

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



82

1. Name

historic The John Ohm House

and/or common The John Ohm House

2. Location

street & number 31524 South Kasson Road not for publication

city, town Tracy vicinity of congressional district 14th

state California code 06 county San Joaquin code 077

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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Ronald Van Leachman

street & number P. O. Box 930, 37 West Tenth Street

city, town Tracy vicinity of _____ state California 95376

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Joaquin County Courthouse

street & number 222 East Weber

city, town Stockton state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

<u> </u> excellent	<u> </u> deteriorated	<u> X </u> unaltered	<u> X </u> original site	
<u> </u> good	<u> </u> ruins	<u> </u> altered	<u> </u> moved	date _____
<u> X </u> fair	<u> </u> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Ohm house is located on the Kasson Road approximately 6 miles southeast of Tracy. Once the site of San Joaquin City, the area is now predominantly farmland. Clustered oak trees mark the banks of the San Joaquin River, located about half a mile east of the Ohm house.

Several outbuildings and the Ohm house make up the four acre ranch complex. Olive trees mark the property's northern boundary while pepper trees shade the Kasson Road entrance. Two large palm trees frame the brick walk leading to the front porch. Brick walks surround the house and the remnants of a fish pond are located between the two palms. Any other landscaping which may have existed has since disappeared.

A large bungalow in design, the house is rectangular in shape, two-stories and of wood frame construction. The house is covered with narrow clapboards on the first floor and shingles on the second floor. True to the bungalow tradition, the side-gabled roof is the dominant design feature. It sweeps down to cover the porch, creating the characteristic low-to-the-ground quality of bungalows. Two large gabled dormers are located at the front and rear elevations. Exposed purlins and notched rafters, both characteristic bungalow treatments, are evident in the main and dormer roofs. Similar fenestration is used in the side gables and dormers. Both have paired double-hung sash flanked by smaller windows with fixed sash. Louvered windows at the gable peak ventilate the attic.

A veranda extends across the front facade and wraps around the north elevation. Stout Colonial Revival columns, resting on the veranda guard rail support the roof. A short flight of stairs leads to the veranda. The stair and front entrance do not align; the stair is centered on the veranda, while the doorway is centered on the house itself. Sidelights frame the slightly recessed entrance. The upper sections of the double doors are glazed with single panes of glass. Paired double-hung sash are located on either side of the entrance.

Window arrangements on the ground floor of the north and south elevations differ but the same double-hung sash is used either singly or in pairs. A side door leads to the veranda from the dining room on the north side. Covered by a separate flat roof, the kitchen extends across the rear elevation. Again, window types are the same and a back-door leads to the yard.

As indicated by old photographs of the property, the house has undergone little or no change in the past 74 years. Shutters have been removed from the dormer windows and the front stair's balustrade has been replaced.

INTERIOR

Despite its bungalow exterior, the interior of the Ohm house is based on a Victorian floorplan. The development of architectural styles is not a systematic process and various traditions are mixed regularly. Such is the case with the Ohm house. The latest trends were slow to reach a backwater like San Joaquin City, increasing the odds of scrambled styles. In the Ohm house the combination of styles was a blessing and may have been intentional. With the advent of the bungalow style, floor plans became less formal. Although bungalows were built in response to the hot California climate, their floor plans did not promote air circulation. The older Victorian plan, based on rooms

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arranged along a central hall, was more conducive to cross ventilation. Thus the Ohms took the best from both styles in terms of keeping their home cool.

Two rooms are situated on either side of the hall: the parlor and dining room on the right and a study, bedroom and bath on the left. Interior details are simple. John Ohm had a reputation for frugality and his home confirms this. Double strips of darker wood outline the parlor's oak floors. Sliding doors lead into the dining room. Pine wainscoting, a built-in buffet and a beamed ceiling distinguish the dining room. The rooms on the left side are more modest. Linoleum or carpeting cover the floors and the walls are papered. All doors in the house have five recessed horizontal panels. Brass door knobs, heating grates and hinges are original. Many of the original carbide lights still exist in the rooms. Copper tubing led to the outlets and an acetylene generator was in the yard. The house was later wired for electricity.

The kitchen extends across the rear of the house. Divided into three sections, it consists of a sink room, a large central kitchen and a sunporch. Both the kitchen and hall are covered with linoleum.

Located on the left side of the hall, the stairs lead to a central hall on the second floor. Four bedrooms are arranged around the hall, each occupying one side of the house. A full attic and basement complete the plan.

OUTBUILDINGS

The outbuildings in the ranch complex include a tank house, cookhouse, barn, an outhouse, and two sheds. A cattle dressing station and sections of old fencing are other remains of ranch life. Of these the owner plans to restore the tankhouse and cookhouse. Due to their dilapidated condition, the other outbuildings were removed.

Measuring approximately 16' x 12', the two-story tankhouse has horizontal wood siding and a hipped roof. Door and window openings are located on the ground level. A pent roof shed was added to the east elevation. A simple finial and corner boards are the only decorative features. The interior was finished with matchstick wainscoting. Topped by a gable roof, the cookhouse is covered with drop siding and measures approximately 12' x 12'. Door openings are located on the east and west elevations. Windows with six over six sash are located on all elevations except the west. Matchstick wainscoting covers the interior walls and the original stove is still in place.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The John Ohm house is significant for its association with San Joaquin City and with John Ohm, one of the San Joaquin Valley's most prominent citizens. Although once a busy shipping point on the San Joaquin River, San Joaquin City vanished shortly after World War I, leaving the Ohm house as one of the few reminders of its existence. Subject to little change over the years, the house and its complex of outbuildings provide an excellent insight into farm life at the turn-of-the-century.

San Joaquin City was located on the west bank of the San Joaquin River, in the south-east corner of the El Pescadero land grant. Indians, trappers and early settlers had all been attracted to the grove of oak trees which marked the future site of the city, but it was not until 1847 that a permanent residence was built. Charles Imus, a horse trader, sent for a house from Boston and reassembled it near what was later Durham's Ferry. One year later the Imus property was bought by Capt. John McMullin. In the fall of 1849 he established a ferry crossing (later called Durham's Ferry). By the following spring, 6 wooden houses and a number of tents were located at the crossing, and the small community became known as San Joaquin City.

San Joaquin City developed slowly but its future looked bright. In its early years it rivaled Stockton as the principal city between San Francisco and mining towns of the Mother Lode. In 1869, nine 80 foot wide streets were laid out in a typical grid pattern, with River Road as the main street. The following decade marked the city's high point. Eleven saloons, seven stores, a stage station, livery stables, blacksmith shops, barber shops, a bakery, laundry and three hotels served a population of 1,000. River freight was the basis of the town's economy as well as traffic along the River Road, an important stage and post route to points south. Lumber and grain from San Joaquin County's west side were shipped from San Joaquin City to market in San Francisco. The cattle industry was an important source of revenue as well, for San Joaquin City was a main stopping point on the drive to Stockton.

Although three railroads were built in San Joaquin County between 1869 and 1879, none connected with San Joaquin City. Lack of rail service, diminished traffic on the River Road and removal of the post office to Vernalis in 1888 all contributed to the demise of the town. Despite these ominous portents, John Ohm and his brother Jacob bought 1200 acres of the Levi B. Holt ranch in 1888, the first and one of the largest ranches established in San Joaquin County.

John Ohm was a native of Schleswig, Germany. After three years in the German Merchant Marine, he emigrated to California in 1881 at the age of 19. He settled near Woodbridge, working as a ranch hand. By 1884 he was able to begin farming himself. Although he purchased the Holt property in 1888, he did not settle there until 1896. Over the years he became one of the most extensive ranchers in the San Joaquin Valley, tender of the Durham Ferry bridge and a promoter of progressive irrigation methods. He was considered one of the most influential and prosperous men in the county.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 4.03 acres

Quadrangle name Vernalis

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 10 653380 4170170
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is on assessor's parcel A, on the East side of So. Kasson Road. The lot is comprised of 4.03 acres.

A. P. #: Book 8, P. 163, Parcel A. Dimensions: W: 500', S: 370', E: 501.7', N: 372'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret Welden

organization Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc. date August 11, 1980

street & number 364 Bush Street telephone (415) 362-5154

city or town San Francisco state California 94104

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Kenny Mellon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 11/18/80

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Kenny Mellon date 11/18/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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In 1908 the Ohm family built the present farmhouse. The house was located at the intersection of South Street and River Road, at the southern boundary of the town. Ohm based his home on the bungalow style, a popular house type from the turn-of-the-century through World War II. A style popularized in California in response to the warm climate, it was a perfect choice for the San Joaquin Valley's blistering summers. A low pitched roof, wide overhanging eaves and surrounding verandas aided in keeping the house cool.

Several outbuildings were included on the Ohm property. The original Holt farmhouse, used by the Ohm's as their residence until 1908, was converted into a bunkhouse for the ranch hands. Other outbuildings included an outhouse, cookhouse, tankhouse, and numerous barns and sheds.

In 1911 a new river channel was cut which bypassed San Joaquin City. With the loss of its river commerce, the town suffered its final blow and never recovered. Slowly the inhabitants moved to surrounding communities, leaving buildings vacant. After World War I the remaining buildings were torn down along with the original Holt house. Much of the lumber was used to construct outbuildings on the Ohm Ranch. In 1962 the site of San Joaquin City was registered as California Historical Landmark #777.

John Ohm died in 1933. Members of his family remained in the house until 1977, when his daughter, Minnie Ohm, passed away. The property was recently purchased by Ronald Leachman, who plans to restore the house and selected outbuildings.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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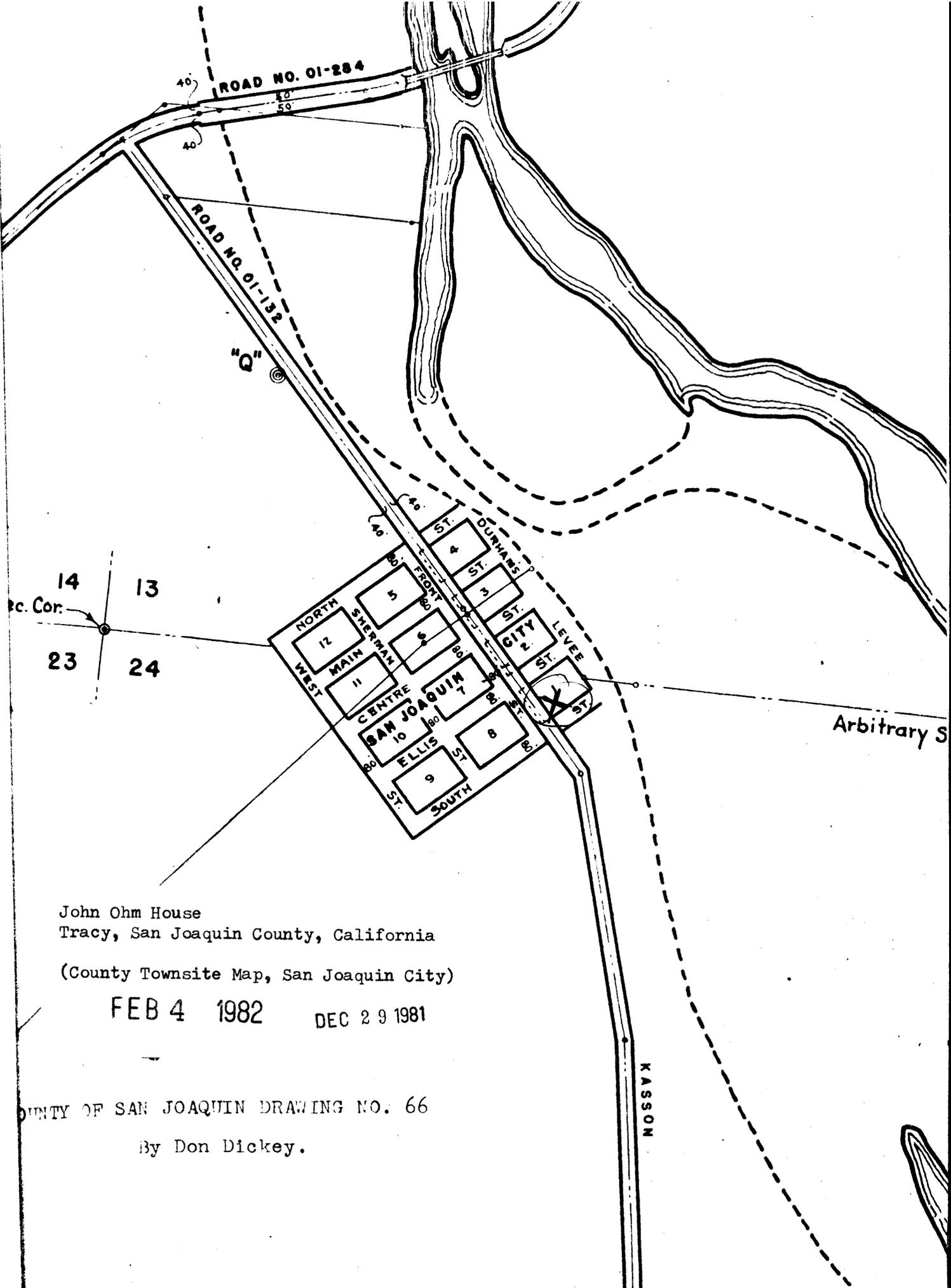
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John Ohm House
 Tracy, San Joaquin County, California

(County Townsite Map, San Joaquin City)

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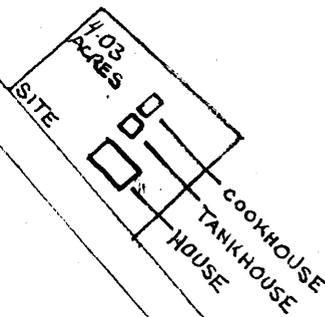
COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN DRAWING NO. 66

By Don Dickey.

DURHAM FERRY ROAD

SOUTH KASSON ROAD

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER



JOHN OHM HOUSE
Tracy, San Joaquin County, California

DEC 29 1981

FEB 4 1982

