

PH0352195

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 24 1976

DATE ENTERED NOV 21 1976

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

GREEN OAKS RANCH HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

The (Isaac) Steele Ranch

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

~~East side of Cabrillo Highway, 3 miles north of Santa Cruz
County line, and 13 miles south of Pescadero on C.A. 1~~

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Unincorporated San Mateo County

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

12

Pescadero ~~and~~ X VICINITY OF Point Ano Nuevo

STATE

California

CODE
06

COUNTY
San Mateo

CODE
081

3 CLASSIFICATION

See 268 on front
12-18-76

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

San Mateo County

STREET & NUMBER

County Government Center

CITY, TOWN

Redwood City

STATE Ca. 94063

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Mateo County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

County Government Center, Hall of Justice & Records,
Marshall Street

CITY, TOWN

Redwood City

STATE
California 94063

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

POINT OF HISTORIC INTEREST

DATE

May 19, 1971

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

California State Department of Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE
California

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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building standing today is a composite of the original (c. 1863) structure and many subsequent additions and remodelings. The 1860's house was a simple two-story, three bay, Greek Revival building with a low gabled roof. A veranda extended the full width of the gabled facade. On the first floor level, the front door was in the first bay on the left. Shuttered windows with six over six sash configurations were in the center and right bays. A shuttered door in the center bay of the second floor opened onto the veranda roof. It was flanked by windows with shutters and six over six sash configurations. Clapboards were the exterior siding material.

The first addition was made on the south side of the house. It had a shed roof and expanded the first floor. Later, a two-story gabled addition with a two-story bay window was made to the north side. Several other one-story shed roof additions were constructed on the rear of the house.

"In spite of the removal of the front gallery, enlargement of the first floor windows and other alterations, much of the 1860's house is intact. The front door and its surround, staircase, and the mantle in the back room appear to be original. Old doors, hardware, and pegged six-over-six sash with thin mullions are found scattered throughout the house and later additions. Much of the flooring and interior tongue-and-groove wall sheathing also appears to be original." (Above from March 23, 1976, report of John Volz, Regional Architect of National Trust for Historic Preservation).

The house was constructed of redwood lumber from the Waddell Mill in Ano Nuevo Creek Canyon.¹ (The Steeles later had three saw mills of their own in Cascade Canyon.)² Some of the milled materials used in the additions may have been brought in from Santa Cruz, Redwood City, or San Francisco.

There are presently four upstairs bedrooms. There are several rooms downstairs, including kitchen, living room, dining room, and the room with an outside door that was the ranch office. There are two downstairs fireplaces. It is believed the north wing was added about 1883. In 1923, the front balcony fell off and was not replaced. The interior was remodeled in 1930.

Behind the house are a trophy room (ca. 1930) that housed a pool table and served as guest quarters, and two utility buildings which are designated on the site map as "cabin" and "shed". All are of wood construction.

Below the house, toward the highway, is the original medium gable 40' x 40' barn with shed room addition. This was constructed on a redwood log foundation, and has a vertical board and batten exterior of redwood and a wooden shingle roof. This barn appears in the earliest photographs and is probably the one used by Isaac Steele as a residence before his own home was ready. Date of the shed addition is unknown.

The west portion of the property also contains a concrete-floored spring house (date unknown) and two additional structures including a small garage. The wooden garage with gable roof was constructed in 1905 to house the family's first automobile, a 1905 Reo. The utility building is simply framed with pole rafters and vertical siding. This housed farm equipment and its date is unknown. There is a gabled, wooden packing shed of recent times (about 1933), which fronts on Cabrillo Highway and is still being used, being leased to a nearby farmer.

A small house and carport, a barn, and four buildings used as "barracks" for farm workers were demolished by the Parks and Recreation Department soon after it acquired the property. The structures were delapidated and considered a fire and health hazard.

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There are numerous trees and mature shrubs which remain of extensive gardens, and there is an orchard remnant in the rear.

The site consists of 13 acres with 100 feet fronting on Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway) and extending 2,040 feet northeast along Green Oak Creek to a narrow easterly boundary of 60 feet. The maximum width of the property is 480 feet. The site is in the gentle sloping flood plain of Green Oak Creek with a lower elevation of 100 feet along the highway and a maximum of 200 feet at the northeast boundary. The legal description from the grant deed is attached.

It is anticipated that recognition of the historical significance of Green Oaks will lead to additional historical studies of other sites associated with the Steele Brothers in the area south of Pescadero. Cascade Ranch (Rensellaer's home, a quarter mile north of Green Oaks), the Gazos Ranch of E. W. Steele, and the site of Isaac Graham's White House are among the locations that were once part of the Steele Ranch holdings. There are nearby homes of Steele descendents, some on properties acquired by the State of California for expansion of Ano Nuevo State Park. The area is still farmed, and zoning is restricted to protect the scenic amenities along Cabrillo Highway. The State has renovated several of the older homes in Ano Nuevo State Park, and local residents recently organized a historical society. San Mateo County plans an interpretive program that will contribute to this historical awareness.

-
1. "Steele Brothers", p. 277.
 2. Stanger, SAWMILLS..., p. 110

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Green Oaks at Point Ano Nuevo in San Mateo County was a headquarters ranch for a California pioneer dairy firm, known as the Steele Brothers, who (1) launched the large-scale commercial production of cheese in the state, who (2) were publicized nationally for their giant "Sanitary Cheese" which benefitted the Sanitary Commission during Civil War times, and who (3) made agricultural history in four counties: Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo and San Luis Obispo.

Although neither the first to have a dairy nor the first to make cheese in California,¹ the Steeles were the acknowledged pioneers in the business of cheese sales and marketing. For three decades, Steele Brothers was the largest producer of cheese in California. More than 20 years after their initial venture, a chronicler wrote, "The Steeles were among the first to establish the business of dairying in California, and from the beginning have made it a grand success; first in Marin, then in San Mateo, and in San Luis Obispo."³ On coastal lands previously considered barren and remote⁴ they introduced dairy farming and transformed perishable milk into cheese that could be transported to the distant markets, thereby increasing the economic value of these lands and creating commerce.

The Steeles were recognized state-wide for their enterprise, they sought public office and served on state committees, and they were leaders in politics, banking and Grange activities.⁵

Green Oaks Ranch in San Mateo County was the home of Isaac Chapman Steele, who was the last surviving member of the firm, and the only one with a lifetime career in the dairy industry. This home was the first built by any of the Steeles in California on their own landholdings. Its construction coincided with the expansion plans that moved Steele Brothers from tenant to owner of their holdings, and the present-day house reflects the family growth and rising affluence that accompanied the move to the southwestern corner of present-day San Mateo County.

Although the business structure of the Steele Brothers firm changed over the years, Green Oaks remained a home base and became a repository for an extensive collection of business and family records, which have been preserved.

These papers are now catalogued and a part of the Special Collections at Stanford University Libraries. They document a century of Coastside agriculture and the economic growth of a significant California agricultural industry. From a kitchen experiment in cheesemaking to the round-up of wild Spanish cattle and sheep, to the organization and management of extensive dairy herds, the Steeles evidenced ability and leadership. With changing times, the Steeles were among the first to support farm conservation programs. The irrigation system installed at Green Oaks was one of the earliest and largest in their area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 13 Acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	56,15,8,0	4,11,0,0,8,0	B	1,0	56,11,1,0	4,10,9,52,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,0	56,10,1,0	4,10,9,5,6,0	D	1,0	56,11,9,0	4,10,9,9,4,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site consists of 13 acres with 100 feet fronting on Highway 1 (Cabrillo Highway) and extending 2,040 feet northeast along Green Oak Creek to a narrow easterly boundary of 60 feet. The maximum width of the property is 480 feet. The site is in the gentle sloping flood plain of Green Oak Creek with a lower elevation of 100 feet along the highway and a maximum elevation of 200 feet at the northeast boundary.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
None			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-			

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nita R. Spangler

February 3, 1976 (Revised)

ORGANIZATION

San Mateo County

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

County Government Center

TELEPHONE

364-5600 Ext. 2486

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

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

Heaven Modes

8/5/76

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/21/76

ATTEST:

Charles [Signature]

DATE

11.16.76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The story of the Steele Brothers in California begins with Captain Frederick Steele, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, Class of 1843, and a veteran of the Mexican War. He accompanied the U. S. Second Infantry which sailed around the Horn, landing in San Francisco in early 1849. He was an aide to General Bennet Riley and to General Ethan Allen Hitchcock.⁶

When Captain Steele returned East in 1854, he encouraged his younger brothers to go West. George Steele, then 19 years old, was the first to emigrate, traveling with his 42-year-old cousin, Rensselaer E. Steele, in 1855. The two had an unsuccessful try at mining before they moved to Sonoma County.⁷

In 1856, Edgar Willis Steele, 26, brought his parents and Rensselaer's wife and children to California, via the Isthmus.⁸

Rensselaer welcomed them to his rented farm in Two Rock Valley in Sonoma County. E. W.'s earlier ambition had been for a "high, classical and scientific education," and he had taught school in Ohio, but the economic realities of his time had forced him to help his father with his small Ohio farm and to supplement his teacher pay with farm work. E.W.'s first employment in California involved a contract to harvest oats. With his profit, he purchased five cows. By the winter of 1857, he had commenced making butter.⁹

The Steeles worked as a family unit to farm, teach school, give singing lessons, or perform whatever job needed to be done or afforded paying work.¹⁰

On March 29, 1857, Isaac Chapman Steele, 38, with his family, arrived in California from Ohio.¹¹ They had also traveled via the Isthmus, and they went to Two Rock Valley to join his brothers and parents. ¹²

Isaac brought with him experience "and scientific knowledge of the best and most practical means of conducting dairying industries."¹³ His arrival set a business operation in motion.

Clarissa A. Jameson Steele, Rensselaer's wife, had experimented with cheese-making. She had first persuaded an Indian to rope and milk some wild Spanish cattle, and from the milk, using a recipe she found in a book, she had made cheese. She sent some cheeses to San Francisco with the butter and other produce and found a ready market.¹⁴

On July 4, 1857, Isaac took possession of lands they had leased at Punta del Reyes, moving his family with him. The Steele Brothers, with 155 cows, now were the first dairy operators on the Marin Coastside. They soon had three dairies or milking stations in this "cow heaven".¹⁵

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July 4, 1857, is also the opening date in a Steele Brothers cash book where one of the earliest entries, October 8, 1858, showed the purchase of cheese presses.¹⁶ It is likely there was little time for keeping books, or was there much cash to account for in the early days of this new business.

E.W. later remembered that butter was sold readily for \$1 per pound and cheese at 27 cents, the demand being greater than they could supply. The cream was taken for the butter and buttermilk was returned to the cheese vats, adding enough value to pay for all the hired help they employed.¹⁷

Three years later, the Steeles had paid for all their improvements and had 400 head of cows on their own. In another year (1861) their cows had increased to 600 head, besides some young stock, all their improvements were paid for, and they had \$10,000 cash from four years of dairying.¹⁸ Cheese production for that season amounted to 640 pounds a day for a total of 45 tons.¹⁹

A change in the Marin County land ownership and better prospects for business expansion took the Steeles to present-day San Mateo County in 1862. The Point Reyes area had numerous land claims, fights between squatters and grant holders, and legal disputes. This had made it possible for the Steeles to operate rent-free for a time until the Shafters took over Rancho Punta del Reyes lands and signed an eight-year lease on 6,000 acres with them. The agreement was modified a year later in 1862, but the Steeles sought expansion and an opportunity to own their own land.²⁰

Isaac first visited Ano Nuevo in 1861, while riding a horse procured from Loren Coburn's San Francisco Livery stable. Arranging for a 10-year lease with Clark and Coburn, the Steele Brothers took possession of their new lands on October 20, 1862.²¹ The lease included an option to purchase.

The Steeles had new business partners for this expansion, Horace Gushee, a San Francisco commission merchant, and Charles H. Willson, who later became a prominent New York lumber dealer.

The lease included more than 15,000 acres south of Pescadero with an option to purchase lands below Gazos Creek on lands of Rancho Punta del Ano Nuevo. The Steeles still retained a Marin County operation.

They brought 1100 head of cows and spent \$18,000 in improvements the first year. E.W. later said they cleared \$17,000 on the cheese made that year.²³

The new leasehold was eventually organized into five dairy farms, each with about 1600 cows.²⁴ Each dairy was a milking station or unit they had determined

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could best be managed. Eighteen or 20 cows were assigned to each "hand,"²⁵ a term that included the Indian laborers, hired men, and the Steeles themselves. The earliest farm records of the operations in San Mateo County refer to the White House, Gazos Ranch and Pescadero.²⁶ Correspondence referred to a Pigeon Point dairy.

On November 16, 1862, Gushee, one of the partners, was staying at Pescadero with Isaac and writing to Willson: "...last week made progress in clearing the ranch. They took off from 350 to 400 head of Spanish stock and will be here tomorrow (we hear) after another lot...The sheep were driven off Friday..." He concluded: "Isaac talks some of moving on to the ranch as soon as we can locate a dairy place to build and put up buildings... We have engaged 20-thousand of pickets at $6\frac{1}{2}$ a thousand and the man is going to work on them at once."

Isaac and Gushee were waiting for Edgar to return from a business trip so that he could help determine where to locate buildings, the letter continued. The two men thought one dairy ought to be at the White House, an 1852 structure that was considered the finest in the region and located on lands previously owned by Isaac Graham. Gushee concluded with the hope that Edgar would bring a wagon and harness. "I do not see how we can get along without it."²⁷

Isaac wrote from Pescadero (where he initially boarded with the Weeks family) on December 7, 1862, to "Dear Friend... I have made a shanty (which will be a good hen coop) at my place and intend to make my abode there and commence the dairy tomorrow." He wrote that Gushee wanted to occupy the White House as soon as Steb (Rensselaer's son) and the Indians (laborers) arrived from Marin County. Steb would be in charge of a dairy there.

Continuing, Isaac wrote that Gushee's proposals did not suit Rensselaer who was concerned that he would have no house when winter came. The business partners were still making decisions about buildings; Rensselaer was "anxious to get lumber to Pigin (sic) Point for the dairy there."²⁸

In a notebook filled with scribbles and diary notes, made by 16-year-old Frederick Nathaniel Steele, there are references to the construction of Isaac's home. ²⁹ Frederick wrote that on January 21, "Moved from Pescadero." On January 28, Olof Lawson "commenced work for father." Early in February, "Mr. Chambers and Bowen commenced work for Father."

On March 1, Frederick "Went up the pines in company of Ella³⁰ (a cousin), Uncle Ed, Ef³¹ (his sister) and Mother and Lawson and wife." This was somewhere in the Santa Cruz mountains east of Ano Nuevo and Pescadero, perhaps near what is today's Skyline. Was this Sunday excursion a visit to a mill to see about lumber for a new house?

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Three days later, (March 4), Frederick wrote: "Father raised his house." On March 12: "Moved from the dairy into the house." And on March 14, with the dairy now vacated, "Brought the cows down."

Other brief entries reveal that in July, cows were moved "up to Gushees." On August 18, Olof Lawson went up to Gushees. A page later, there are notes about drawing hay, which prompted Frederick to write: "This was done in apple pie order."

On a July day, the draft animals "drew cheese". Frederick wrote: "July Cheese house Drew packet with Pady and Selim..."

Thus in just seven months from the signing of the lease, the Steeles had worked to take over the lands, buy more animals, build housing for themselves and the cows, and have cheese ready for shipment on the small packet boats that called at the nearby coves.

Rensselaer moved his family to a home by Cascade Creek, about a quarter mile north of Isaac's home. For a time after his wife's death, Rensselaer moved in with Isaac. But he remarried and after 1868, again resided at the Cascade Ranch.

During the Civil War, because of their devotion to their brother who was a Union general, the Steeles produced a 3,850-pound cheese, believed to be the largest in the world, and transported it to San Francisco to benefit the Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the Red Cross. Sanitary fairs were held across the country to raise money for war victims and the Steele Brothers' cheese was widely publicized. It was over 20 feet in circumference and 18 inches thick.

The cheese was the product of all the dairies of the Pescadero Rancho for two days.³² It was sold for \$1 per pound, eventually netting \$2,820. Pieces were cut and sent to President Lincoln, General Grant and to General Steele. A certificate from the Sanitary Commission dated at San Francisco, January 11, 1864, reads: "This is to certify that Steele Brothers of Santa Cruz County has paid to the California Branch of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, Two Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Dollars." It is signed by Henry W. Bellows, president of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, F. F. Low, president of the California Branch, R. G. Sneath, Treasurer, and O. C. Wheeler, Secretary.³³

These were busy years for the Steele brothers, as E.W. later recalled. He daily milked 20 cows, as did the hired men. He also made cheese, "attended to the outside business, and kept the books of the firms, working regularly 16 hours a day." By that time, there were 11 dairies in the state, including those at Pescadero and Point Reyes.

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Overwork forced E.W. to lease his Marin dairies and take time off to visit his old home in Ohio. He also toured the Southern States at the end of the war. When he returned to California in 1866, the lease on his Marin properties had expired and he decided in June that he would move the Marin County dairy operations of Steele Brothers to San Luis Obispo County.³⁴ To help with the new enterprise that would introduce dairy farming to San Luis Obispo County, George resigned a judgeship in Marin County. With their experience and \$40,000 cash capital, in the first five years E.W. and George stocked their rancho lands with 600 cows, employed 100 men, and expended \$20,000 a year in improvements. Lumber was shipped from Waddell's mill at Ano Nuevo.³⁵

A visitor to the Steele Ranch at Ano Nuevo learned that "the style of the firms will be 'Steele Brothers of San Mateo' and 'Steele Brothers in San Luis Obispo'."³⁶

This Ano Nuevo ranch was, the visitor wrote, "a model dairy of California." There were two fine 2-story houses on the ranch, a quarter of a mile apart, and "unlike the majority of houses on this part of the coast, are elegantly furnished, surrounded with shade-trees and gardens, and provided with all the comforts of life."

The Ano Nuevo dairy operation involved milking between 600-700 cows early in the season, but as the feed grew shorter with the advance of the dry season, the number was cut by 25-50 per cent. As the cows dried up, they were sent to the mountains and allowed to remain until the rains commenced in November or December. There were, all-in-all, more than 1500 cows on the ranch, grazing on the native wild oats. If only there were more rainfall, the milk production of the cows could be doubled. The distance of the ranch from San Francisco made it impossible for the Steeles to send their fresh milk there and compete in the market, but the cheese and butter would not perish in transit. Fortunately, there was such a demand for cheese and butter that California imported "immense quantities" annually, he concluded.³⁷

These were halcyon days. Even the nearby creeks swarmed with spotted trout in the spring, "one hundred, two hundred, or even three hundred trout are often basketed in a single day's fishing by one individual."³⁸

In 1870, Steele Brothers' holdings were estimated to be worth \$1.5-million. Next to Shafter and Howard of Marin County, the Steeles were the largest owners of milk cows in California. They had 1400 cows, 750 of them in five dairies in San Mateo County. In addition they had beef cattle and hogs.³⁹

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In 1878, Isaac said he had 31,000 acres. In 1883 Steele Brothers were still the most prominent cheese manufacturers on the coast, a writer stated. Bancroft: "The largest cheese makers are Steel (sic) Brothers of s.l. Obispo, who keep fully 1500 cows."⁴⁰

But litigation over land titles and some of E.W.'s speculations forced the Steeles to sell some of their lands.⁴¹ Isaac continued his ranch operations at Green Oaks. Renssalaer died November 14, 1886. When Isaac died, February 25, 1903, age 83, he was the last survivor of the one-time "mammoth"⁴² Steele Brothers firm. His grandson, William F. Steele, later managed Green Oaks until his death in 1956.

Green Oaks was a dairy until recent times. As the herds diminished, farm methods changed. Green Oaks was one of the first ranches on the San Mateo Coastside to install an irrigation system, and it was one of the largest. Members of the Steele family continued to set examples for progressive farm management, working with university extension offices and other agencies.

In 1967, Catherine B. Steele made a gift to San Mateo County of the ranch home and the adjoining 13 acres of Green Oaks to be used for historical and recreational purposes. In November 1972, she gave to Stanford University the papers and photographs that comprise the record of the Steele family and Green Oaks. This collection is now catalogued and includes 17,820 items in 40 linear feet. The preservation of these papers gives special consideration to the historical significance of Green Oaks and invites scholastic inquiry into the state's agricultural history. Mrs. Steele also gave to Stanford the papers of General Steele, who was selected by President Lincoln to be the first military governor of reconstruction.

In 1976, Green Oaks is owned by San Mateo County, which is ready to embark upon a preservation and interpretive program that will make the Steele family history available to the public. The property will be administered by the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department.

In conclusion, Green Oaks is significant because:

- 1) It was built by Isaac Steele, the first to construct a home in the complex of structures that were part of the Steele Brothers operations at Ano Nuevo.
- 2) It was a focal point for operation of the Steele Brothers dairy and an operating ranch for more than 100 years.
- 3) The preservation of the Steele Brothers records found at Green Oaks (in 1923) indicate that the ranch was a headquarters for extensive business operations.

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Addenda FOOTNOTES

1. The Spanish arriving in 1769 were the first Europeans to engage in agriculture in California. The Russians, who came in 1812 to Fort Ross in Sonoma County, were the first to produce and export butter and cheese. (From a pamphlet by the California Dairy Museum and Educational Foundation. n.d.) For 1843 California dairy conditions, see "Memoirs of Theodore Cordua", California Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. XII, No. 4, December, 1933. For 1850, see "A Frenchman in the Gold Rush..." CHSQ, Vol. V No. 4, December 1926. An 1855-56 dairy in the Santa Cruz Mountains is described in "The Burrell Letters," CHSQ XXVIII. See also, Bancroft, Vol. VII, pp. 52-57.
2. Alley, p. 246, Guinn, p. 758.
3. Angel, p. 166.
4. Evans, p. 53.
5. George was the most political, being elected a county judge in Marin, a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention in 1878, and serving two terms in the State Senate in the 1880's from the district comprising San Luis Obispo, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties E.W. became a county supervisor in San Luis Obispo. Isaac sought election as delegate to the State Constitutional Convention on the Workingman's Party, but was defeated. He served as master of the state Grange.
6. "Steele Brothers", p. 259.
7. Angel, p. 166.
8. Angel, p. 38. Edgar Willis Steele was born in Delhi, Delaware County, New York, March 4, 1830. He died February 18, 1896.
9. Angel, p. 38.
10. "Steele Brothers", p. 259-260.
11. Isaac Chapman Steele was born August 14, 1820, in Delhi, New York. He moved to Ohio with his parents in 1836. His wife, Hulda Emeline, was a native of Ohio. Their children were Frederick Nathaniel, b. 7-8-1846 in Ohio, d. 9-24-1907 at Ano Nuevo; Effie, b. 1850 Ohio, d. 10-25-1913; Robert Who died at birth; and George Horace, b. 2-8-1860 at Point Reyes and d. 12-10-1913, at Pt. Ano Nuevo.
12. "Steele Brothers" p. 259.
13. Guinn, p. 748.
14. Clarissa A. Jameson Steele, Rensselaer's first wife, died May 31, 1866, and is buried in the family cemetery at the Cascade Ranch. "Steele Brothers", p. 272, fn. 9.
15. Angel, p. 39. In Alley on p. 257, (At Point Reyes) "...Steele Brothers commenced the manufacture of butter and cheese, shipping the first consignment of this character to San Francisco ever manufactured on the immediate coast, and which was sold for the first price on that market."
16. Steele Ranch Papers, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.
17. Angel, p. 39
18. Angel, p. 39.
19. John Quincy Adams Warren, p. 199 in CALIFORNIA RANCHOS AND FARMS.
20. Mason, POINT REYES ..., p. 55-57; the Shafter dairies employed tenant farmers.

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21. "Steele Brothers", p. 264-265; Rancho Punta del Ano Nuevo was deeded to Loren Coburn on September 15, 1862. Alley, p. 257: "Here was started the extensive business which the Steele Bros. are at present conducting..."
22. Horace Gushee, Produce commissioner, 319 Washington, residence West side Montgomery between Vallejo and Green. 1862 San Francisco Directory.
23. Angel, p. 39.
24. Alley, p. 246.
25. February 1870, San Francisco Commercial Herald quoted in "Steele Brothers", p. 268.
26. Steele Ranch Papers, Stanford.
27. Horace Gushee at "San Pescadero" to "Friend Willson", November 16, 1862. Steele Ranch Papers, Stanford.
28. I. C. Steele at Pescadero, December 7, 1862, to "Dear Friend", Steele Ranch Papers.
29. Notebook is in Steele Ranch Papers, Stanford.
30. Ella Steele, daughter of Rensselaer and Clarissa Steele, was born August 15, 1844 in Ohio.
31. See fn. 11.
32. Angel, p. 39.
33. "Steele Brothers", p. 266. Alley, p. 257. Guinn notes the cheese was exhibited at the Mechanics Pavilion in San Francisco. p. 748. The area of Ano Nuevo was transferred from Santa Cruz to San Mateo County in 1868.
34. Angel, p. 40.
35. "Steele Brothers, p. 267. Rensselaer had a lumber mill on Cascade Creek about 1868, and there were two additional sites as the operation moved upstream. There was also a Steele lumber mill on Ano Nuevo, operated as early as 1868. From Stanger, Sawmills in the Redwoods, p. 111.
36. Evans, p. 55.
37. Evans, p. 52-56.
38. Evans, p. 72.
39. San Francisco Commercial Herald quoted in Angel, p. 226-227.
40. Alley, p. 257. Bancroft, p. 51.
41. George Steele, a lawyer, wrote on January 1878, that he wanted to sell and leave San Luis Obispo. He died October 21, 1901. "Steele Brothers", p. 270.
42. Guinn, p. 748.

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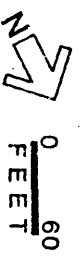
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|--------------------|---|------|---------------|
| 1. | Sketch of Green Oaks, I.C. Steele home. Artist, date unknown. In Steele Ranch papers, Stanford Library. Negative is at San Mateo County Historical Museum, 1700 Hillsdale Blvd., San Mateo, Ca. 94402. | | |
| 2. | Photo of Green Oaks, west side. No date. Negative at San Mateo County Historical Museum. | | |
| 3. | Telephoto view of Green Oaks from Cabrillo Highway. Left to right, utility building that was called "Machine Shop", residence, barn, and spring or milk house. March 5, 1975. Negative with photographer, Nita R. Spangler, 970 Edgewood Road, Redwood City, Ca. 94062. | | |
| 4. | West side of Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 5. | West side of Green Oaks, with I. C. Steele, daughter-in-law (?) and three grandchildren. No date on photo, but would be about 1880. Copied from photo in Steele Ranch papers, Stanford Library. | | |
| 6. | Front door, Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 7. | Front stairway and hall in original part of Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 8. | Fireplace in original part of Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 9. | South and rear exterior of Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 10. | Early photo of barn and dairy buildings, Green Oaks. Date unknown. In Steele Ranch papers, Stanford Library. | | |
| 11. | Front of Green Oaks, and dairy barn. March 5, 1976. Photo No. 7475 by Wes Tollber, staff photographer with State of Calif. Department of Transportation, District 4, 150 Oak Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94102. | | |
| 12. | Barn at Green Oaks with spring or milk house in right background. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 13. | Interior of utility building called "Machine Shop" at Green Oaks. March 5, 1976. Photo No. 7479 by Wes Tollber, California Department of Transportation. | | |
| 14. | Trophy room on left, cabin at right, January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |
| 15. | Garden and arbor at Green Oaks. January 23, 1976. Negative with N.R.S. | | |

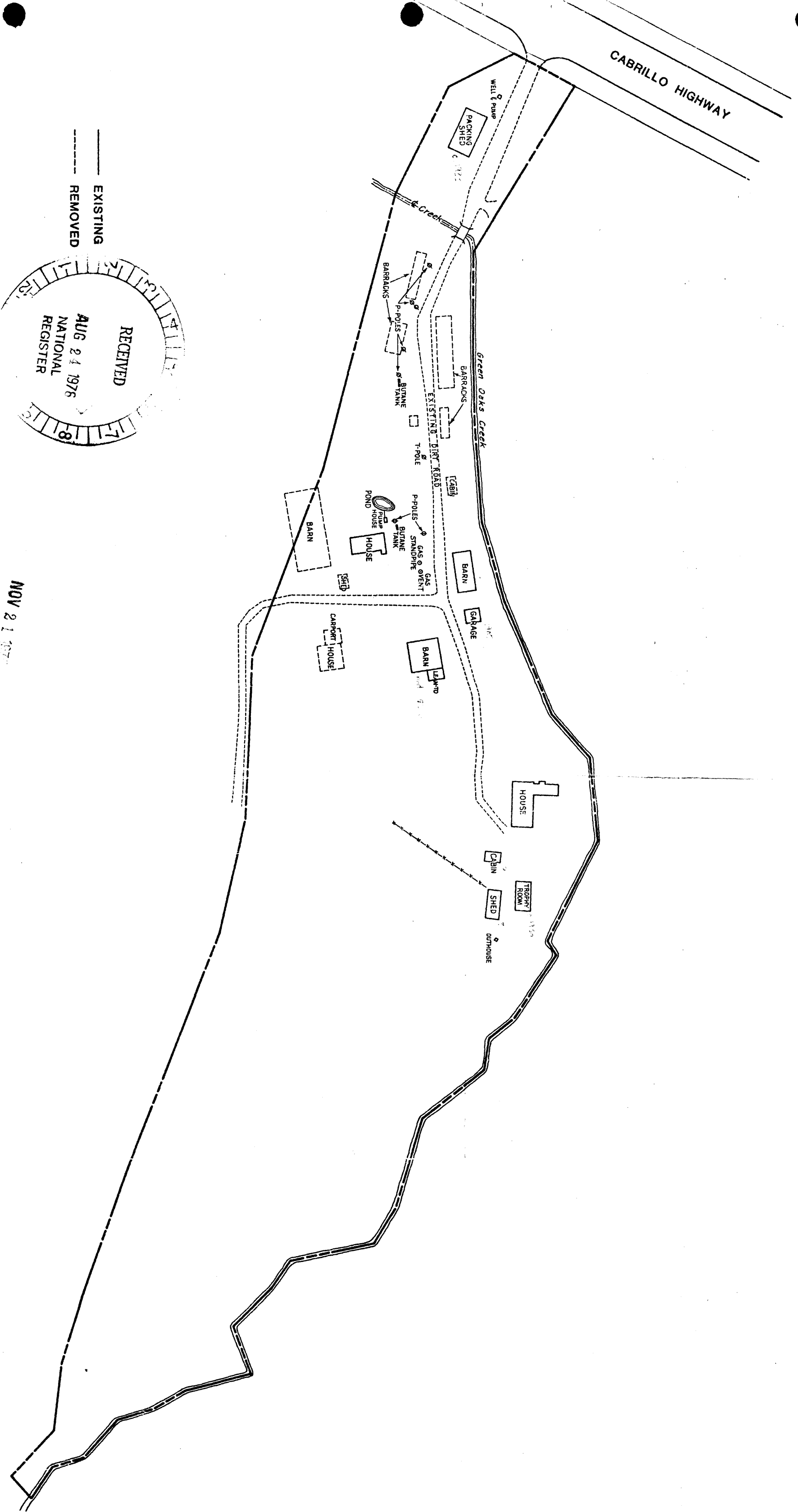
GREEN OAKS RANCH

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

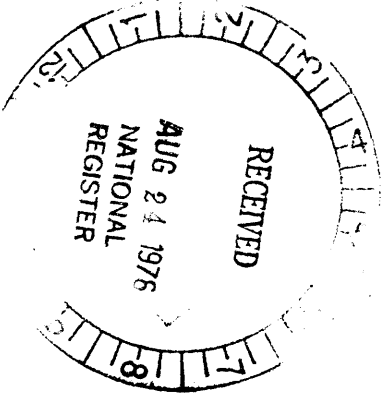
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