other significant items associated with the early Chinese settlement.

OVERLOOK  
RIDGE



NORTH  
1" = 200'

RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

REVISIONS

DATE

DESIGNED

DRAWN

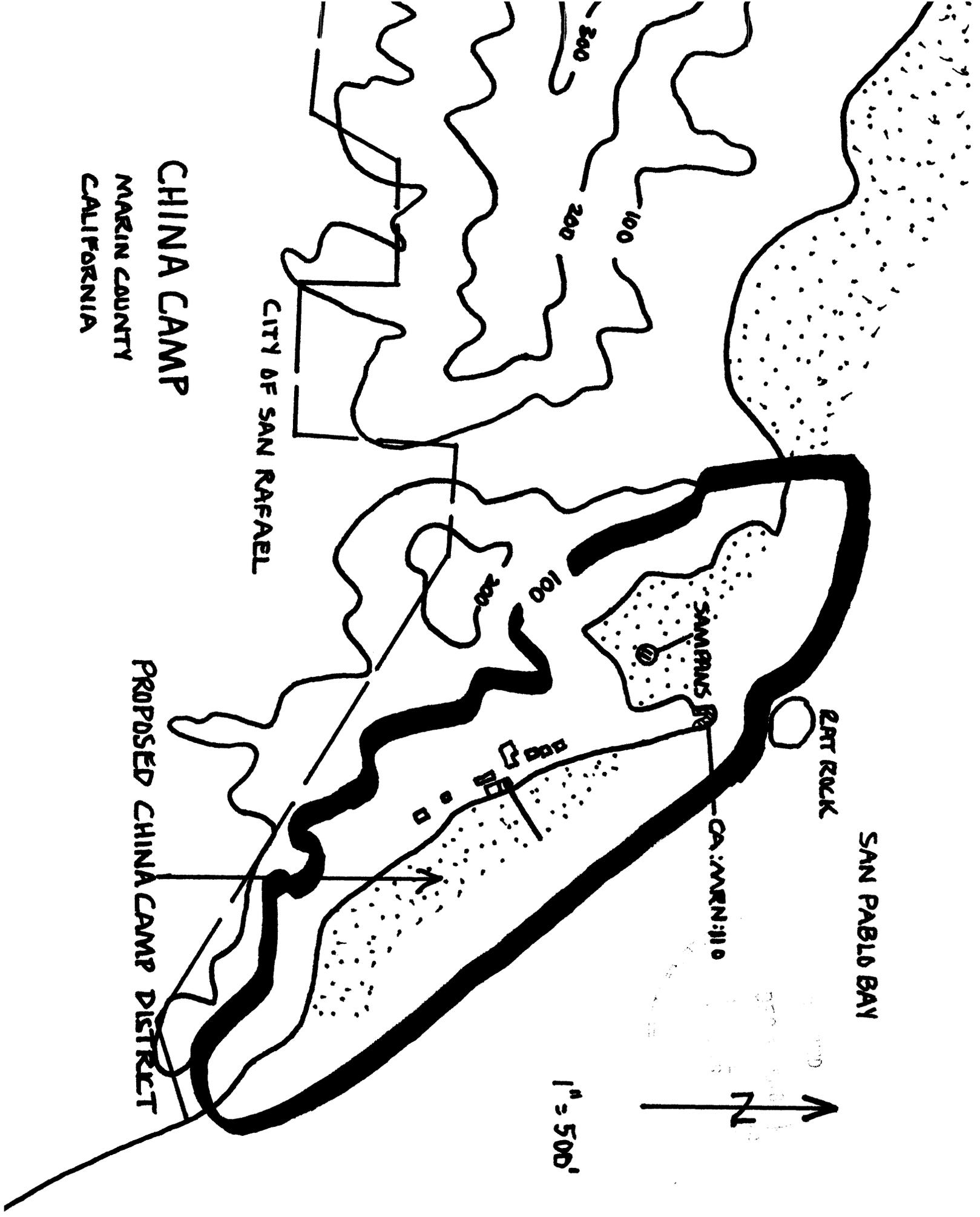
CHECKED

EXISTING CONDITIONS  
CHINA CAMP  
(SOUTH COVE)

DRAWING NO.  
M D C C T T

SHEET NO.

1



SAN PABLO BAY

ART ROCK

SAMPUS

CA:MRN:110

1" = 500'

CITY OF SAN RAFAEL

CHINA CAMP

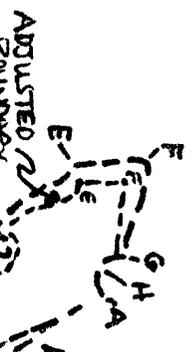
MARIN COUNTY

CALIFORNIA

PROPOSED CHINA CAMP DISTRICT

1460115E  
(NOV412)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



See  
San Quentin Quad. EDMUND  
HARVEY O. BANKS. I

122° 30'  
38° 00'

54500m E

546

548

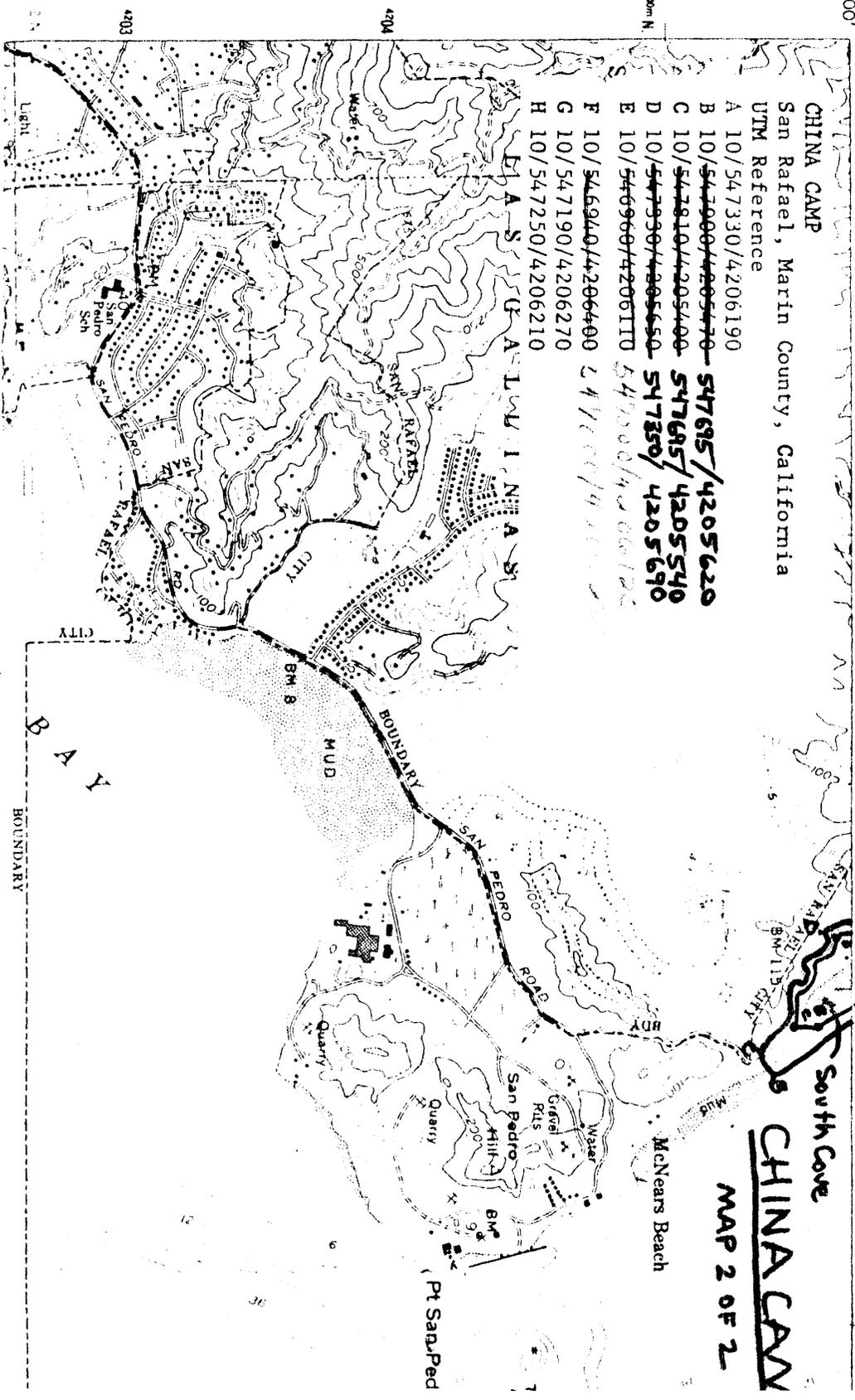
**CHINA CAMP**

San Rafael, Marin County, California

UTM Reference

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- B 10/547900/4205770
- C 10/547810/4205400
- D 10/547930/4205650
- E 10/546960/4206110
- F 10/546940/4206400
- G 10/547190/4206270
- H 10/547250/4206210

BLA S G A L W I N E A B



**CHINA CAMP**  
MAP 2 OF 2

South Cove

McNears Beach

Pt San Pedro

BOUNDARY

MUD BAY

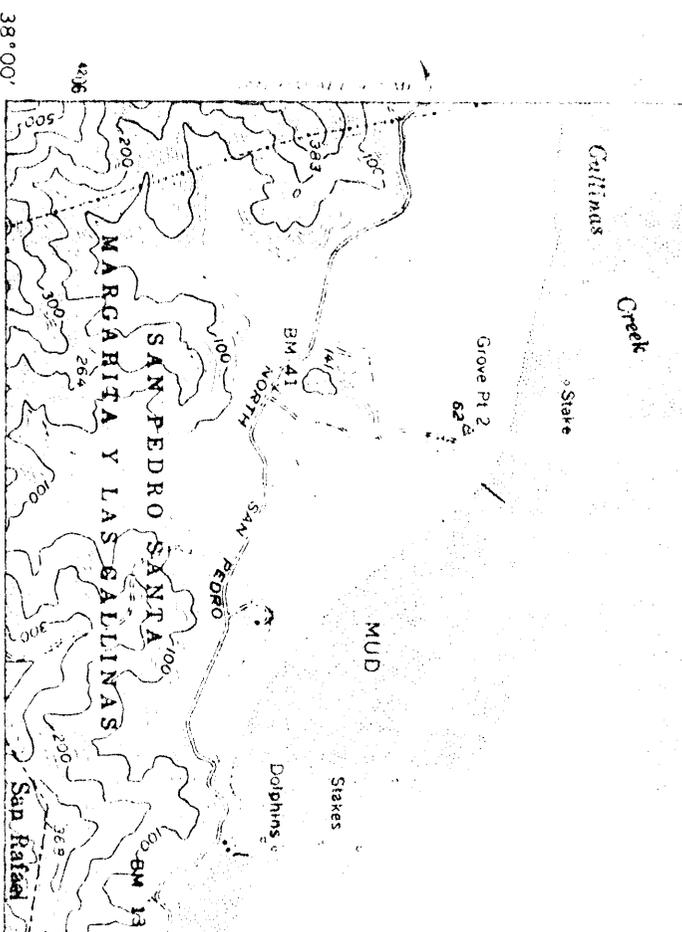
CITY

Light

4203

4204

420500m N

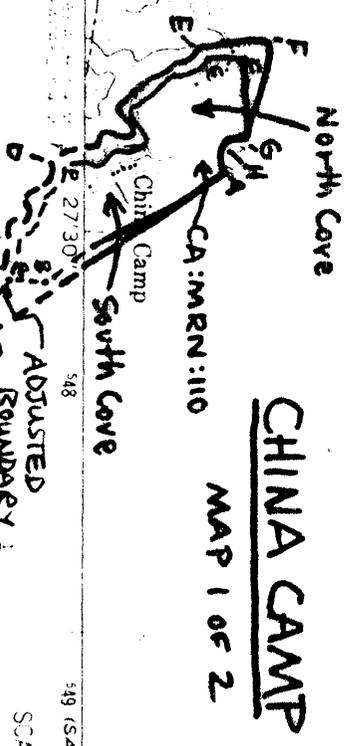


CHINA CAMP  
 San Rafael, Marin County, California

UTM Reference

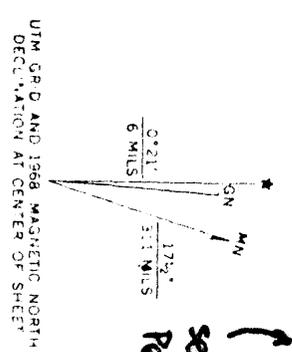
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G	10/547190/4206270
H	10/547250/4206210

**547000/4206125**  
**547000/4206280**



(SAN RAFAEL)  
 1:50,000

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS  
 Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
 and by plane-table surveys 1949. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1958  
 Field check 1959  
 Hydrography compiled from USC&GS chart 5533 (1956)  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grids based on California coordinate system, zones 2 and 3  
 1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 10, shown in blue  
 Dashed (and lines indicate approximate locations  
 Land lines unsurveyed in T 3 N., R. 5 and 6 W.  
 Unchecked elevations are shown in brown



UTM GRID AND 1968 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ADJUSTED BOUNDARY

Retaluma Point quad.

SCAL

1:25,000

1000 2000 3000 4000 5000

THIS MAP COMPARES WITH THE  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS