

HISTORIC CONTEXT

This section summarizes the cultural landscape of the Driscoll Ranch area in San Mateo County, California, discussed in detail by L. Furnis in the companion report entitled *Architectural Survey and Evaluation Report for Driscoll Ranch near La Honda, San Mateo County, California* (Furnis 2016).

The earliest European ownership of the land which comprises Driscoll Ranch was by Don Antonio Buelna, who during the Mexican period owned two ranchos. The one within the Project Area totaled four square leagues in size; it was the Rancho San Gregorio. A quarter of Buelna's Rancho San Gregorio was sold to Salvador Castro in 1849. After U.S. takeover of California, Castro was confirmed as the owner in 1852. The Driscoll Ranch lies within the original boundaries of the Rancho San Gregorio. Salvador Castro sold off portions of his land to a variety of people looking for business and living opportunities in the area. These people were loggers, mill owners, ranchers and farmers and included both Americans and immigrants.

The name of La Honda that is connected to the area originates with John L. Sears, when he started to develop that area as a town in 1861. Sears, family members and associates including the Younger family of outlaws from Missouri built at least one store there, with John and William Sears operating the store. The community of La Honda developed during the 1870s, and attracted a population sufficient to host a post office, a hotel run by Sears, as well as other businesses. The La Honda store was a focal point for area loggers, ranchers and dairymen. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, the La Honda store was owned and run by Charles and Frank Cavalli, and by then included the general store, a saloon, and a post office.

The La Honda area's timber led to the establishment by the mid-nineteenth century of a new and prominent local industry. The area's lumbering history has been divided into five periods. These span Native American use prior to 1842, and another period marking the establishment of water-powered mills until 1875. The latter period encompasses the Gold Rush era, during which many loggers left for the gold fields. They were eventually replaced by other loggers when timber demands grew. New, steam-powered, mills were established at that time and milling camps were established where those supporting or working in the mills lived. Period III, after 1875, saw further expansion of the industry as well as the introduction of new technology such as steam tractors for hauling logs. The industry also witnessed consolidation when large companies purchased multiple small mills. Period IV, from the first years of the twentieth century until the end of WWII, was a period of ups and downs for the local industry, with a boom after the San Francisco 1906 earthquake and a bust during the Depression, causing the shutting of many mills. It was during this period that the steam tractors were replaced by diesel-powered ones. The last period, Period V, going through the present, has been marked by both technological innovation such as gasoline powered saws and large trucks. These efficiencies allowed large corporations to

take control of the local lumbering business. However, beginning in 1945, laws were passed to regulate the ways in which forests were cut and access roads cleared.

During the same time period that the area's timber industry was developing, the oil industry was also starting, made possible by large oil fields underlying San Mateo County. The oil industry began in the 1860s and until the late 1930s was mainly extracted by small, local companies. At first, the main use of the oil was for fishing boats. The local ownership and small scale oil production changed, however, when the area's oil fields attracted the attention of larger oil companies based in Los Angeles. In 1940 the first of several Los Angeles-based oil companies leased numerous wells in the area. Aerial photographs from the 1950s show the locations of many active oil wells on and near the Folger Ranch properties, on the west side of the Project Area.

The Driscoll Ranch Project Area is composed of four ranches. These comprise the Ray Ranch, the Guerra-Zanoni Ranch, the Wool Ranch, and the Folger Ranch. The Folger Ranch is divided into Upper and Lower ranches. The Driscoll Ranch name derives from the family by that name who, between the 1970s and 1990s, acquired all four ranches and combined them into one. The Driscoll Ranch has since become a part of the La Honda Open Space Preserve.

The Ray Ranch was first associated with Salvador Castro in the 1850s as part of the Rancho San Gregorio (Revolvy 2016). The property as shown on the 1868 and 1877 Official Maps of San Mateo County belonged to the "Estate of Burns John" (Easton 1868; Cloud 1877). Richard T. Ray, whose name also appears on the 1877 Official Map of San Mateo County on the parcel where the ranch stands, was also mentioned in the 1878 publication *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County* as being the owner of the illustrated ranch in the book (Moore & DePue 1878). John was one of the early pioneering families at La Honda (a + h llc 2015:4). He purchased property with Michael Dubbs in 1856 (Foss 1941:6). Dubbs retained the north half of the 1412.54 acres and Burns John took the south half. John became County Treasurer of San Mateo County, which had just been formed, but died later the same year (1859), leaving his wife and four children. Mrs. John then married their ranch hand – Richard T. Ray – and the family remained at the ranch until 1880 (Foss 1941:6). This couple produced six more children.

During the 1860s and 1870s, this ranch was associated with the Younger family, who added to a pre-existing ranch house on the property. In 1892, Richard Ray sold his property to William Hughes, of Hanson, Ackerson & Co., a large lumber company in the area (Foss 1941:6). Later, it was sold to Henry Hilderbrandt, who then sold it to the Italian-Swiss brothers Julio and Felix Guerra sometime between 1909 and 1927 (Kneese 1927; Neuman 1909). On both the 1902 and 1940 USGS topographic quadrangles, standing buildings are shown at the Ray Ranch site. The Guerras rented the property to others by the 1940s. These tenants had dairy and beef cattle. One of the families who rented the ranch was the Cunha family, who also rented other ranches in the area from the 1950s to the 1980s.

The Guerra-Zanoni Ranch property first belonged to Salvador Castro, as part of the Rancho San Gregorio in the 1850s. The property as shown on the 1868 and 1877 Official Maps of San Mateo County belonged to Michael Dubbs. Dubbs was one of the early pioneers at La Honda and the partner of Burns John (Foss 1941:7-8). In March of 1880, William Hughes purchased the Dubbs' property and in 1886 rented it to Charles Dearborn. This is the parcel that includes the present-day Guerra-Zanoni Ranch. Hughes owned the property until at least 1909 as shown on the 1909 Official Map of San Mateo County. By 1927, the Italian-Swiss brothers Julio and Felix Guerra possessed both halves (Neuman 1909; Kneese 1927). The Zanoni name derives from the ranch's renter, Joe Zanoni, who rented from the Guerra brothers in the 1940s. Zanoni ran a small dairy operation on the property and also grew his own cattle feed. Beginning in the 1950s the ranch was, like the Ray Ranch, leased to the Cunha family. At some point between the 1970s and 1990s this property was purchased by the Driscoll family, who eventually sold it to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

The Wool Ranch property was first owned by Francisco and Encarnacion Rodrigues, who granted it to Salvador Castro in 1855 (Abstract of Title 1909:50, 51). On March 3, 1858, Franklin Todd deeded to Henry W. Seale a tract Rancho San Gregorio property 95 acres in extent (Abstract of Title 1909:104). In 1863, Henry W. Seale was granted the deed to 1114.30 acres of land by Lloyd Tevis (Abstract of Title 1909:82, 83, 93). Lloyd Tevis acquired the acreage from James Bell prior to 1863. Henry W. Seale deeded to Joseph Buchannan Seale (relationship unknown) this same 1114.30 acres on August 31, 1866 (Abstract of Title 1909:93).

A parcel consisting of 120 acres was patented to Helen Schultz who assigned 110.47 acres of the original 120 to William Wilson in 1867 (Abstract of Title 1909:103, 104). The parcel given to Wilson eventually became part of the Seale Ranch. Joseph Buchannan Seale deeded back to Henry W. Seale the same 1114.30 acres in 1870 that Henry Seale had sold to him in 1866 (Abstract of Title 1909:94). The 1868 Official Map of San Mateo County shows property belonging to Henry Seale that is 1114 acres in extent (Easton 1868). Henry Seale continued to expand his holdings for the next 20 years (Abstract of Title 1909:110; Cloud 1877).

On May 23, 1890, the Seale property, now in the estate of the deceased Henry W. Seale, was distributed to Thomas Seale. The Seale Ranch amounted to 1314.30 acres at this time and it is depicted on the 1894 Official Map of San Mateo County (Bromfield 1894). During that same year, Thomas Seale entered into a lease agreement with Natale Fry, for 1500 acres, to be leased for a period of five years (Abstract of Title 1909:95). The lease was in effect from late 1891 through 1896.

In 1897, Thomas Seale began leasing 1500 acres, possibly the same 1500 acres, to James and Barnado Zanoni for the purposes of farming and dairying (Abstract of Title 1909:96). Fry's

lease would have been up by this time, so the Zanoni Brothers likely took over working the same land. According to George Bordi, Joe Zanoni was raised on the Wool Ranch, probably in the 1920s and 1930s. Joe leased adjacent property from the Guerras in the 1940s (G. Bordi 2006).

Thomas Seale was deceased by July of 1908 and his holdings were distributed to his grown children – Alfred and Mabel Seale (Abstract of Title 1909:118). A few days later, in July, 1909, the Albert and his wife Grace Seale and Albert’s sister Mabel (now Mabel S. Laumeister) deeded 1293.52 acres of land to Emilia D. Silva (Abstract of Title 1909:121). This transaction ended the Seale Ranch era and began a new one at what is now known as Wool Ranch

By 1927, Peter Faber owned the ranch and was a dairyman who used it for haying and pasturage for dry stock (Kneese 1927). The 1927 Official Map of San Mateo County and the Half Moon Bay 1940 USGS topographic map show no buildings or structures at the current location of the Wool Ranch in those years (Furnis 2016: Figure 1; Kneese 1927; USGS 1940). However, the 1953 aerial photograph does show the house, barns and other buildings at the current location, along what was known as “Seale Road” on some maps (Furnis 2016: Figure 15; Bromfield 1894). It is possible the buildings were in existence prior to 1940, as the USGS topographic maps were sometimes years behind in reflecting built resources on the ground. George Bordi’s account of Joe Zanoni being raised on the Wool Ranch property certainly suggests that a ranch house existed somewhere on the Wool Ranch property (G. Bordi 2006). Since the Zanoni Brothers leased the Seale Ranch from Henry Seale in the late 1890s to early 1900s, this makes sense.

Following the Faber occupancy, A. J. and D. E. Wool owned the ranch, as well as other properties to the north. Their names are shown on the 1960 county map (San Mateo County 1960). In the 1960s, A. J. Wool was a member of the San Mateo County Cattlemen’s Association and sponsored an article on the history of San Mateo County (California Cattleman 1966:16). In the article, A. J. Wool was listed as a resident of La Honda. The Henry Cunha family leased the Wool Ranch for 30 years, from the 1950s to the 1980s (Judy Wilson, personal communication, April 29, 2016). The ranch buildings are shown in aerial photographs from 1953, 1956, and 1960 (Furnis 2016: Figures 15-17). They used the property for dairying and growing hay and oats, and may have seasonally occupied the house. Sometime during the 1970s to 1990s, the property was acquired by Rudy Driscoll Jr.

Owners of the Folger Ranch, as with the others, purchased the land from Salvador Castro. The Upper Folger Ranch land was first purchased from Castro by Alfred R. Woodhams sometime after 1868. He sold it to James W. Bell sometime between 1877 and 1894, based on ownership parcels shown on the San Mateo County maps for those years. The James W. Bell family included a mother, father and six children. The Bell family owned various properties in and near to La Honda, establishing a school on their property, leasing land for oil production, but also dairying. The Bells, or at least the parents, continued to reside at this ranch until their old age, at

or just after the start of the twentieth century. Most of the property was sold off by 1909 to another family, Robert A. and Manuel F. Silva. Silva family members continued to live and farm the ranch until 1959. In 1960, Carter Lane was shown as the property owner, when it was leased to Charlie Bettencourt for the next ten years (Charlie Bettencourt, personal communication, May 2, 2016; San Mateo County 1960). Then, Peter Folger, grandson of J. A. Folger, of coffee fame and fortune, purchased the 1000+ acre ranch. Bettencourt continued on, working for Folger raising beef cattle, barley, oats, and hay for another 10 years. It is Peter Folger's name that is currently attached to the ranch.

The Lower Folger Ranch shares the Upper Folger Ranch's history until 1902. No structures appear on the property until 1953, when a large barn is apparent along with smaller buildings south of the present-day ranch house and small barn. These may have belonged to S. J. Tichnor (or Tichenor). Other than the fact that buildings on this ranch appeared later in time than on the Upper Folger Ranch, the Lower Folger Ranch's property history is the same as that of the Upper, with the same series of owners. Peter Folger was the last to own it prior to the Driscolls.

PART II: FINDINGS

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The 3,649.65-acre Project Area is a working cattle ranch situated between La Honda Creek on the east, Bogess Creek on the west, and between La Honda Road (State Highway 84) on the south, and Bear Gulch Road on the north. It is in a rural area adjacent to the small community of La Honda, in steep terrain within the Coast Range. This area can be divided into four ranch sub-areas: Ray Ranch (APN No. 078-290-030), Guerra-Zanoni Ranch (APN No. 078-290-010 and 078-270-030), Wool Ranch (APN No. 078-270-030), and Folger Ranch (APN No. 082-170-040). As a whole, these four ranches include a total of 26 structures: 22 standing structures and four collapsed structures.

Land Uses and Activities

Within the Project Area, fenced pasture land is extremely common and is present almost everywhere that there are clearings on the property. Since the property is now and will continue to serve as an active cattle ranching location, even as part of the Preserve, the modern and historic pastures are essentially the same. Grassy lands, whether level or sloped, that are fenced indicate pasture locations and boundaries. A network of fences, gates, corrals, and roads is employed to move and manage cattle on the pastures. Salt licks, modern water troughs, and shelter structures stand in several locations throughout the property.

A number of hay and feeding barns remain within the property for use in cattle raising, but these are no longer used and are falling into disrepair, many of them having already collapsed.

Obsolete historic operations for the property include redwood tree logging, saw mill operation, fruit tree growing, oil drilling, and dairying. Logging and milling were conducted here in the 1860s through the early 1900s. This continued until the redwoods were nearly completely logged out. Dairying became the predominant use of the property, based out of four ranches, during the 1930s through the 1940s, at least. Following the dairying, ranchers shifted their efforts to raising of beef cattle. From the 1920s until the 1980s, oil exploration and drilling took place on the Folger Ranch, but no longer occurs. Very little fruit tree growing was done as far as is known. A small orchard was grown at the Upper Folger Ranch during the 1950s.

Patterns of Spatial Organization

The terrain within the Project Area has dictated where locations of settlement and agricultural pursuits could feasibly take place. The land here is extreme with steep slopes, dense vegetation, and numerous small and large drainages crisscrossing the land. The major drainages virtually define the Project Area boundaries, with La Honda Creek on the east, Bogess Creek on the west,

and San Gregorio Creek on the south. Logging took place where the redwood trees grew, up on the higher reaches and in the larger drainages, of which there are three within the Project Area. There have always been small clearings between the redwood, and now oak forests and these are the places where the first and all later ranches and homes were established. The clearings became larger as logging commenced and removed most of the forest.

The present-day five remnant ranch clusters (counting two at Folger Ranch) follow a pattern. Four of the five are situated within non-forested, open grasslands, close to small drainages, and probably close to active springs. The Wool Ranch is the exception to this. All the ranches are adjacent to dirt roads within the Project Area. Three of them (Ray's Ranch, Upper Folger Ranch, and Lower Folger Ranch) are nestled in low, more protected open locations. They are all surrounded by pastures within wide open grassy clearings.

Within each ranch, some similar patterning of space is apparent, with houses being somewhat removed from barns, corrals, and sheds, while barns, corrals, and sheds are adjacent to each other, in most cases. Settlement within the property has always been sparse and continues to be so, probably another result of its steepness and remoteness.

Roads within the Project Area are all non-paved roads. At present, portions of the two main roads within the space are graveled for some distance into the property. Those main roads are located at the east and west edges of the Project Area. On the east, trending north-south, is Sears Ranch Road which provides access to Ray's Ranch and the Guerra-Zanoni Ranch. This same road has served those ranches for decades.

The unnamed road on the west side, also north-south trending has been the main road into the Folger Ranch clusters for decades. Access to the Wool Ranch has always been difficult from either side because of the need to cross the deep Harrington Creek from the east to approach it, or to drive over extremely steep terrain to reach it from the west. At present, the two roads have been joined at their upper ends (northern endpoints) by newer, but still narrow, unimproved road segments. The roads, together, form one large loop that accesses all five ranches. In the past, access to and from the Wool Ranch appears to have been by means of a dirt road from the north.

Property ownership also has affected the spatial organization within the Project Area. For nearly all of its history, the parcel sizes and configurations have remained virtually the same. Several parties acquired 1000+ acre parcels from Salvador Castro in the mid-1800s. Those parcels determine how and where settlement and other activities occur in this area.

Response to the Natural Environment

The natural environment within which the Project Area exists is the west slope of the California Coast Range, characterized by steep hills, etched by numerous drainages of deep to shallow

extent. These are bordered by thick stands of oaks, some pine trees, and the occasional redwood tree. Between the wooded areas and drainages are lush, open grasslands. The Project Area is just a few miles from the Pacific Ocean.

The area is subject to substantial weather in the form of rain, wind, and fog during the year. Evidence of adaptation to weather and the terrain within the Project Area includes man-made windbreaks composed of large trees (pines, eucalyptus), solid shelters for people, for animals, and for equipment in the form of substantial wooden buildings, and corrals and fences for the restricting of animals to pasture areas. One bridge exists within the Project Area, over Harrington Creek, which is an adaptation to accessing lands on both sides of a deep drainage that is difficult to cross in most places. There may be other kinds of features on the property that have not been observed by Cogstone personnel in the current study.

Cultural Traditions

Twenty-three of the 24 structures were constructed using the Vernacular architectural style, which means they were constructed based on local needs, construction materials, and to reflect local traditions. The buildings are extremely utilitarian in their construction, which is due to the nature of their use in an agricultural setting. Building materials and construction are plain, to the point of being described as crude, and consist of wood, metal, and concrete or cement.

Circulation Networks

The principal circulation network within this landscape is roads and trails. Roads within the Project Area are all non-paved dirt or gravel roads. At present, portions of the two main roads within the space are graveled for some distance into the property. Those main roads are located at the east and west edges of the Project Area. On the east, trending north-south, is Sears Ranch Road which provides access to Ray's Ranch and the Guerra-Zanoni Ranch.

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There are larger roads and highways that articulate with the dirt roads on the Project property. State Highway 84 is the direct connection to the east and west dirt roads within the Project Area. Within 10 miles to the west, State Highway 84 intersects Highway 1, a major, if narrow, highway that runs along the coast, connecting places like La Honda with San Francisco, Monterey, and beyond. At its northern, then eastern segments, State Highway 84 leads to greater population centers within the San Francisco peninsula, such as Woodside, Redwood City, Palo Alto, and many others. Major highways connect with Highway 84 in these locations, such as

Interstate 280, Highway 101, and Interstate 880.

Boundary Demarcations

As previously noted, both natural and man-made elements form effective boundaries within the Project Area. There are deep drainages and steep hills that physically divide the land. The three large drainages within the property are roughly north-south trending, which divides the property into north-south portions. The larger land holdings over time have followed this pattern. Once Salvador Castro began to sell some of his Mexican land grant holdings in the 1860s, the parcels followed a similar pattern. In 1868, the estate of John Burns owned much of the land between La Honda and Harrington creeks, Salvador Castro retained the property between Harrington and Bogus [sic] creeks, and Henry Seale owned the northern property between two upper branches of Harrington Creek (Easton 1868). Once these parcels were established, they remained much the same through the many ownership transfers over time. In the 1940s, the Silvas possessed the western property, while the Guerra brothers, Julio and Felix owned and rented out the ranches located on the old John Burns parcel. For much of its history, the Project Area had just two main north-south roads, one on the east and one on the west. There were no main east-west roads other than La Honda Road (State Highway 84), which is just south of and outside the Project Area.



Figure 3. Example of Older, Less Used Road near Guerra-Zanoni Ranch

The Project Area today is extensively fenced, and presumably was in the past. Since the 1990s at least, the property has been owned and managed as one ranch, so all of the pastures, roads,

holdings belonged to one owner. This affects how the lands are managed, controlled, and delimited. Prior to that, there were four separate ranches, but they were located within three separate ownership parcels. So, the Ray's Ranch and the Guerra-Zanoni Ranch were under one ownership during the 1900s (Wm. Hughes, then Guerra brothers), though the two separate ranches were often rented or leased to two different dairymen or ranchers. Fencing would have reflected the ownership boundaries, as well as separate ranch boundaries, just for functional reasons.

Within each ranch, boundaries for pasture and settlement were determined to a large degree by locations of drainages, clearings, and wooded areas. The drainages and forests restricted and defined open spaces for agriculture and domestic habitation.



Figure 4. Ray's Ranch Buildings between Drainages

Vegetation Related to Land Use

In the historic past, the significant vegetation in terms of value to people was of two types – redwoods for lumber and pastureland (grass) for grazing of cows and sheep. The forests are not present now in a form viable for renewed logging. But the grasslands for pasture have expanded over time and have been continuously used since the 1850s at least. The drainages are now lined with oak, pine, and a few second-growth redwood trees.

As for domestic plants, a substantial windbreak composed of eucalyptus and pine trees was planted long ago adjacent to the Guerra-Zanoni Ranch, which is located on an exposed hillside. At Ray's Ranch, at Guerra-Zanoni Ranch, and at the Wool Ranch, domestic flowering plants and ornamental and fruiting trees grow near the ranch houses today. These are also places where people were living until recently. So, they may not represent domesticated vegetation from historic times. The many pastures that exist have been previously discussed.



Figure 5. Pine and Eucalyptus Tree Windbreak at Guerra-Zanoni Ranch

Buildings, Structures, and Objects

As there are five ranch complexes within the Project Area, there are 26 buildings and structures on the property. These are all ranch-related structures that include eight dwellings, eight barns, four sheds, one metal animal shelter, a modern dog kennel, and several corrals. Most of the buildings and structures date to at least the 1940s or 1950s, though others were not constructed until the 1960s or 1970s to 1980s. Dwellings include small to medium ranch houses, bunk houses, a cabin and a cottage. Large and small barns stand on the property, some of which have collapsed in place.

Many of the barns, sheds, and bunk houses were originally constructed of heavy 1 by 12 inch boards and large supporting members and were sided with such boards. Their foundations are short wood posts set on bare ground or on small concrete pyramidal piers. All of such structures are of plain, simple, functional construction and style, meant for ranch and dairy purposes. Over

time, most of them have had their siding replaced by plywood or particle board type sheets. Very few retain their original wood siding.

The older ranch houses (at Ray's Ranch, at Guerra-Zanoni Ranch, and at Upper Folger Ranch) are all vernacular styles and have been greatly altered over time, with additions, window and door and siding replacements over time. The newer ranch houses (Wool Ranch and Lower Folger Ranch) are Ranch-style houses similar to the Ranch-style tract homes so prevalent in suburban housing tracts in the 1960s and 1970s.



Figure 6. Ray's Ranch House, Vernacular style