

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 1 1984

date entered

JUL 28 1983

AUG 30 1984

OHP

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Final

1. Name

historic Clayton Vineyards/DeMartini Winery

and or common Forni Ranch, Clayton Ranch

2. Location

street & number 5919 Clayton Road, N/A not for publication

city, town Clayton N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county Contra Costa County code 07

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: none

4. Owner of Property

name Mitta Pierce Forni

street & number P. O. Box 248

city, town Clayton N/A vicinity of state California 94517

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Contra Costa County Recorder's Office

street & number 822 Main Street

city, town Martinez state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Contra Costa County Historic Resource Inventory
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date February 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Office for Historic Preservation

city, town P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento state California 95811

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Clayton Vineyards/DeMartini Winery, an 8.328 acre parcel, is the remaining portion of a twenty-eight acre vineyard planted in the 1860's and location of the DeMartini Winery building, a city- and county-designated historic resource. The parcel contains a winery building -- essentially unaltered from its original 1885 appearance, a barn and shed built in the 1940's, as well as the sites of Paul DeMartini's residence, Joel Clayton's 1870 Sherry House, and an old barn. Brick and stone remnants of the residence and the Sherry House remain on the property. The winery building and the vineyard land associated with it are the most important historical features of the nominated property.

The property is bounded on the east by Mitchell Creek, on the north by Mt. Diablo Creek, on the south by Clayton Road between Oak and Mt. Zion streets, and on the west by a residential subdivision. Vegetation on the property consists of an almond orchard, planted after 1919, eucalyptus, walnut, oak, palm, and various fruit trees. A few grape vines, dating from the period when the parcel was a vineyard, remain.¹

The DeMartini Winery is a 50' by 66', three-storey building built into a hill. The first two storeys are constructed of two-foot thick sandstone with the third storey and roof being constructed of wood frame with shiplap horizontal wood siding and wood shingles. The first two floors are both twelve feet high; the third is fourteen feet. A 10' by 56' porch wraps around the southwest corner of the winery building and ties into the dock at the southern third-storey entrance. An original 15' by 18' one-storey stone extension is located at the northeast corner of the building.

The roof of the main volume is a gabled roof with a central louvered cupola and louvered roof monitors extending north and south to provide ventilation for the interior spaces. Each end of the gable roof is clipped in a Jerkin head fashion.

The placement of the structure in the hill provides dock access on the third level at the upper end of the bank and grade-level access to the lowest level at the opposite end of the building. In addition, despite its distance from the Sherry House built fifteen years earlier, it reserved the best soil for vineyards and other agricultural activities.

The stone walls serve as retaining walls where the first two levels are below grade. The exposed portions of the stone wall are constructed of stone blocks in a common bond and an ashlar pattern. The base of the building is set out from the wall face and has a cove detail forming the transition to the first-storey wall. The base itself is three courses high; the stone texture is a rock face with smooth edging at the mortar joint. The mortar joints are flush. The finish on the stone at the lower level is dressed using a pecked and fine-point type finish. At the second level, the stone has broken faces and appears to be more rubble in nature, detailed using a run type stone molding. The date "1885" is chisled on three inner walls of the winery. Also the name "P. DeMartini" and a silhouette of a man's face with initials "P.D.M." next to it are carved on inner walls of the second storey.

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¹The original vineyards are no longer extant. A few original vines remain along the creek between the ruins of the sherry house and Clayton Road.

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 checked="" 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"/> 3 agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1885 **Builder/Architect** Dragovitch and Cavagnaro

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of Clayton Vineyards/DeMartini Winery derives first from its association with Joel Clayton, discoverer of the Black Diamond coal field of Mt. Diablo, founder of Clayton, and the individual responsible for establishing the "Clayton Vineyards" in the middle 1860's and for building the "Sherry House" in 1870. It derives, second, from Paul DeMartini, who purchased the vineyards following Clayton's death, built the winery in 1885, and established it as the second largest winery in Contra Costa County by the turn of the century. At the time of DeMartini's death, he was recognized as one of the state's "most expert wine makers." The winery, which won first prizes for both port and sherry at the St. Louis Exposition in 1903, was "known throughout the State for its excellent blend of old wines." Lastly, the DeMartini Winery is significant as a remnant of the wine industry in Contra Costa County and its importance to the state prior to passage of the Volstead Act. By 1919, 40% of the agricultural land in the county was devoted to grape production and some fifty wineries produced wine. The winery building is one of the few such buildings in the county and symbolizes a style and method of construction found in the wine-growing regions of Napa and Sonoma counties as well as in Contra Costa County.

Joel Clayton, who had immigrated to Lowell, Massachusetts, from his native England in 1837, has properly gained fame primarily from his role in discovering the Black Diamond coal field and founding the town that bears his name. Before migrating to California in 1850, he had worked in the lead mines of Illinois and the zinc mines of Wisconsin. With a number of other experienced miners, he came to California first in search of gold and then of the profits to be made from selling coal in the markets of San Francisco and Sacramento.

Clayton, the one-street town he laid out in 1857, was initially an adjunct to his coal operations, a village to house and supply the miners who worked the Mt. Diablo coalfield. Early land records relate primarily to the purchase of developed mining claims (the 320 acre Welsh Claim) and a five-year lease on lands surrounding the Lime Kiln of Frank Sachs.

In 1861, after the coalfield proved unprofitable, Clayton turned to agriculture, eventually acquiring some 1200 acres. Around 1863, he planted twenty-eight acres in grapes, establishing "Clayton Vineyards." In March 1870, after the vines had matured, Clayton built the "distillery for making brandy from the grape" known as the Sherry House. Thus Clayton was responsible both for the first vineyard in the Clayton area and for introducing wine manufacturing to the area.(1)

Although primarily a farmer, Clayton became a significant producer of wine by the time of his death in 1872. An appraisal of his estate listed 6,000 gallons of wine and 250 gallons of brandy, worth \$1500 and \$375 respectively. Annual accounts show wine and brandy sales of \$432 for 1872, \$945 for 1873, and \$1638 for 1874. But the account for 1874 also shows rental income of \$700 from Paul DeMartini. The account for 1875 shows no income

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Entranceways are centered at all three levels on the north side of the winery, with windows on each side. Openings in the stone walls are arched using rock-faced sandstone around the sides and arch at the lower level. At the upper level openings, the sides and arches are dressed stones with a pecked and fine-point type finish similar to the wall stone below. The sills are stone with an ogee type detail below. The stones at the sides of the openings are detailed as quoins and with a uniform dimension over the arch. Small rectangular openings exist on the east and west side walls, some with drainage channels visible.

The north facade of the wooden third-storey has a centered rectangular opening with paired double-hung windows on each side. The south facade has a centered arched opening with paired two-panel sliding doors opening to the dock. Window openings to either side no longer exist; the east opening has been closed and the west opening now provides access between the enclosed porch and the interior living space. East and west third-storey facades have paired double-hung windows. Floor construction is wood with wood joists and beams. The interior of the first two levels is open like a warehouse. The southwest portion of the third floor has been converted to a residential useage which incorporates the enclosed sunporch. The residential construction dates from the 1940's and has no value as part of the historic fabric of the building. The enclosed sunporch addition at the southwest side of the third storey has not eroded the exterior fabric as it is somewhat concealed from what is considered to be the major views of the building.

The 15' by 18' original extension located on the north side of the building, east of the arched center opening, originally served as a sampling room. Three walls are of stone, the south wall being a common wall with the winery. The west wall, which contains a south offset doorway, is constructed of wood frame with horizontal shiplap wood siding and endboards. The wood construction is similar to that of the wooden third storey.

With the exception of the 1940's Cardinet residential addition inside and the enclosed shed-roof sunporch-type structure around the southwest side, the building remains in original condition. There has been some deterioration of the sandstone. Abandonment of the building in 1979 led to vandalism which included removal of interior plumbing fixtures from the third-storey residential addition and broken window panes.

Of the historic sites on the property, the Sherry House and an old barn were bulldozed in 1939 by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service when it raised the creek bank and installed a headgate in Mt. Diablo Creek to form a lake. The former residence of Paul DeMartini was intentionally burned, and a bunkhouse was torn down. Bricks from the DeMartini house may have been used in the land fill when the creek bank was raised. Stone -- probably from the walls of the Sherry House -- was located near the bank of Mitchell Creek.

The barn and shed built in the early 1940's are located in the northwest section of the parcel. They have no historical significance. However, an almond sled, dating from the period 1919-1939, was found in the east corral.

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from the winery, but does include a payment by DeMartini of \$800. Apparently, the heirs terminated the wine business in 1874, selling the stock of wine on hand and renting both the vineyard and the Sherry House to its future owner for \$1500 per year.(2)

Paul DeMartini became sole proprietor of the forty-three acre Clayton Vineyards portion of the 145-acre Clayton homestead as well as an additional 3.5 acre parcel on May 2, 1876. Born in Genoa, Italy, DeMartini's career in some ways parallels that of Clayton. Both immigrated at the age of 17, although DeMartini came to Calaveras County in search of gold. He spent four years placer mining before moving to Concord in 1865. Market gardening proved even less attractive than mining, and he soon moved to Nortonville one of the coal towns established following Clayton's discovery, where he ran a boarding house. He was but one of many Italians to settle in the county, so many, in fact, that by 1882 Italian Independence Day was celebrated in Concord each year. Antonio Cereghino, with whom he would later establish a partnership, Lucca Curtola, and Angelo Cuneo, also Genoese, preceded him as Contra Costa winemakers.(3)

Although grapes had been planted in the county both during the period of Mexican settlement and by the first American settlers, DeMartini's acquisition of Clayton Vineyards coincided with both a period of tremendous expansion of both vineyards and wineries and with the rise of Clayton to preeminence among Contra Costa County grape-growing regions. The state viticulture report for 1881 claimed 300 acres planted in grapes, that of a decade later over 3,000. By 1897, the local press was reporting an increase to 6,000 acres.(4) Commercial histories of the county singled out Clayton for special mention. That of 1878 noted that "near Clayton, another [agricultural] break was made with extensive vineyards." An 1882 history claimed that

No portion of the county is so peculiarly adapted to the growth of grapes as that surrounding the town of Clayton. The land in that vicinity is essentially a grape soil, and the climate is especially favorable for grape raising. It is safe to say that some time in the not remote future, Diablo Valley will be one vast vineyard, and that Clayton wine will be manufactured, equal to any produced in the state.(5)

To take advantage of this growth, DeMartini imported stonemasons to construct the large winery in front of the Sherry House he had acquired in 1876. Built by Dragovitch and Cavagnaro, the new building was completed in 1885. The new winery allowed DeMartini to expand production, using grapes from his own twenty planted acres as well as some 150 to 200 tons he purchased from neighboring growers.

With expanded production capability, DeMartini Winery became one of the major wineries in the area and one of the few large wineries in the state under Italian ownership prior to Prohibition. In addition to the ports and sherrys which brought first prizes at the 1903 St. Louis Fair, the winery also produced zinfandel and white claret. In 1897 the winery's production ranked second in the county, at 200,000 gallons, surpassed only by Martinelli's Mt. Diablo Winery.

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By 1917, there were fifty wineries in the county. According to a history of the county published that year, "the vineyards...have become famous the world over." The authors credited this fame to soil and climatic conditions "peculiarly favorable to the successful growing of dry-wine grapes," "the choicest cuttings obtainable...from all over the world," and, most importantly, "to the expert knowledge that has been brought to bear on" the industry.(6)

Paul DeMartini's economic success was followed by social and political prominence in the community. In 1896, he was elected to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. A Democrat, he joined the board as representative of the second district at a time when Charles J. Clayton, Joel's oldest son, was serving his fourth and last term as Republican representative of the fourth district. DeMartini continued to serve until 1904, when he was defeated in his bid for reelection, apparently the only supervisor of Italian ancestry to serve during the period 1851 through 1938.(7)

Despite both DeMartini's and Contra Costa County's success, the wine industry, and, with it, DeMartini Winery, was threatened by forces beyond its control. The 1916 Byron Times "Booster Edition," denouncing the "highly extravagant claims of prohibitionists, members of the Anti-Saloon League, and paid reformers," predicted that "the prohibition wave is breaking and that the methods...of its advocates are discredited." As a 1981 issue of the Contra Costa Times noted, such was not to be the case: "Prohibition and the grape blight spelled the end for Clayton's string of wineries; agriculture and livestock production took their place."(8)

From his lease of the property in 1874 through 1920, DeMartini had consistently listed his occupation as "Wine Maker." Nationwide prohibition made that no longer viable. At the age of 76, the winemaker had most of the vines removed from his property and changed his occupation to "Farmer." Paul DeMartini himself described the end of his winery in a biographical sketch he prepared for a 1926 history: "...until the time of the passage of the Volstead Act Mr. de Martini conducted a winery and engaged in the manufacture of high-grade wines. Now...his lands are planted to almonds."(9)

In 1928, eight years after the demise of the winery, the winemaker himself died. Both local and regional newspapers reported the death of the "prominent Clayton agricultur-
alist." He was heralded as one of "the county's real pioneers." The Byron Times noted that he "was recognized in the old days as one of California's most expert wine makers." The San Francisco Chronicle credited the former supervisor and vineyardist with operating "one of the largest vineyards in the country" and claimed that the DeMartini Winery "was known throughout the State for its excellent blend of old wines."(10)

The end of Prohibition in 1933 resulted in a revival of the wine industry in the state and, to a lesser extent, the county. However, Clayton Vineyards remained an almond grove. In 1940, the property was sold and the building converted to a storage facility and week-end residence. Purchased by the Forni family in 1962, it was used as a residence until abandoned in 1979. Although the present owner plans its restoration and a Livermore winery has expressed considerable interest in moving its operations to the DeMartini building in Clayton, it remains today as described in the 1975 county historic resource inventory -- a structure of historical importance threatened by neglect, by , and by planned development on adjacent property.(11)

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ENDNOTES

1. Janet Pape Rocha, "An Archaeological Survey of DeMartini Winery/Clayton Ranch, Clayton, Contra Costa County, California [CA-CCO-476H]" (Rohnert Park: Anthropology Studies Center, Sonoma State University, July 1, 1983), Pg. 5-6; J. P. Munro-Fraser, History of Contra Costa County, California (San Francisco: W. A. Slocum, 1882), Pg. 470, 542-3; Sach's Lime Kiln has been assigned an archaeological identification of CA-CCO-418H. See Pape, Ibid., Pg. 5; Contra Costa County Recorder's Office (CCC, RO), Deeds, Bk. 1, Pg. 306 ff.; Contra Costa County, Planning Department, "Contra Costa County Historic Resource Inventory," February 11, 1975; Richmond Record, January 1, 1902; Antioch Ledger, April 19, 1870.
2. Antioch Ledger, March 9, 1872; San Diego Union, March 12, 1872; CCC, RO, Miscellaneous Records, V. 1, Probate Case #237.
3. CCC, RO, Deeds, Bk. 30, Pg. 384-92; Ibid., Mortgages, V. 12, Pg. 241; Ibid., Miscellaneous Records, V. 1, Pg. 265; History of Contra Costa County (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1926), Pg. 451-2; George Emanuels, Ygnacio Valley, 1834-1970 (Walnut Creek: the author, 1982), Pg. 32; CCC, RO, Official Records, Bk. 173, Pg. 40.
4. MacFisher Purcell, History of Contra Costa County (Berkeley: Gillick, 1940), Pg. 421-5; St. Helena Star, August 25, 1882; State of California, Board of Viticulture Commissioners, Directory of Grape Growers (Sacramento: n.p., 1891), Pg. 22; Contra Costa News Special Edition, July 1, 1897.
5. Illustrations of Contra Costa County (Oakland: Smith & Elliott, 1878), Pg. 237; Munroe-Fraser, History of Contra Costa County, Pg. 471.
6. Pape, "Archaeological Survey," Pg. 7-8; "Contra Costa County Historic Resource Inventory;" Directory of Grape Growers, Pg. 22; William Heintz interviews, March 5 & 7, 1983; Contra Costa News Special Edition; F. J. Hulaniski, ed., The History of Contra Costa County, California (Berkeley: Elms, 1917), Pg. 91.
7. History of Contra Costa County (1926), Pg. 109; Purcell, History of Contra Costa County, Pg. 279-80; CCC, RO, Grantor Index, which shows entries in Candidate's Statements, V. 2, Pg. 59 & 67, and V. 3, Pg. 14..
8. Byron Times Fifth Booster Edition (1916), Pg. 164; Contra Costa Times, October 21, 1981.
9. CCC, County Clerk's Office, Decrees of Naturalization, Bk. 4, Pg. 96; CCC, Registration and Election Department, Great Register, V. 4, #161, and Index to Voters, 1906 through 1926; United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1880 Population Schedules, Contra Costa County, Pg. 670; Ibid., 1900 Population Schedules, Contra Costa County, Pg. 260; History of Contra Costa County (1926), Pg. 452.

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10. State of California, Department of Public Health, Death Index, 1905-1929, V. C-E, Pg. 2656; Martinez Daily Standard, January 7, 1928, Pg. 6, and Ibid., January 9, 1928, Pg. 2; Byron Times, January 13, 1928, Pg. 4; San Francisco Chronicle, "East Bay Section," January 7, 1928, Pg. 4.
11. Purcell, History of Contra Costa County, Pg. 426 & 432; CCC, RO, Official Records, Bk. 568, Pg. 316 ff.; Ibid., Bk. 4154, Pg. 773 ff.; Contra Costa Times, October 21, 1981.

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(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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Representation in Existing Surveys

Clayton Preliminary Historic Resource Inventory
February 1978 X Local
Clayton Historical Society
Clayton, California

CLAYTON VINEYARDS/DEMARTINI WINERY
5919 Clayton Road
Clayton, Contra Costa County, CA

PROJECT AREA

CLAYTON, CALIF.

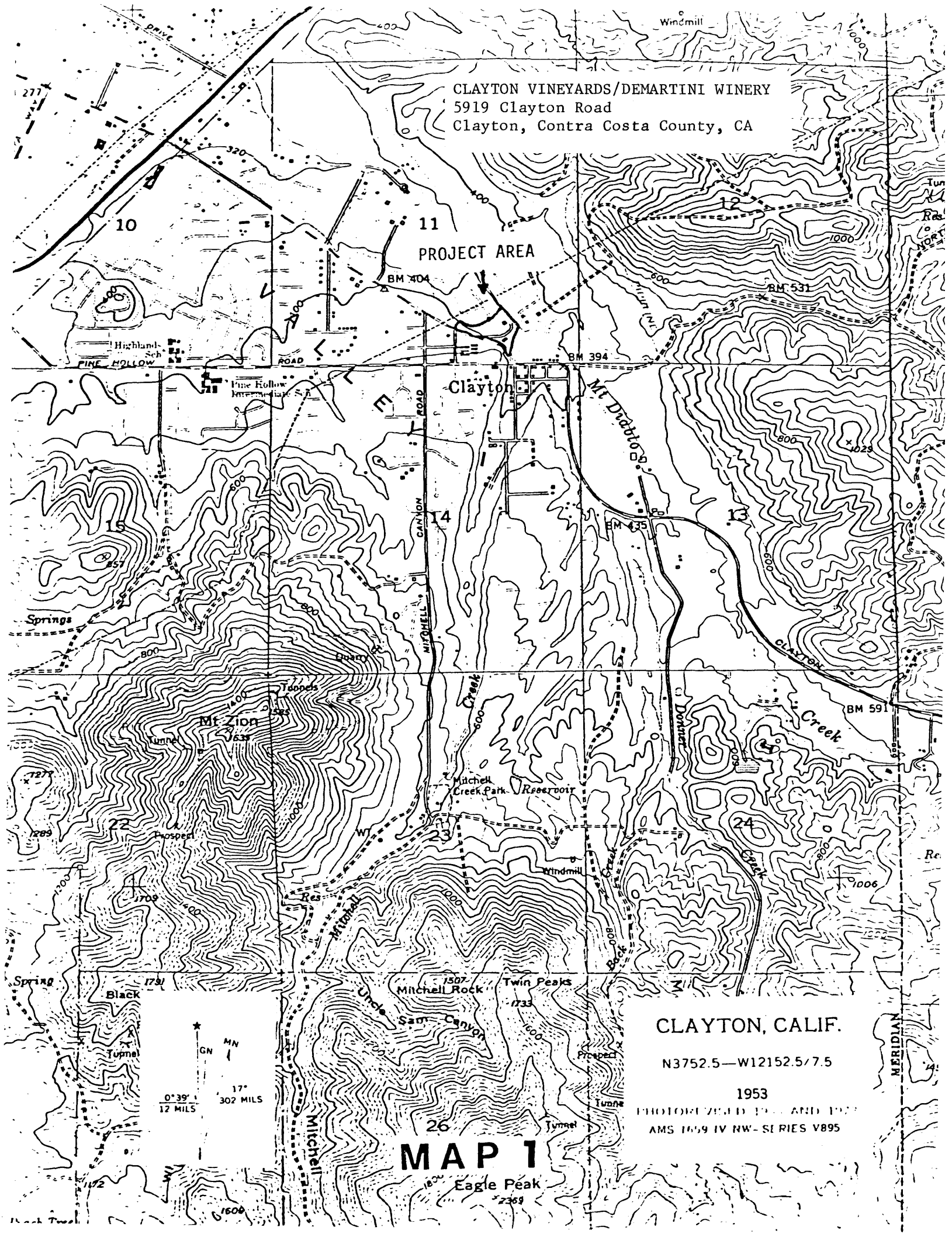
N3752.5—W12152.5/7.5

1953

PHOTOZOOMED 1953 AND 1957
AMS 1659 IV NW—SERIES V895

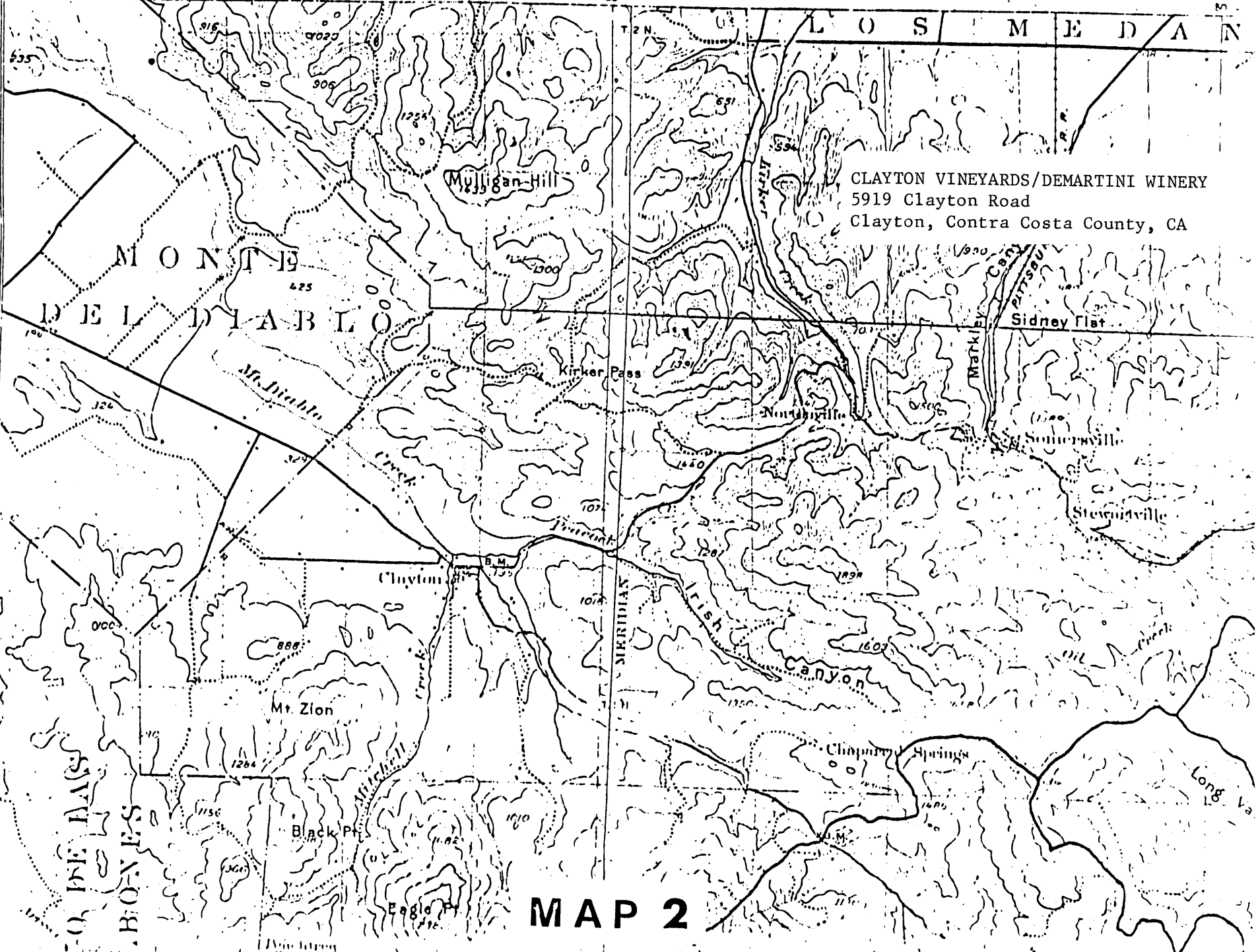
MAP 1

Eagle Peak



122°09'
38°00'

55



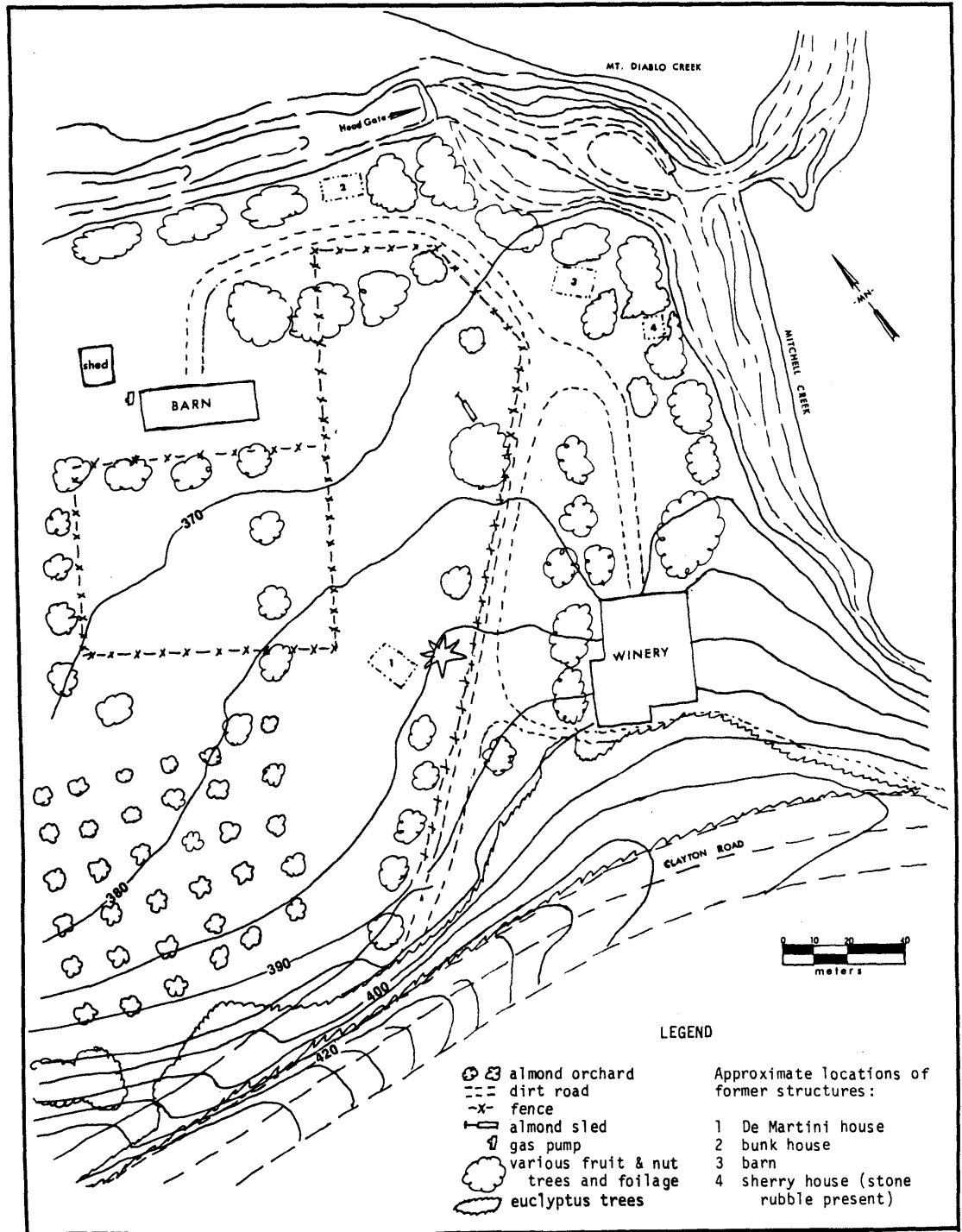
CLAYTON VINEYARDS/DEMARTINI WINERY
5919 Clayton Road
Clayton, Contra Costa County, CA

L O S A N E M E D A N

M O N T E
D E L I A B L O

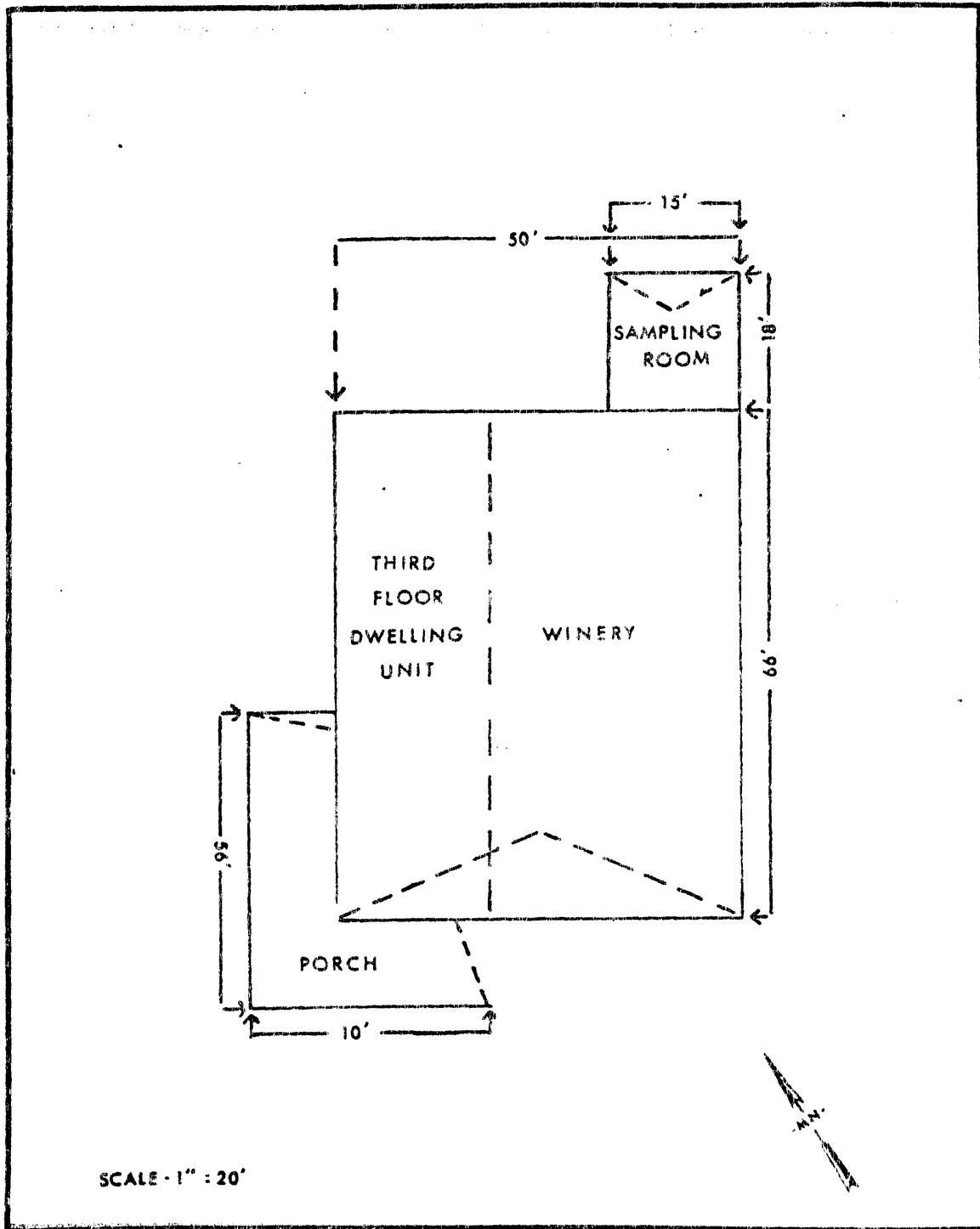
C O N T R A
C O S T A
C O U N T Y

MAP 2



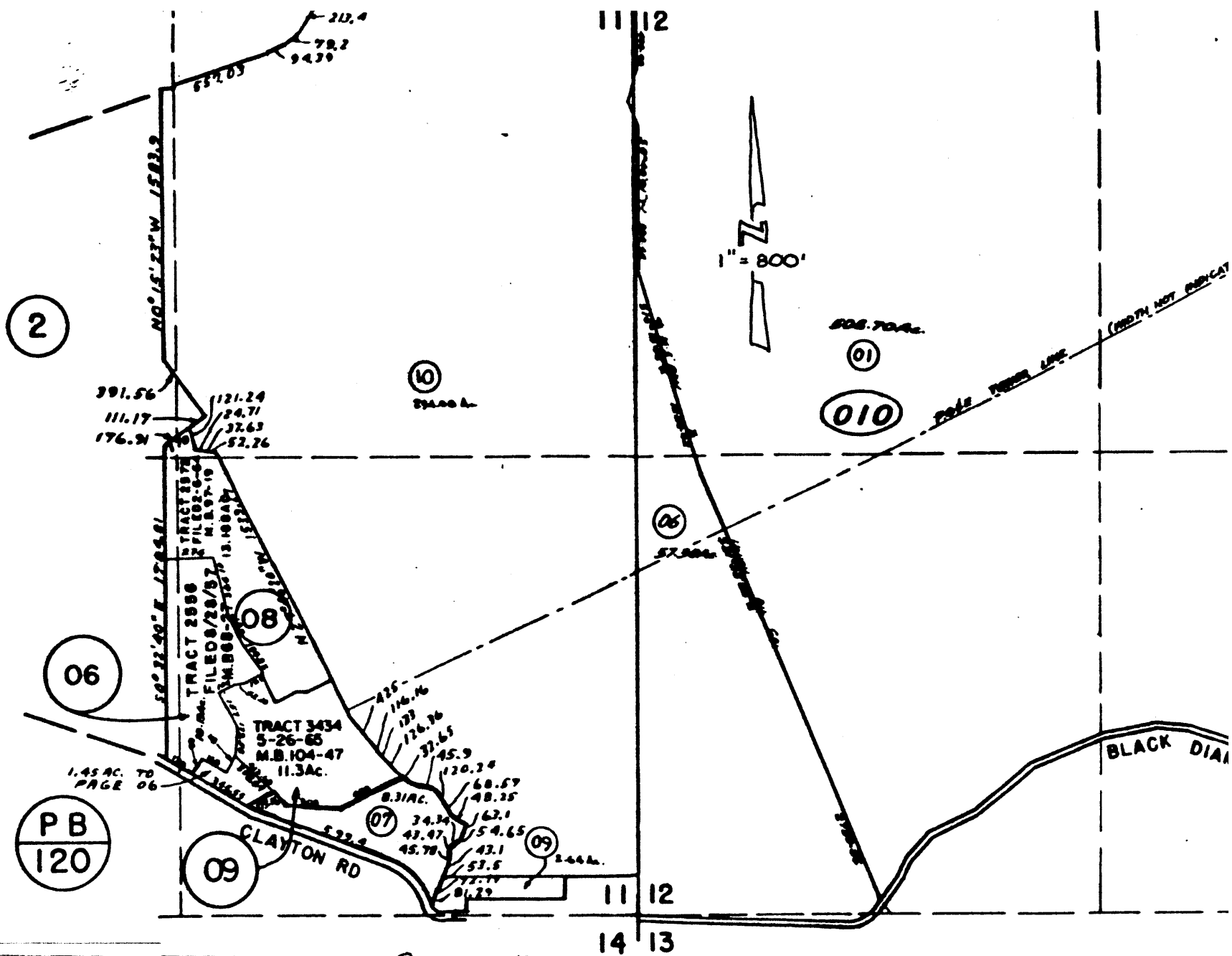
MAP 3

CLAYTON VINEYARDS/DeMARTINI WINERY
5919 Clayton Road
Clayton, Contra Costa County, CA



MAP 4

CLAYTON VINEYARDS/DEMARTINI WINERY
 5919 Clayton Road
 Clayton, Contra Costa County, CA



CLAYTON VINEYARDS/DeMARTINI WINERY
 (FORNI RANCH/CLAYTON RANCH)
 5919 CLAYTON ROAD
 CLAYTON, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
 CALIFORNIA

MAP 5