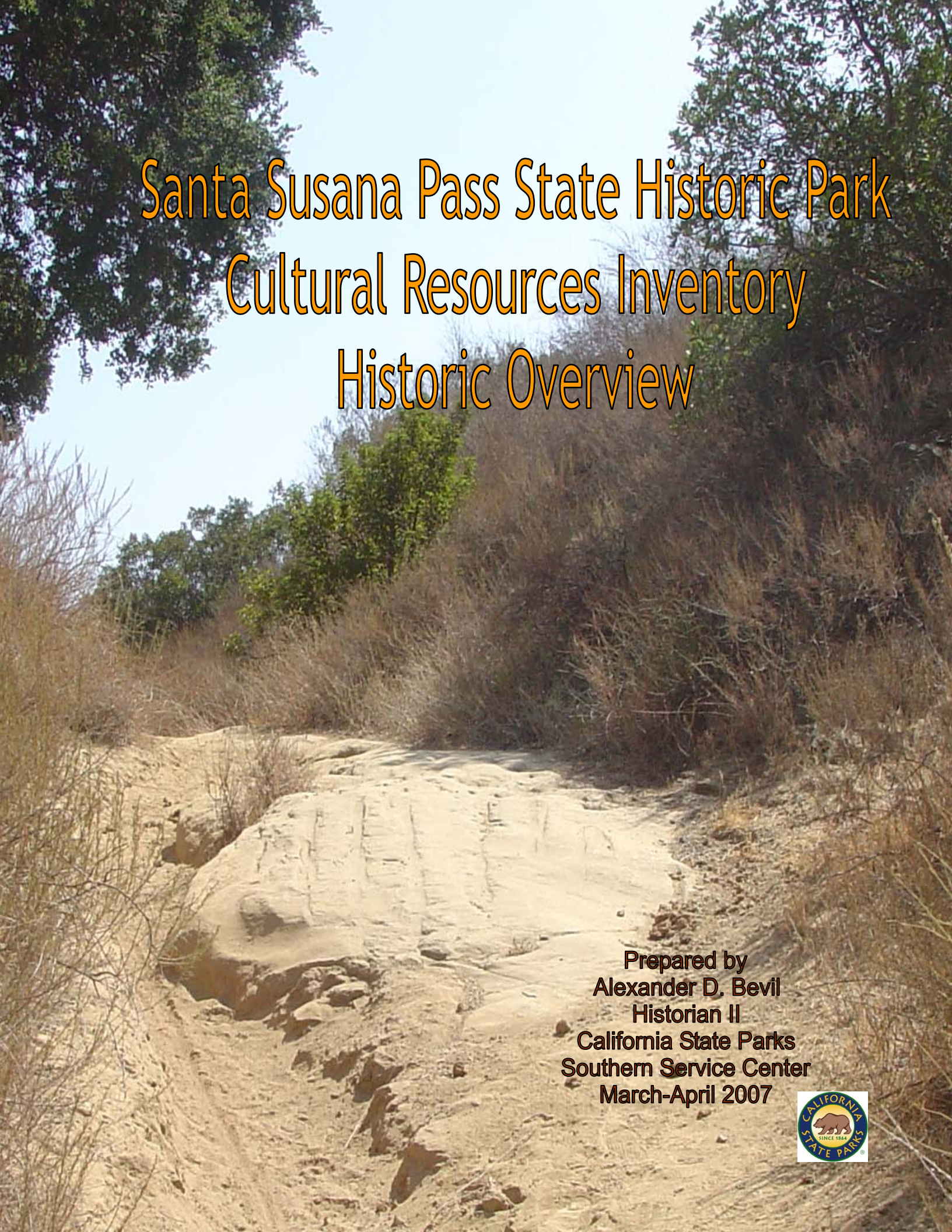

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park
Cultural Resources Inventory
Historic Overview

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Purpose

This section of the report provides preliminary data on the historic resources located at Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. It provides a summary account of historically significant events, personalities and land-use patterns that developed in what is now Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park from the late 18th through the mid-20th century.

SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD —1769-1822

Santa Susana State Historic Park's historical documentation begins with the Spanish colonization of Alta (Upper) California in 1769. That year, on August 5, members of the Gaspar de Portolà Expedition from San Diego were the first Euro-Americans to enter the San Fernando Valley via the Cahuenga Pass. They christened the valley *El Valle de Santa Catalina de Bononia de los Encinos*—the Valley of St. Catherine of the Oaks. According to Miguel Costansó, the groups' cartographer, they traveled eastward to the site of a large Indian village or ranchería near a "very large pool" (present-day Los Encinos State Historical Park in Encino). The expedition's scouts may have ridden north to explore a passable route out of the valley, but it is not known if they explored the Santa Susana Pass area. The steep sandstone cliffs may have dissuaded them. Instead the group followed the advice of native informants and travel northeast along the Simi Hills' southern foothills to another ranchería at the entrance to the San Fernando Pass. Here it left the valley and traveled northwest to the Santa Clara Valley near Camulos, and turned southwest towards Ventura, then onwards up the coast to San Francisco and Monterey bays. After founding a mission and presidio at the latter, the Portolá Expedition reentered San Fernando Valley on January 15, 1770 via Calabasas, and continued along the base of the Santa Monica Mountains' foothills to the Cahuenga Pass, then on to San Diego (Costansó 1992: *xxxvi*, 23-27 and 183).

Four years later, in 1774 and again in 1776, another pioneer Spanish trailblazer, Juan Bautista de Anza, followed Portolà's southern trail on his way north from Mexico to found and settle San Francisco. Anza had traveled four times along the familiar *El Camino Real* (Sp., The Royal Road) that linked Spain's southern and northern California missions, forts and settlements. Like Costansó, Anza's diary does not mention the Santa Susana Pass area. It would take at least 28 years before the Spanish would be interested in using the pass (Costansó 1992:*xxxvi*, 23-27 and 183; Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 57 and 173; Guerrero 2006:60-62, 166-168, 200 and 210-211; and Roderick 2001: 20).

Some nine years after the Anza expedition's trek through the valley, in 1785, the Spanish colonial government granted Francisco Reyes, a concession for a *rancho* or tract of land in the valley.[1] Reyes' *Rancho Los Encinos*, was situated near the Indian ranchería of *Achois Comihavit*.[2] Here Reyes built a house and ran his and other Los Angelinos' livestock. The Reyes ranch's westernmost boundaries may have included the Santa Susana Pass. Across the pass, adjoining *Rancho Los Encinos* was another Spanish ranch, 62,132-acre *San José de Gracia de Simí*, which was granted to Francisco Javier, Miguel and Patricio Pico in 1795 and 1821. Reyes' tenure was short-lived, though. Sometime prior to September 8, 1797, he had to relinquish the land to Misión San Fernando Rey de España. The 17th of 21 missions built along El Camino Real between 1769 and 1822, the mission's location in the valley's northeastern quadrant helped to fill the seventy-mile gap between Missions San Gabriel and San Buenaventura. One of the most prosperous, it supplied agricultural produce and products such as olive oil, dates, wheat, wool, and leather hides to Los Angeles and Mission Santa Barbara. While the San Fernando mission became an economic and communication nexus, there were no other settlements in the valley during the Spanish Period other than outlying ranching stations used to monitor the mission's herds. No doubt mission cattle wandered and grazed on land that is now part of the State Park. Mission and later secular *pastores* (Sp. sheepherders) often led large herds of cattle and sheep through the pass to their seasonal pasturage (Bancroft 1963:561-562, 612, and 661-663; Cowan 1977:34 and 98; Knight 1997:3; Pitt 2000:447; and Robinson 1948:55).

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[1] Reyes would become the alcalde of the Los Angeles pueblo, from 1793 to 1795. See: Bancroft 1963:661.

[2] This should not be confused with Rancho Encino, the precursor of the present-day community of Encino, which was a later Mexican land grant (1845) to local Indians Ramon, Francisco, and Roque. See: Cowan 1977:34. Sometime prior to 1810, Reyes obtained a land concession near Mission La Purisima in place of El Encino. See: Bancroft 1966a:172.

A former Indian trail, the pass and mountain range were named after St. Susana, a 3rd Century Roman Catholic martyr. However, it had many names: *El Camino de Santa Susana y Simí* (The Saint Susan and Simi Road); *El Puerto Zuelo de Santa Susana* (The Narrow Pass of Saint Susan); *El Arroyo de Santa Susana* (The Stream of Saint Susan); *Sierra de Santa Susana* (the Mountains of Saint Susan); and *Bajas de Santa Susana* (Lowlands of Saint Susan). The first recorded mention of the pass was in on April 27, 1804. Father José Señan of Mission San Buenaventura suggested to Provincial Governor José Joaquín de Arrillaga that the pass might be a viable shorter route from his mission to Mission San Fernando via the Simi Valley than El Camino Real (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 57-58 and 173; Engelhardt: 2006; Pitt 2000:456 and 447; Señan 1804:1; and WordReference 2006).

MEXICAN REPUBLIC PERIOD—1822-1848

After Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1822, Alta California became part of the northwestern territory of the Republic of Mexico. As it had during the earlier Spanish Colonial era, the Santa Susana Pass continued to serve as an important transportation and communications link connecting Los Angeles to Santa Barbara via the San Fernando Valley. So much so, that in 1822 Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola asked Father Francisco González de Ibarra to furnish men and tools from Mission San Fernando to "widen and improve the highway through the Santa Susana Pass" to accommodate ox-driven carts or carretas. In addition to carrying mission goods, the pass saw an increasing amount of traffic by Rancheros, owners of large tracts of land moving huge herds of cattle and sheep between grazing ranges (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 58; and Keffer 1934:30).

The increase in privately produced agricultural goods through the Santa Susana Pass road reflects a marked shift in the control of the region's economic and political power from the former Spanish religious missions and military presidios to private ranch owners. In an effort to foster settlement, the Mexican government passes the Colonization Law and *Reglamento* (Regulation) in 1824 and 1828, respectively, which granted Mexican citizens title to unoccupied lands within the republic. The early Spanish concessionaires applied for ownership to insure their holdings, followed by several others, both native and foreign-born. These *rancheros* soon owned vast tracts of land where they ran hundreds of head of cattle, horses, and sheep. As had the mission padres before them, the *rancheros* bartered the cut hides and tallow for manufactured goods brought by trading vessels. In part, the *ranchos* were intended to counter and reduce the influence of the former Spanish mission ranchos. This was particularly true after the Mexican

government passed the 1833 Secularization Act, which was supposed to redistribute the ranchos to the local Christianized Indians. However, the Indians' inability to manage the land led to their abandonment. The result was a "land rush" to California and a shift in population from the urban pueblos to the more rural ranchos. By 1842, over 300 ranchos had been carved out of the former mission lands. Over fifty of these were located throughout the Greater Los Angeles area (Cowan 1977:4-5; Pitt 2000:419-421; and Robinson 1948:13; and 30-31).

Between 1840 and 1846 six separate land grants were carved out of the former Rancho Misión San Fernando Rey de España. Eulogio de Célis was the first to acquire the entire 116,858-acre ranch for an estimated $14,000. Further encroachments in the valley included *Tujunga* (1840), *El Escorpión* (1845), *El Encino* (1845), *La Providencia* (1845) and *Cahuenga* (1846). Two of these grants, *Ranchos Ex-Mission San Fernando* and *El Escorpión*, reportedly extended into what is now Santa Susana Pass SHP, as well as the previously mentioned *San José de Gracia de Simí*, which extended into the Park's western boundary. In 1842 the Mexican governor had regranted the tract to Manuel and Patricio Pico. By 1865, José de la Guerra y Noriega of Santa Barbara held a reduced claim to 113,009 acres. As the result of faulty titles or surveys, parts of the ranchos within Santa Susana State Historic Park reverted to the public domain, eventually making them available for homesteading (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 58; and Cowan 1977:10, 34, 64 and 78).

The Santa Susana Pass may have played a role in California's first gold. In 1842 gold was discovered accidentally near the headwaters of Santa Clara River, some 35 miles northeast of Mission San Fernando.[3] While not as widespread or international in scope as the later 1848 to 1849 gold rush in northern California, it did precipitate a minor influx of gold seekers. Some may even have utilized the old mission trail through the pass down into the San Fernando Valley. However, there is no known evidence so far to substantiate this claim (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:58).

[3] The site is located and commemorated in Placerita Canyon State Park.

U.S.-MEXICO WAR—1846-1848

Growing tension over an unresolved Texas-Mexico border and a policy of westward expansion resulted in the United States of America declaring war on the Republic of Mexico on May 13, 1846. While the major land battles were fought between Monterrey and Mexico City, the United States planned to invade and capture California by sea and land. After the capture of Monterey on July 7, 1846, Commodore Robert Stockton proceeded south to San Pedro, where he landed with a force of 400 men to advance upon and occupy Los Angeles. After conducting guerrilla warfare against Marine Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie and his fifty man garrison, the Los Angelinos were able to retake their town. However, the resulting battles at Rancho Dominguez, San Gabriel River, and La Mesa resulted in Stockton's recapture of the pueblo. On January 13, 1848, Mexican Military Commander of California Andrés Pico capitulated to Lieutenant Colonel John C. Frémont at the Cahuenga Pass, signing a treaty that formally ending the fighting in California (Pitt 2000:327; Harlow 1982:146, 162, 209, and 216-217; and Rolle 1979:98-99 and 102-103).

There has been some conjecture as to Lt. Col. Frémont's route on his way south to participate in the Treaty of Cahuenga Pass. In 1939, the Native Daughters of the Golden West believed that Fremont had utilized the Santa Susana Pass; a statement that appears in subsequent descriptions of the pass's historic significance. Fremont and his men however traveled in a northeasterly direction from Mission San Buenaventura along the Santa Clarita River drainage to the treacherous Cuesta Vieja, or Old Grade, a pass near present-day Newhall. Here they entered the San Fernando Valley and advanced along the old mission road to San Fernando, where they camped from January 11th to the 13th, before proceeding on to Cahuenga Pass. After the fall of Mexico City and the February 2, 1848 signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico formally ceded California, as well as what are now the states of Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico to the United States (Beck 1974:11, Bryant 1849; Harrington 1876; LAT 1939c:10; and Pitt 2000:327).

EARLY STATEHOOD PERIOD—1850-1860

The Santa Susana Pass's importance as a transportation corridor increased after the United States acquired Alta California after winning the war with Mexico. As increasing numbers of settlers began arriving into the region, primarily during the 1849 Gold Rush, the Territorial and later state and local governments began to realize the need for improved highway routes. This was especially true for the

subsequent handling of passengers, freight, and especially mail between Los Angeles and San Francisco's burgeoning seaport. Meeting the need was a number of private coach companies, which hoped to obtain lucrative contracts carrying the U.S. Mail as well as passengers and freight. Three years after improvements were made to the horse path through the Cahuenga Pass in 1851, Phineas Banning was the first to traverse the eastern San Fernando Valley with supply wagons from Los Angeles to Ft. Tejon by way of the San Fernando Pass. In 1858 the Concorde coaches of the famous Butterfield Overland Mail Company provided mail and passenger service along this route, linking St. Louis, Missouri to San Francisco, California. Geronimo and Catalina López operated the first stage way station in the Valley at Lopez Station. Located in the hills just west of the former mission, coaches arrived there three times a week for Los Angeles. An alternate route in and out of the Valley connecting Los Angeles to the coastal towns was the Coast Road. Following along much of the former El Camino Real, old timers still referred to the "new" public highway as "*El Camino Viejo*," the old road (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 59; Goldman 1973a:15; Pitt 2000:38 and 68; and Roderick 2001: 30-32).

SANTA SUSANA PASS WAGON ROAD "REDISCOVERED"

Because the Coast Route ran close to the beaches and low-lying marsh areas along the shoreline, it was often prone to flooding during storms and high tides; so much so that an alternative by-pass route would be necessary. On July 11, 1859, the *Sacramento Union* reported that "an important discovery was made by some hunters of a pass or road over the [Coast Range] mountains near Santa Barbara. It is not known if the article was referring to the Santa Susana Pass. However, it did state that "the road was passable on horseback." It also described the road as "strewn [with the] fragments of old wagons and '*carretas*' along at intervals." The article surmised that the road through the pass "was made and used by the Mission Fathers, and that large timber, etc., were carried over it many years past." The article fails to mention whether it was referring to the Santa Susana Pass or the San Marcos Pass north of Santa Barbara through the Santa Ynez Mountains. However, the stagecoaches did not utilize the latter until 1868, eight years after the Santa Susana Pass Road was completed. Therefore it is possible that the article was referring to the former pass (SU 1859:n.p.; and Kummel 1997).

In 1859 the California Legislature appropriated $15,000 towards improving the Santa Susana Pass Wagon Road. In addition, the Counties of Los Angeles and Santa Barbara (Ventura County would not be incorporated until 1873) contributed funds to the project, which included improvements to the wagon road between the Santa Barbara County line and Los Angeles. Their reasoning was that an improved wagon road would serve the greater public good by stimulating commerce and settlement between the counties. In 1859, local contractors T. W. More and James P. Thompson were awarded the road building contracts for the respective Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County sections. Because More could not meet his deadline, Thompson completed the Santa Barbara section in 1861. The wagon road shaved 15 miles off the old Coast Route by providing an alternative coastal route via Santa Paula up through the Simi Valley to the Santa Susana Pass, and onward to San Fernando and Los Angeles. It was fortuitous that the improvements and mail contract had been completed and initiated at this time. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 disrupted U. S. Mail service between the Eastern states and the federal government along the Butterfield Overland Stage Company's southern route to Southern California. To compensate, the U.S. Postal Service had contracted the Butterfield Company to carry mail from San Francisco to Los Angeles via this route. By doing so, it kept an important line of communication open between Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles during the war (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 60-63 and 173-174; Goldman 1973a:16-17; Roderick 2001: 31; and Ventura 2004).

James P. and Manuelita Thomson, ca. 1860
Source: Los Encinos 2006

JAMES P. THOMPSON IMPROVES PASS ROAD—1858-1861

It was after the completion of the new road improvements through the Santa Susana Pass that the first recorded individuals of historic note become associated with Santa Susana State Historic Park, as well as the naming of the downgrade from the Santa Susana Pass as "The Devil's Slide." As mentioned previously, James P. Thompson was awardee of the mail contract and was directly responsible

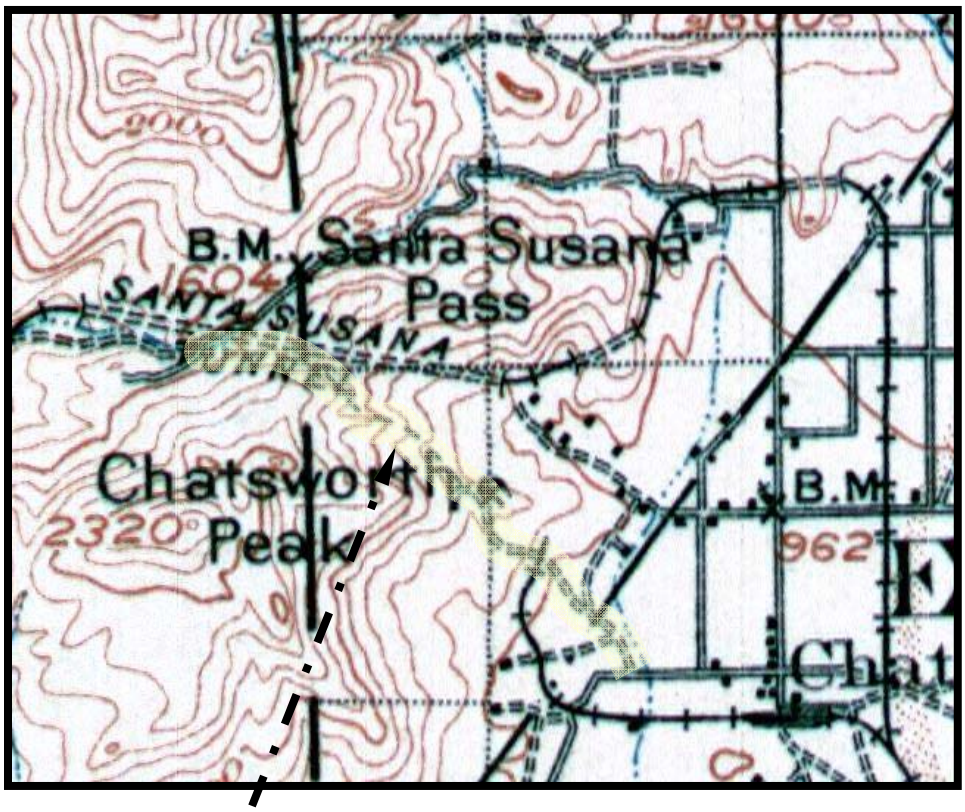
for overseeing the road's initial improvement. A well-known local San Fernando Valley resident at the time, Thompson had married Manuelita de la Osa, elder daughter of Vicente, grandee of Rancho El Encino. Thompson had made a reputation for himself after he participated in capturing the notorious highway bandit Juan Flores in 1857, reportedly at the Santa Susana Pass. He also served as Los Angeles County sheriff, jailer, and tax collector. Under the supervision of both the Santa Barbara and Los Angeles Counties Road Commissioners, Thompson had directed laborers to drill and blast out sections of the flanking sandstone cliffs to widen the road down from the pass. This would have entailed hammering steel rods to drill holes into the sandstone walls protruding along the route. Filled with blasting powder, the subsequent explosions widened the road so that a team of four horses could pull a wagon along the road. Although Thompson and his crew began work in June 1860, heavy rains impeded their work during the winter, delaying the road's completion until April 1, 1861. The remaining section of road connecting Los Angeles wasn't completed until the fall. The first overland mail stage coach to utilize the pass did so on April 6, 1861. It had made the run between San Francisco and Los Angles in 72 hours (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:173-174).

THE DEVIL'S SLIDE—1861-1895

Despite the road widening and other improvements, the portion of the road downgrade from the pass into the San Fernando Valley was precipitous, to say the least. Mrs. Gertrude Black, who described her 1884 trip down the grade in a 1964 *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly* article:

> The steep part of the road on the Chatsworth side was called the Devil's Slide; it connected with what is now Lilac Lane, following it down to the present highway on the west side of the pass .... The stage drivers were Mexicans [sic] or men also used to bad mountain roads. They were a colorful lot with their open shirts, big hats and sinister looking blacksnake whips, which they cracked menacingly over the backs of their teams . . . . Most of the settlers where not so expert and took the upgrades more slowly. All passengers in the vehicle generally walked up the steep places, carrying rocks to put behind the hind wheels when the horses tired and needed to get their wind. Going down hill the timid ones again walked. But now the two wheels on either side were firmly tied together with strong rope or chains to help with the braking. During these years much produce was hauled to Los Angeles [from Simi Valley]. A heavy load was usually divided at the foot of the grade. One half was taken over, deposited at the top or at the bottom on the other side. Then the

driver would go back, load up and take the rest over, load the first half again and proceed. Sometimes an extra team would take part over and return when the load was finally adjusted. Or extra horses might be added to get the load over the hill, and the extra horses returned to the ranch (Quoted in Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 174).



Route of Devil's Slide Portion of the 1860-1895 Stagecoach Road
Source: U.S. Topographic Map
Chatsworth Quad, 7.5, 1903/1912

Local teamsters faced with the prospect of runaway wagons were, according to Mrs. Black's contemporary, local businessman and writer Harris Newmark, "compelled to use a windlass or other contrivance to let down [their] wagon[s] safely, and likely will never forget the real perils of the descent." First, they blindfolded the horses, usually nearly wild mustangs, so as not to spook them. Second, there were a series of steps cut into the sandstone bedrock along the road. Thompson's crew had installed them to prevent the horses from losing their footing. Third, drivers used extreme measures to secure the rear wheels so that the wagons didn't run way. If the driver relied on brakes alone, there would be, as one passenger described, "a streak of fire" as the brake shoes rubbing along the wagon

wheels' iron rims overheated. Among the techniques used to slow down their descent, drivers used chains to augment the wooden brakes, which often slipped when locked while they stopped to rest the horses. The other was what was called a "wolf walk," used to prevent the wagon from running into the team on the way down.

Similar to the latter, it consisted of chaining a rear wheel in place to the wagon's brake rod. A wooden timber placed through the rear spokes locked both wheels under the chassis. During this drive the driver had to secure the wagon in place by some other means, while he or a helper changed the timber's position. If not, the wheels' iron tires would wear out unevenly. A recent inspection of the sandstone road bed reveals the presence of wheel gouges cut into the sandstone, especially along the "steps" along the exposed roadbed. Evidence of wheel gouges, drill holes, and blasting can also be found in the sandstone bedrock and hillside along a section of a current foot and equestrian trail west of Santa Susana State Historic Park's southern entrance near the Lassen Street and Andorra Avenue intersection.

Examples of Wagons in Use during the Late 1800s in the American West
Sources: Left—Fraser 2005; Right—Hansen 2006

The latter is not included on the 1971 National Register nomination; however, these and other features cut into the stone, such as drainage channels, pick marks, drill holes, and wheel channels, are character-defining features similar to those found along the Devil's Slide. All of which suggests that this section of road dates back to at least 1860 and may have been in use until 1895. Historic maps suggest that this may have been part of the main or an alternate route for coaches traveling to and from the Encino Station (Bannon 1974:24; Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 174-175; Besson 1971:2; and Watson 2004).

The Santa Susana Pass Road continued to be a viable alternative to the El Camino Viejo (the former El Camino Real) route from 1861 to 1875. So much so that it replaced the older road as the main route between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Sterling M. Holdredge's 1866 guidebook listed the San Jose and Los Angeles Stage Lines Company running regularly scheduled passenger coaches from the north via the Santa Susana Pass every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Likewise, stagecoaches from San Buenaventura also utilized the pass on their way to and from Los Angeles (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 174-175; Besson 1971:2; and Watson 2004).

While the discussion so far has been on the portion of the wagon/stage road within Santa Susana State Historic Park, this would be a good place to describe the entire Southern California route during its 1860-1893 period of historic significance in order to help place it in its proper context. From Los Angeles, the stage road traveled through the Cahuenga Pass to San Fernando. From here, it split off the road to Ft. Tejon (near present-day Burbank) to Encino Ranch. The passenger fare for the 18-mile ride so far was $1.50. Besides serving as a place to change horses, the stage station at the Encino Ranch was a "Home Station." This meant that it was owned and managed by the station manager and his family who offered meals and overnight accommodations for passengers, coach drivers, and other line employees. If a passenger was traveling beyond Encino, he would have to pay an additional $4 for the next 14 miles up over the Santa Susana Pass to the Mountain Station. The site lies somewhere near the southwestern-most mouth of the current Railroad Tunnel #26 (outside Santa Susana State Historic Park). It was also named "Larry's Mountain Station" after its resident manager, Lawrence Howard. Here passengers could rest and eat, while the driver and station manager changed horses for the downhill ride. Crossing the Arroyo Simi, the next stops were at Tierra Rejada (near MoorPark), Las Posas (Somis), Saticoy, San Buenaventura, Rincon Point, and Santa Barbara (Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 63-64 and 177; Goldman 1973b:29; Hutchinson 1962: n.p.; Roderick 2001:31).

Conditions at the stage stations were often primitive. Writing about her experience traveling by coach from Ventura to Los Angeles, a Mrs. Clifford (first name unknown) described what it was like having a quick meal at one of the stations (possibly Larry's) before continuing on her journey:

> There was nothing remarkable about the supper we took that night except the bats that kept coming in at the front door in a perfectly

> free-and-easy manner, swarming about our heads till they thought they knew us, and then settling in their favorite nooks and corners. Noticing my untiring endeavors to prevent them from inspecting my head and face too closely, the station keeper observed that people were 'most always afraid of them things when they first come,' but that they 'needent fright of them; they wouldn't hurt nobody.' The rest of the night was passed inside the stage, though of sleep there was no thought, such jolting and jumping over rocks and boulders; I ache all over to think of it even now! Just before daybreak we entered the City of the Angels (HBR n.d.:459).

RITA DE LA OSA AND THE STAGE COACH SWING STATION AT LA CUESTA—1858-1895

Local tradition insists that a member of the De la Osa family operated an additional stage coach station within Santa Susana State Historic Park from 1867 to 1877. Bob Besson, historian for the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association, reportedly found a listing in Los Angeles County Land Title Book 15 which showed the son of Doña María, Fabricio de la Osa, owning land in the Santa Susana Pass area as early as 1858. Frank M. Keffrer's 1934 book, *History of San Fernando Valley*, suggests that his mother, the recently widowed María Rita Guillen de la Osa, opened the station in the early 1860s. Both mother and son were descendants of a noted pioneer Spanish / Mexican-American family.[4] The family's patriarch, Mexico City-born Don José Pablo de la Osa, had been an envoy to the United States during the 1830s. His son, San Diego-born José Vicente de los Reyes de la Osa, had migrated to Los Angeles in 1832 where he served on the pueblo's *ayuntamiento*, or town council, as *regidor* (councilman), *secretario* (secretary), and *síndico* (attorney) from 1832 to 1835. Don José married María Rita Perez Guillen at San Gabriel Archangel Mission on June 19, 1832. Doña Maria's mother, Elualia Perez de Guillen Doña Elualia, held the honorable title, Keeper of the Key, at the mission, and had been awarded land that now includes much of the city of Pasadena for her services (Bancroft 1966b:635; Goldman 1973b:22; Raffetto 1985: 121, note 4; and Northrop 1984:193-194).

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[4] The family surname's spelling varies in the public record from "de la Osa" to "de la Ossa." Basque in origin, the name means "from the town of Osa", which is in Navarre, an autonomous province in Spain. However, Raffetto states that the name is "traceable to the 1600's, [with] coat of arms [which] carries the seven stars of the bear constellation Ursus Minor." The Castilian word for bear is "oso." See: Raffetto 1985: 121, note 4.

On March 23, 1843, 35-year-old Vicente and his 26-year-old San Diego-born wife applied for and received a Mexican land grant: *Rancho la Providencia* (present-day Burbank). The first non-California Indian family to live in the San Fernando Valley, the De la Osas ran cattle, farmed and raised their large family at their 4,064 acre ranch, which included part of the original Rancho Portesuelo, until 1849. That year debt-ridden Don Vicente sold the ranch to Alexander Bell and David W. Alexander, the first Anglo-Americans to purchase land in the valley. Don Vicente used the money from the sale to purchase 4,438-acre *Rancho El Encino*, which was in arrears from non-payment of back taxes. The De la Osa's improved the property by erecting a nine-room adobe home next to the Encino spring. As mentioned previously, the De la Osa adobe at La Cuesta adobe became a way station for travelers along El Camino Viejo, especially those traveling north to the California gold fields (Bancroft 1969:634, note 13; Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 177, 184 and 189; Cowan 1977:34; Goldman 1973a: 14-22; Goldman 1973b: 22-29; McGroarty 1935:675-676; Northrop 1976:193-194; Raffetto 1985: 1 – 11; and Roderick 2001: 31).

In 1851 Don Vicente's eldest daughter, María Manuela married James P. Thompson. Their wedding present consisted of Rancho La Brea, where they lived for a while. Thompson, whether by design or coincidence, was awarded the contract to widen and improve the Santa Susana Pass Road. However, Thompson didn't start work on the road until June 1860, and the first scheduled stage coaches didn't roll through until the following year. Perhaps Fabricio, who was only 19 years old, was acting as a proxy for his brother-in-law, who, as Los Angeles County sheriff and tax collector (1858-1859), would have been intimate with the Los Angeles road commissioners. The road project would make benefited himself and his in-law's business interests. First, it would be beneficial to his mother-in-law, the recently widowed Doña Rita de la Osa, who had reportedly taken over the Encino station's operations. The station's location at the southeastern approach to the new Santa Susana Pass Road would increase the family's chances of acquiring another contract to supply horses, feed, and other supplies for another overland mail contractor. However, by the time the station was operational, the relationship between Thompson and the De la Osas had deteriorated (Census 1870; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:173-174 and 189; and Goldman 1973b:27-28).

The cause of the rift between Thompson and the De la Osa family was caused by personal loss and money problems. Because of torrential rains and subsequent drought period during the 1860s, the Encino Ranch suffered the loss of hundreds of head of cattle and horses. To help defray costs and taxes, Thompson loaned money to his mother-in-law, who gave him a lien on the ranch. Around 1867 or

1868 Thompson, who was away on business in San Francisco, suffered the loss of his wife and newborn twins due to illness at La Brea. Thompson's grief was extremely short-lived; he immediately married Francisca Sepulveda. By doing so, he alienated his late wife's family. Adding to this was Thompson's foreclosure on his loans to Doña Rita, which resulted in his suing his mother-in-law for $3,500. Unable to come up with the money, she was forced to sell the ranch to Thompson. Thompson may have manipulated the court to decide in his favor. After winning title to the ranch, Thompson sold it for $9,000 in 1871 to Eugene Garnier, who made substantial improvements during his occupancy (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:189; and Goldman 1973b:27-28).

After the foreclosure, Doña Rita relocated her family, which included adopted daughter Mary Aiken (later Zorriaquinos), to live with her son Fabricio and 25-year-old daughter-in-law Teodora Davila to the adobe at the base of the Santa Susana Pass. Doña Rita was reportedly "employed by the Overland Mail Company to run a station at Chatsworth". Also known as *La Cuesta*, the crude adobe house was part of a "Swing Station;" where fresh horses were kept in a nearby corral. They would be ready for use in transferring teams for arriving coaches before proceeding up or down from the pass. The station also housed and maintained various tack and other gear necessary to keep the stage line operating. Besides the adobe and corral, the La Cuesta way station featured rock-lined cisterns or *pilas* (Sp., a large water basin, like that of a fountain) that collected runoff from a nearby natural spring. Previously discovered clinkers (burned coal) near the upper foundations suggest that the station also featured a blacksmith forge. The De la Osas would have been supplying horses to William E. Lovett, who acquired the mail contract in 1867. Lovett, who had taken over the operations of the San Jose and Los Angeles Stage Lines Company, continued to carry passengers and mail between the two destinations via the Santa Susana Pass as well as from Los Angeles to San Diego. Lovett's stage coach service was known as the "Coast Line of Stages" and the "San Juan-Los Angeles Stage Co" north and south of San Buenaventura, respectively. By now through service had been reestablished between Los Angeles and St. Louis, Missouri. Therefore, Lovett's line was an important link in carrying overland mail and passengers as it had been prior to the Civil War. "New, improved coaches" had been introduced along the route "for the more perfect convenience of travelers, and [which] shortened the time in which trips were made." Lovett sold his operation in 1869 to his new brother-in-law, Llewellyn Bixby, who operated under the aegis Flint, Bixby & Company and continued to maintain the line (Besson 1971:2; Census 1870: Ciolek-Torrello 2001: 63-64 and 189 and 191; Cowan 1977:149; Elliot 1979:20; Goldman 1973a: 19; Goldman 1973b:29 and 33; Jackson 1974:254 and 257; Keffer 1934:n.p.; Marinacci 1997:265; Northrop 1976:158; and Roderick 2001:31).

Joseph W. Bannon, whose father would acquire the De la Osa adobe at La Cuesta in 1891, confided in a 1974 letter to the Chatsworth Historical Society that his mother told him that the stage way station was "pretty wild habitation—pretty rough from the accounts that she'd been given. And Old Gabe Allen ... said that when he first came out there that if you wanted to get into a gambling game or a fight or just go up and get good and drunk, why that was the place to go." However, he may have mistakenly been referring to Larry's Mountain Station on the Simi Valley side of the pass. There is no indication that the De la Osa adobe/swing station was ever used as an inn or roadhouse (Bannon 1974:9; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:184; and Goldman 1973:30).

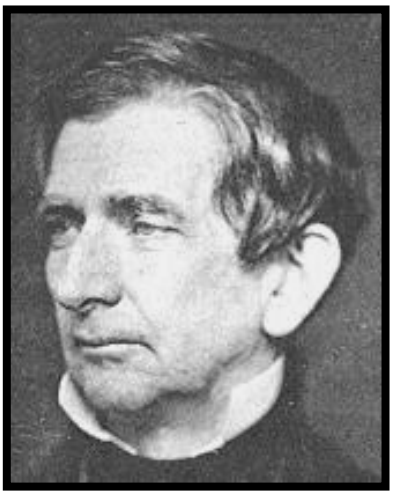
It is not known how long Doña María de la Osa lived in the area. Neils and Ann Johnson, who homesteaded nearby in the mid-1870s, stated that "Our nearest neighbor, [was] a fine Spanish family [who], lived at the foot of the hills." Local reports have her living within what is now Santa Susana State Historic Park until at least 1880, when she was actively involved in the founding of the Chatsworth Park Elementary School. She lived to be 92 years of age, and was buried at Mission San Gabriel on September 16, 1908. While the original De la Osa stage relay station had been subsequently altered and demolished, there was enough physical evidence for its inclusion as a contributing element to the Santa Susana Pass Road/Devil's Slide 1971 National Register designation. Besides its association with the western San Fernando Valley's transportation history, it is significant for its association with members of a pioneering family whose collective experience spans the Spanish Colonial, Mexican Republic, and early American periods of California history. Further study of the De la Osa family, especially Fabricio and his mother's working relationship at La Cuesta, may provide a model for interpreting the stage coach station's day to day operation during its period of historic significance (Besson 1971:1; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:175, 184 and 189-190; and Raffetto 1985:15).

Doña Rita de la Osa, 1880
Source: Cal Archives

THOMAS ROBERT BARD AND WILLIAM SEWARD'S WILD RIDE

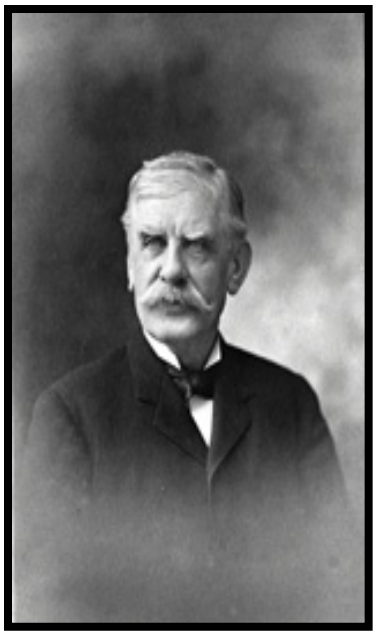
Doña María may have come in contact with several noted personalities while operating the Santa Susana Pass Road/Chatsworth Stage Relay Station. The most famous was William Seward, retired Secretary of State under the late President

Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. Among his accomplishments, he had negotiated the United States' purchase of Alaska from Imperial Russia in 1867. Steward, along with his wife and son making a tour of California to celebrate his retirement from public service. His itinerary included sailing south from San Francisco to San Diego, where he would travel by overland coach back to San Francisco. Prompted by his pending arrival, local Santa Barbara Republicans argued that Steward should arrive in their town in a style befitting his status. They also wanted him and his party to arrive early, with plenty of time for "specifying and cold collations" afterward. To accomplish this, they turned to someone they thought best for the job, Thomas Robert Bard. A member of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, Bard would meet the Steward party in Los Angeles and transport them back to Santa Barbara in an open carriage. Bard also guaranteed that he would have them there in just one day, a remarkable feat in its day considering the route and terrain (Hutchinson 1962: n.p.).



William Seward
Source: Wikipedia

If anyone could accomplish such a feat, Bard could. While most men preferred to ride on horseback, Bard's modus for travel was a rugged spring wagon. Often referred to as the horse-drawn forerunner of the modern station wagon, a spring wagon was suspended on elliptical springs and featured tall narrow wheels. Often fitted with a canopy top, it also came with removable cushioned passenger seats that could be removed for carrying light cargo. From the description of Bard's use of the spring wagon, he may have been using a version known as a "mountain spring wagon.. Bard's use of the vehicle was legendary among locals. He had recently made the thirty-nine mile trip between Point Hueneme and Santa Barbara in four hours flat, driving at night along the often wave-washed coast road (Ibid.; Sears 1908:108; and Phil 2004).



U.S. Senator
Thomas Robert Bard
Source: U. S.
Congress 2006

A unique individual in his own right, prior to his coming to California in 1864, the twenty-seven-year-old Bard had studied law in his native Pennsylvania before securing a position with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. After serving as assistant superintendent of the Cumberland Valley Railroad, he became involved in the grain business at Hagerstown, Maryland. Immediately after the outbreak of the Civil War, Bard left his position and volunteered as a scout in the Union Army, and was involved in repelling Confederate incursions into Maryland and Pennsylvania. After the war, he moved to San Buenaventura where he became a noted figure in local business and politics. As mentioned previously, he was a member of the Santa Barbara County board of supervisors, which he served from 1868-1873. During this time he was instrumental in laying out the town and port of Hueneme and served on the 1871 commission to organize Ventura County. Bard's earlier coastal surveys would result in the building of Bard's Wharf at Hueneme. Completed in 1872, it would serve to develop the port into a major agricultural entrepot. From 1886-1887 Bard served as director of the State Board of Agriculture. On March 4, 1899 local Republicans elected him to the United States Senate to fill a vacancy. During his one term (1900 to 1905) he served on two committees: Fisheries and Irrigation. Bard died and was buried at his home estate, "Berylwood," in Hueneme on March 5, 1915 (Congress 2004; and Hueneme 2004).

Instead of using his own travel-worn wagon, Bard borrowed one from a friend that had a passenger seat and a better paint job. He also made sure that there were enough fresh horses along the route at the various stage relay stations. On September 20, 1869 Bard left his Ojai ranch with his majordomo, Ramon Ayala with several *vaqueros*. Bard and his party left the Bella Union Hotel at Los Angeles on September 22 at 7 a.m. After exchanging horses at the Encino Station, he drove "hell-bent-for-leather" diagonally across the arid San Fernando plain towards the Santa Susana Pass. Somewhere near the De la Osa adobe, two of Ayala's men met the wagon. Each man cast his rope or *riata* around each side of the front axle and securing the end around their saddle horns, they moved ahead guiding Bard's team up the Devil's Slide. At the top of the grade they released the wagon and waited courteously while he proceeded down towards Larry's Station, which he reached at 11:30 a.m. After an hour's delay

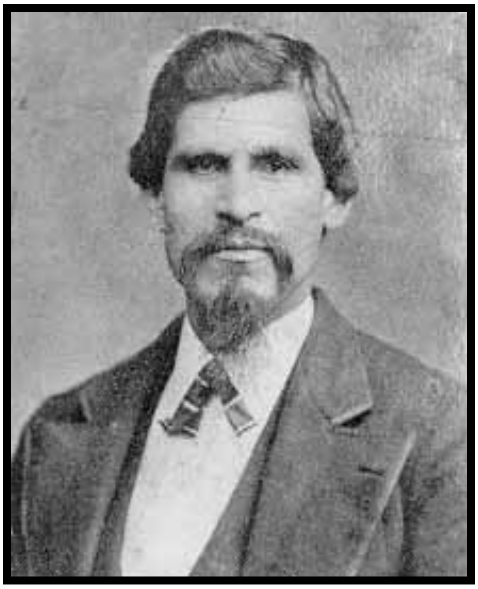
Modern Replica of a Standard Late 19th Century Two-horse Led Spring Wagon
Sources: KG Enterprises 2006

having to deal with bridling unbroken horses, Bard rode on to Santa Barbara in record time. His thirteen-hour ride averaged eight and one-half miles an hour over questionable "roads," a feat no other driver, private, commercial, or military, could match until the coming of the gasoline-powered automobile (Hutchinson 1962: n.p.).

BANDITS' LAIR—1857-1875

Other contemporizes of Doña María associated with the Chatsworth/Simi hills area were two notorious bandits, Juan Flores and Tiburcio Vásquez. Wanted for rustling, robbing, and murder, they conducted separate reins of terror in the Los Angeles and Anaheim areas between 1857 and 1875. Their crimes inaugurated the most extensive vigilante action and exacerbated relations between the Anglo and Mexican-American communities. After escaping from San Quentin in 1856, Juan Flores organized one of the largest bandit operations in Southern California history. As many as fifty Mexican-Americans from San Luis Obispo to San Juan Capistrano joined his ring. After a string of robberies and murders, against Hispanic as well as Anglos, an area-wide manhunt resulted in Flores' capture somewhere near the Santa Susana Pass in February 1857. He was summarily hanged in Los Angeles on February 14, 1857 (Kielbasa 1997; Pitt 1966: 167-170; and Pitt 2000:153).

Thirteen years later, Tiburcio Vásquez, conducted another rein of organized robbery and mayhem. Reportedly hiding out in the area between Tejon and Santa Susana Pass, where he reportedly was a frequent visitor to Larry's Station, which he supposedly robbed as many times as he paid for his meals. The validity of this somewhat whimsical statement has yet to be confirmed. While outlaws did frequent the Santa Susana Pass area, there is no indication that Vásquez or anyone else ever held up a stage coach running between the San Fernando and Simi Valleys. Vásquez was eventually captured in what is now the West Hollywood area in 1874, and extradited to San Jose, where he was tried and sentenced to death on March 19, 1875 (Monroy 1990:214-218).



Tiburcio Vásquez
Source: Santa Cruz Public Library

Vasquez, Flores and other contemporary Mexican-American outlaws like Pancho Daniel and Joaquin Murrieta represent a turbulent and often violent era in California's early statehood, as it evolved from a

Mexican province into an Anglicized American state between 1850 and 1880. The resulting period of economic, political, and social anomie was fraught with wrenching change, lawlessness and injustice toward Hispanic Californians and Mexican immigrants. Adored by some as guerrilla fighters, vilified by others, Flores, Vásquez and their men have been interpreted as "classic social bandits" who took on a life of banditry to avenge Anglo-oriented depredations against a relatively pacific ethnic group. Sadly, public reaction to their acts, along with anti-Mexican nativism among the dominant Anglo population, led to a legal culture that coordinated attacks on Hispanics, and their general exclusion from the emerging Anglo-based society (Pitt 1966:257-258 and 262; and Pitt 2000:523).

SIMI STAGECOACH LINE—1874-1895

The 1876 completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) tunnel through the San Fernando Mountains opened Los Angeles to transcontinental railroad traffic from the north. As a result, there was no longer a need to provide long-distance stage coach service in California. The way stations at Larry's Station and El Encino had already closed by 1874, the same year the Southern Pacific completed laying track between Los Angeles and its new San Fernando train station. There was, though, a continued need to serve the local communities not yet connected by rail. In 1875 Flint, Bixby & Company sold their stage line to the Coast Line Stage Company (purportedly partially owned by Wells, Fargo & Company). The new owners abandoned the Santa Susana Pass stagecoach route in favor of the old Coast Route to San Buenaventura via the Conejo Grade. The route included a newly reopened way station at El Encino ranch, as well as new stations at Newbury Park and Vejar, between El Encino and Calabasas. While the main overland stage line bypassed the Old Santa Susana Pass Stagecoach Road, local ranchers and farmers continued to utilize it as a transportation corridor between the San Fernando and Simi Valleys. From 1875 until the completion of the three Southern Pacific Railroad Tunnels in 1904, a local stage line utilized the Pass to carry visitors the 13 miles from the San Fernando rail station to the Santa Susana Hotel west of the former Larry's Station in Simi Valley. A means by which its owner, the Simi Land and Water Company could lure prospective buyers to the area, the fashionable hotel was a popular destination and stopover point in the valley. According to local historians, M. L. Montgomery operated the stage line between San Fernando and the hotel, with Joseph McDonald, Frank Pyle, and Joe Horner as his drivers until the completion of the new Santa Susana Pass Wagon Road in 1895 (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:64 and 175; Goldman 1973a:19; LA Star 1875:n.p.; and Mullaly and Petty 2002:17).

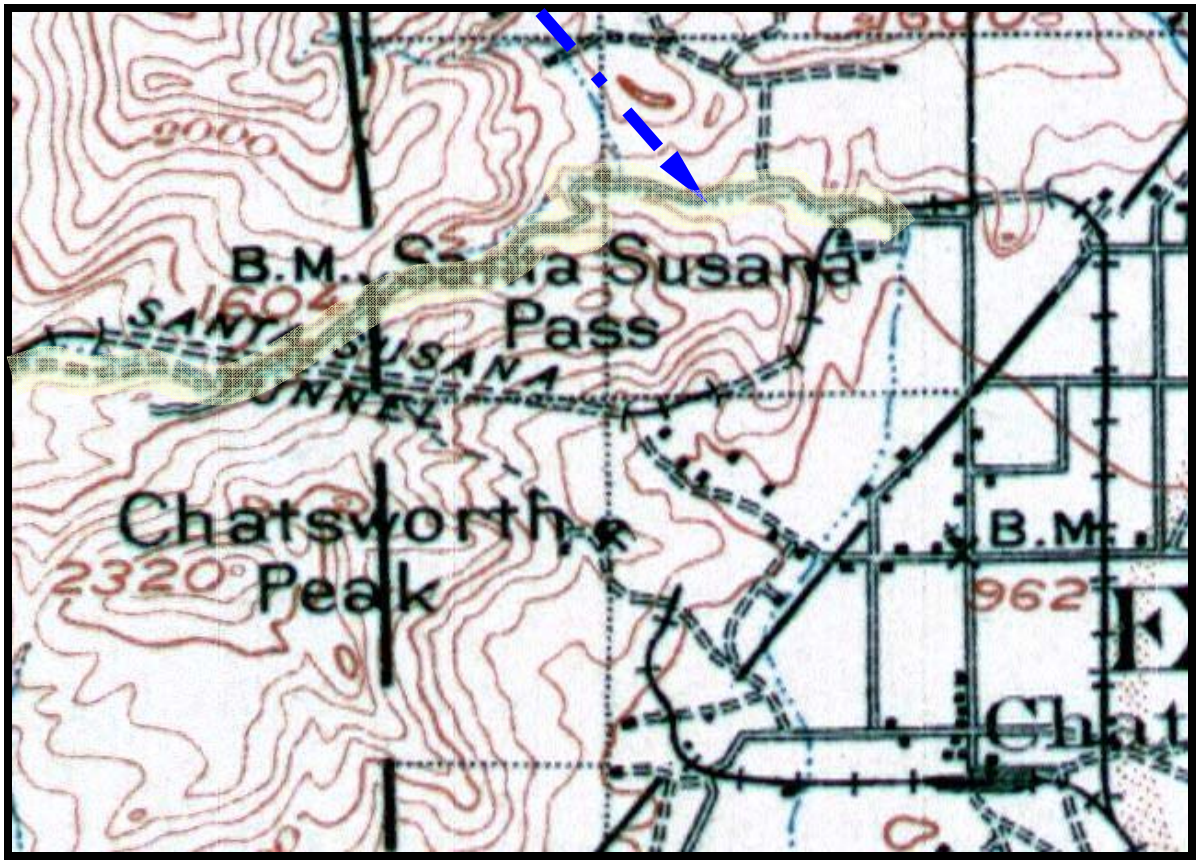
EL CAMINO NUEVO/CHATSWORTH GRADE ROAD-1895-1917

In 1895 the Los Angeles County Road Commission decided to build a bypass road that circumvented the Devil's Slide segment of the Santa Susana Pass road due to its deteriorating condition. The new single-lane road followed a much easier grade west of what is now the intersection of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Santa Susana Pass Road. Improvements over the older road included wide passing turn-outs and cut-stone-lined culverts and retaining walls. James W. Bannon emphatically claimed that his father contributed to the road's construction. "Wherever they had to build a retaining wall," he noted, "you will notice it's all dimension stone—cut stone." "My father did all of this" he related, "of course the County did quite a bit of work too." It was such an improvement over the old road that the newly elected Ventura County Board of Supervisors recommended improvements on their side of the pass to facilitate its use. Initially known as "*El Camino Nuevo*" (Sp., the New Road), it was later referred to as the "Chatsworth Grade Road."[5] In 1899 Los Angeles County made extensive repairs, which included the removal of large boulders embedded in the roadway (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:177; Bannon 1974:12; and Goldman 1973a:20).

While a major improvement over the original 1860-built road, the new Chatsworth Grade Road did have its problems: long teams of horses found it difficult to maneuver along its many hairpin turns. By 1913 these horse-drawn wagons had to share their right-of-way with an ever-increasing number of gasoline-powered automobiles and trucks. Joseph W. Bannon remembered that the road from Chatsworth was paved with macadam, a paved surface formed of compressed layers of broken rocks held together with asphalt or tar, until it reached the foot of the pass. Driving a quarry truck along the road sometime prior to 1919, Joseph W. Bannon noted that after a good rain, the truck's solid tires "turned up the unpaved sections into yellow clayey mud." This was particularly true after torrential winter rains in 1914-15. Instead of repairing the road, Los Angeles and Ventura Counties decided to construct an entirely new asphalt-paved road across the drainage dedicated solely to automobile traffic. Completed in 1917, the *Santa Susana Pass Grade Road* greatly reduced the Chatsworth Grade Road's importance. In turn, the 1983 Simi Valley-San Fernando Valley Freeway (Renamed the Ronald Reagan Freeway in 1994) has relegated the road into a local-access road between Chatsworth and Saticoy (ACSC 1912-1927; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:68; Harrington 1961:108-109; Reagan 2004; and Roderick 2001: 48).

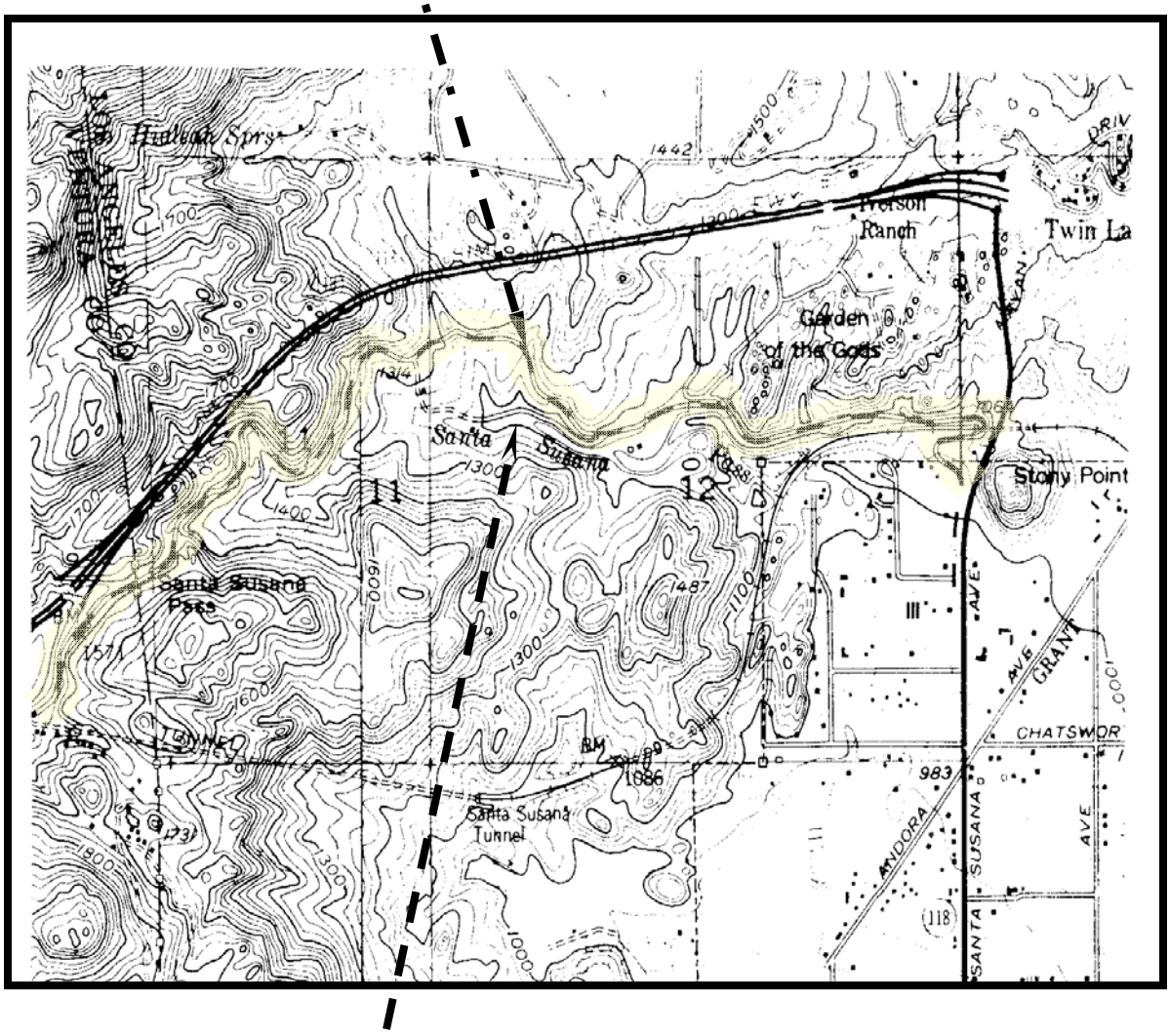
[5] Locals also referred to the previous Santa Susana Pass Road as "*El Camino Viejo*," the Old Road. This is not to be confused with the colloquial name of the former *El Camino Real* to the south.

Route of 1874-1895 Stagecoach Road
Source: U.S. Topographic Map
Chatsworth Quad, 7.5, 1903/1912



In addition to the National Register-listed Devil's Slide, there are other discontiguous sections of historic wagon roads in Santa Susana State Historic Park. Subsequent surveys should be undertaken to locate and document their location and include them into an expanded National Register boundary or possible cultural preserve. Surviving features, such as the fore-mentioned wagon ruts, drill/blast holes, pick marks, and cut stone culverts and retaining walls can serve as markers helping to identify their location.

1917-built Santa Susana Pass Grade Road
Source: Proposed I-118 Freeway Right-of-Way on 1950 Topographic Map



Remnant of 1895-1917 Chatsworth Grade Road?

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION—1875-1888

Among those utilizing the Santa Susana Pass Road during the late 19th Century was a new kind of fortune-seeker. Instead of gold, they were looking for another terrestrial mineral buried in the sandstone mountains—petroleum. As the nation's industrial economy slowly shifted from coal to oil-fired machines, oil became a much sought after commodity, spurring rushes that rivaled the 1849 Gold Rush. As early as the Spanish and Mexican Eras, locals had gathered asphaltum from seeps found throughout the Santa Susana Mountains. Andrés Pico allegedly

distilled oil from a hand-dug asphaltum pit near Newhall in 1856 for use as lamp oil in the San Fernando Mission. Others tried to prospect the Santa Susana Mountains for petroleum immediately after the Civil War. The area's remoteness, though, dissuaded all attempts to mine and transport oil out of the area. It wasn't until after the coming of the railroad that men and equipment could be brought into the foothills surrounding the San Fernando Valley. In 1875 wildcatters were able to successfully drill and pump oil from a well in Pico Canyon. Located in the Santa Susana Mountain eastern foothills west of Newhall, it was the first truly commercial oil well in California. By the 1880s, the Newhall Petroleum District north of the San Fernando Pass would become the center of California's pioneer oil industry (Rintoul 1990:5-6 and 141; and Roderick: 64-65).

SETTLEMENT AND TOWN BUILDING—1875-1888

Concurrent with oil prospecting in the Santa Susana Mountains during the decades immediately after the coming of the railroad, was the transformation of the San Fernando Valley's economy from large cattle ranches to smaller single-family-owned ranches and farms. Indeed, between 1857 and 1870 several factors led to the demise of the large ranchos. First, out-of-state sources of improved cattle stock from Texas and the Midwest undermined their cattle's value. Second, periods of heavy rains followed by drought destroyed large tracts of grasses and forbs on which their cattle could feed. Third, bears, coyotes, pumas, and other predators killed and fed upon hundreds of weakened cattle. Fourth, the rancheros themselves slaughtered their starving animals to salvage what profit they could from the sale of their hides and tallow. Fifth, a smallpox outbreak decimated the labor pool of California Indians and Mestizos needed to tend and protect their reduced herds. The attrition rate during the 1860s was staggering. According to the 1870 federal agricultural census, 50 thousand head, or 71 per cent of Los Angeles County's cattle population, had died. These factors, in addition to lawyers' fees encumbered during land litigation court appearances, had forced most Mexican-American ranchers to either sell outright or section off parcels of their ancestral ranches due to delinquent taxes and foreclosed mortgages. Taking advantage of the situation in the San Fernando Valley at the time was San Francisco land speculator Issac Lankershim. He, along with his partners, formed the San Fernando Farm Homestead Association and purchased 60,000 acres of the former San Fernando Mission Rancho's southern half from former Mexican California governor Pío de Jesus Pico. Lankershim and another partner, New Yorker Issac Newton Van Nuys stocked their holding with large herds of sheep. Likewise, similar activities were underway in the Simi Valley; but it is not known if they ran sheep between the two ranches over the adjoining Santa Susana Pass. Nor do we know if there ever was a

sheepherder's station in what is now Santa Susana State Historic Park (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:65; Cleland 1969:108, 131-135 and 220; and Pitt 1966: 244-246).

Another period of severe drought between 1876 and 1877 reduced the viability of raising sheep in the two valleys. However, Lankershim and Van Nuys had also experimented with dry farming. An agricultural technique familiar in the Great Plains states, it was used for cultivating land which receives little rainfall. After the loss of an early harvest due to drought and rust disease, they discovered that the San Fernando Valley's clayey soil could absorb and hold moisture when it did rain. As a result, in 1876 they produced enough wheat to ship two full cargoes to Liverpool, England. After building a flour mill in downtown Los Angeles, Lankershim was able to furnish another viable outlet for San Fernando Valley wheat. This in turn drew settlers into the area who purchased smaller "ranchettes" from Lankershim and Van Nuys to grow wheat, vegetables, and fruit tree orchards in the valley and surrounding foothills. Credit must be given to the Southern Pacific Railroad, which brought additional settlers into the valley and provided an affordable means for them to send their produce to granaries and mills in Los Angeles. Between 1876 and 1910 dry farmed wheat was the valley's dominant crop (Cleland 1969: 220 and 143; and Roderick 2001: 45).

While Lankershim and Van Nuys were involved with converting the lower half of the San Fernando Valley from sheep and cattle ranching to farming, others were doing the same in the northern half. In 1874, former State Senator Charles Maclay of San Jose, with his partners, San Francisco Benjamin F. and George K. Porter, borrowed $60,000 from Leland Stanford and purchased 57,000 acres of land north of Lankershim and Van Nuys' holdings. Maclay, who owned all of the land east of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks east to the San Gabriel foothills, laid out the town of San Fernando and subdivided the rest of his property into small ranches. George K. Porter owned a third of the northern valley west from the railroad line to Aliso Canyon (Zeldah Avenue from Granada Hills to Northridge). He was the first to initiate large-scale citrus growing in the valley, having planted a navel orange grove that reportedly stretched nearly three miles long. His cousin Benjamin owned 20,000 acres in the valley's northwestern area. Because it was far removed from the railroad line, it was the least desirable section, and remained relatively undeveloped (Cleland 1969:217-218; and Roderick 2001: 42-43).

By 1879, improved coach, wagon, and later rail connections, in addition to aggressive promotion, would attract enough farming families into northwest San

Fernando Valley to warrant the opening of a one-room school near what is now Santa Susana Avenue above Chatsworth Street. The following year, students transferred to the larger Santa Susana elementary school building, north of present-day Devonshire Street and Topanga Canyon Boulevard (the site of the present Chatsworth Elementary School). Mrs. Rita de la Osa, the former matron of La Cuesta, was reportedly instrumental in organizing the school's founding. The next ten years saw the laying out and development of a number of additional farming communities throughout the valley, due primarily to a rate war between the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railways, widespread land speculation, and an influx of thousands of new residents. While some of these boom towns, like Pacoima and Monte Vista never developed past the planning stage, others grew into modern communities. For example, in 1888, Issac Lankershim's son James founded the small fruit-growing hamlet of Toluca (now North Hollywood) in the eastern part of the valley. Also in that region, Dr. David Burbank bought and subdivided a section of the former El Providencia Rancho into the town bearing his name in 1887. The following year the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company bought and platted the farming community of Santa Susana into the town of Chatsworth Park (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:66 and 189; Pitt 2000:66, 87, 360 and 503-504; and Roderick 2001:43-45).

HOMESTEADING—1870-1892

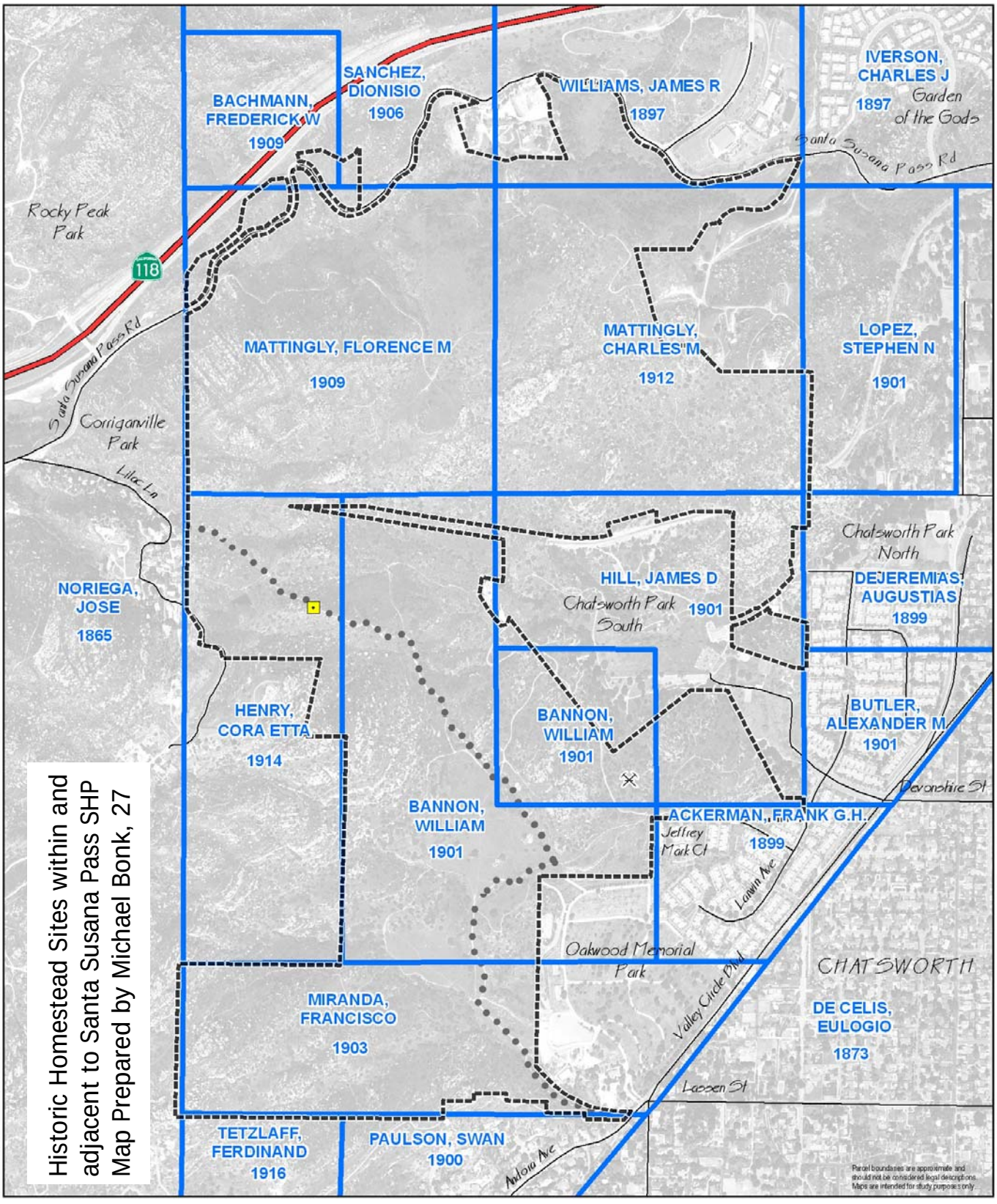
By the late 1880s most latecomers found it more difficult to find good farmland in the valley. Most were consigned to seek out marginal land in the surrounding hills for ranches and homesteads. Benjamin Porter had divided his "least desirable" property into thirteen separate shares. Granger Ranch (which Porter named after his ranch superintendent), the westernmost share and adjacent to Santa Susana State Historic Park, eventually became part of the town of Chatsworth Park. In 1870, Niles and Wilden Johnson were among the first families to take advantage of the Federal Homestead Act, to settle in the San Fernando Valley. The Johnsons were applying for the land under the 1862 Homestead Act, which allowed an adult United States citizen or naturalized citizen the opportunity to acquire free up to a ¼ section of a township (160 acres) in the public domain west of the Mississippi. The claimant had to have improved and lived on the property for at least five years, after which he paid a nominal filing fee; or was allowed to buy it after six months for $1.25 per acre. Settling first in Brown's Canyon, in 1874 they relocated farther up the Santa Susana Pass Road and homesteaded in what is now the Indian Hills Estates. Over the next twenty years, several other early pioneer families established homesteads in the hills above Chatsworth, including the Coffeen, Glasscock, Graves, Gray, Thrasher, and Iverson. By damming streams and digging wells, these homesteaders were able to coerce crops from the rocky

soil. All of which contributed to the west valley's economic growth, helping to establish the Chatsworth area as an independent agricultural community. With the opening of the Owens Valley Aqueduct in 1913, the City of Los Angeles offered to sell water to Chatsworth and other towns in the San Fernando Valley only if they would agree to be annexed. As a result, Chatsworth's residents voted to give up their municipal independence to the growing megalopolis. With a steady supply of fresh water, the Chatsworth area would be noted for its orchards of oranges, lemons, grapes, and figs, and eventually develop thoroughbred horse ranches (CHS 2005a; Census 1900, 1910, 1920; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:65-66; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928; Pitt 2000:315; and Robinson 1948:168).

FRANCISCO MIRANDA

At least five homesteads were claimed within Santa Susana State Historic Park's present boundaries. Among the earliest was that of 41-year-old Francisco Miranda. A naturalized United States citizen from Mexico, in 1879 Miranda applied for a homestead patent on 133 acres in Lots 4 & 5, Section 13 and Lot 4, Southeast ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 14 in Township 2 North, Range 17 West, SBM. He had improved and raised crops on 50 to 60 acres of cultivated land that was "part hilly and part level." Miranda, along with his wife María and their 14 children (all born in California), built and lived in a 3-room house that was "part adobe and part lumber." A pipe brought water to a reservoir that supplied potable water to the house and irrigated the fields, which included a small orchard and vineyard. The recently repaired and stabilized Miranda Adobe is located near the Oakwood Memorial park administration offices just inside the main entrance off Andorra Avenue (Census 1900, 1910; NARA 1903; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928; and CHS 2005b).

Joseph Bannon, whose family homesteaded in the area in 1892, confided in a 1974 interview for the Chatsworth Historical Society the existence of a small "cemetery" or graveyard "some hundred yards south of the lower cistern." Bannon emphasized that the graves belonged to members of the neighboring Miranda family. This would place the grave just outside the present Oakwood Cemetery (22601 Lassen Street, Chatsworth.), which was laid out in the 1920s. It is not known who is buried at this grave site (Bannon 1974:4-5; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:88; Goldman 1973b:36; Grenier 1978:100; NARA 1870-1972:86 and 1896-1928; USGS 1969; and Watson 2004).



Historic Homestead Sites within and adjacent to Santa Susana Pass SHP
Map Prepared by Michael Bonk, 27

Legend

- Quarry
- Stage Road Plaque
- Original Land Patents
- Historic Stage Route
- State Hwy
- Local Road
- Park Boundary

500 250 0 500 Feet

SANTA SUSANA PASS STATE HISTORIC PARK

DIONISIO SANCHEZ

Another Hispanic-American family that homesteaded within what is now Santa Susana SHP was that of 67-year-old Dionisio Sanchez. A recently naturalized American citizen, Sanchez had immigrated to the United States from his native Mexico in 1882. He and his California-born wife María, along with their six children, had settled in the Santa Susana Pass area around 1885. On December 14, 1901, he received a patent for 129 acres of "hilly and rough mountain land" in the East ½ of the Northeast ¼ and Lot 1 of Section 11 in Township 2 North, Range 17 West, SBM. Sanchez farmed about 50 acres, with 10 or 12 acres cleared for grape vines and fruit trees, with the remainder was used for pasture. He and his family lived in an approximately 15' x 16' "rough 2-3 room lumber house." Other improvements included a shed, corral, wire fencing, and water well (Census 1900, 1910; NARA 1905; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928).

JAMES R. WILLIAMS

In 1884, 40-year-old Indianan James R. Williams applied for a homestead patent for 160 acres of improved land in the Northwest quarter of Section 12, Township 2 North, Range 17 West, SBM. Twenty acres of cultivated land was used to raise hay and grow potatoes, with the remainder set aside for grazing cattle and apiaries. He and his wife Carrie, along with their four adult children, lived in a 4-room 24' x 24' "wood-board house," with a 12' x 16' barn, honey house, a small orchard, and a half-mile of fencing nearby. The Williams family lived on their homestead at least into the 1920s. Part of the property reportedly evolved into the infamous Spann Movie Ranch, where convicted mass-murderer Charles Manson and his "family" of followers lived while they plotted the 1969 Tate-La Bianca murders (Census 1900, 1910, 1920; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:65-66; NARA 1897; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928).

JAMES D. HILL

On April 22, 1901, another Indianan, 58-year-old James D. Hill, acquired 120 acres in the North ½ of the northwest quarter, of the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 13, Township 2 North, Range 17 West. Hill, with his wife Rhoda, their four children and two grandsons, had homesteaded the area in 1887, building a wood-frame house, with an adjacent barn, well, and fencing. Because the land was hilly, he was only able to cultivate about 10-12 acres, which included a small orchard. Hill's 38-year-old son Lowell became head of the household by 1910. Time, aided by rain, flood, and brush fires, has removed the wood and adobe building materials associated with most of these historic

homestead sites. However, the Hills reportedly built a small wood-frame, vertical board-clad cottage sometime between 1911 and 1913 east of the Bannon Quarry site (outside of the State Park's boundary). Their daughter, Minnie and her husband Alfred Palmer occupied the cottage. Minnie Hill-Palmer was instrumental in efforts to preserve the future park's historic resources as well as her home for future generations. Known as the "Hill-Palmer Historic Cottage," the City of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation incorporated the cottage and the surrounding "Homestead Acre" within the present Chatsworth Park South. As the Homestead Acre's conservator, the Chatsworth Historical Society maintains the National Register-listed cottage's interior as a regional museum (Census 1900, 1910; CHS 2005a; NARA 1901c; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928).

CHARLES H. AND FLORENCE M. MATTINGLY

Seven years later, on June 16, 1908, 44-year-old Iowan Florence M. Mattingly applied for a patent for a 174 and 13/100s acre homestead south of the Sanchez homestead. Located near the Los Angeles/Ventura county line, between the historic Devil's Slide and the 1917-era Santa Susana Pass Road, the Mattingly homestead consisted of Lots 3 and 4 of the East ½ of the Southeast ½ of Section 11, Township 2 North, Range 17 West. Married to 47-year-old Charles H. Mattingly of Illinois in 1902, Mrs. Mattingly was the mother of three daughters, age 4 to 7. In 1912, Charles H. Mattingly applied for a land patent for another 160 acres of public land adjacent to and east of his wife's claim (Census 1910; NARA 1909; NARA-PR 1870-1972 and 1896-1928). While there is no trace of a home site, there are several terraced rock walls and concrete pads located a short walking distance east of Lilac Lane. Within a steep arroyo is a debris pile that includes a rusted kitchen stove. It is not known whether or not these features belong to the Mattingly homestead or are associated with an "indigent camp" that the Los Angeles County Department of the Forester and Fire Warden, in cooperation with the State of California, erected and administered from 1934 to approximately 1937. The camp's purpose was reportedly to house "a hundred or more ... old men who could not, or would not, find employment" during the height of the Great Depression (Barney 1953:1; and CSUN 1938:photograph AXJ_23_8.tif).

WILLIAM BANNON

On July 4, 1892, 50-year-old New Yorker William Bannon homesteaded 160 acres in the east half of the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Sec 14, and the northwest quarter of southwest quarter of Section 13, in Township 2 North, Range 17 West, SBM. Bannon and his family, wife Maria, and their four sons and four

daughters moved into the former De La Osa family adobe at La Cuesta. Typical of his neighbors, he improved the property by adding a two-room wood-frame addition, installed a corrugated iron roof, and placed wood planking over the adobe's dirt floor. He also restored the existing two stone reservoirs, added fencing, and cultivated 50 to 90 acres of "rolling farmland" to raise seasonal crops and grow fruit trees. In 1901 Bannon mortgaged his property to Henry Voucle for funds to "defend [his] title and complete improvements." Among the latter was a "barn and additional house" (Bannon 1974:4, 9; Census 1900; NARA 1898, 1901a).

QUARRYING ACTIVITIES—1892-1919

BANNON/CHATSWORTH PARK STONE QUARRY—1892-1915

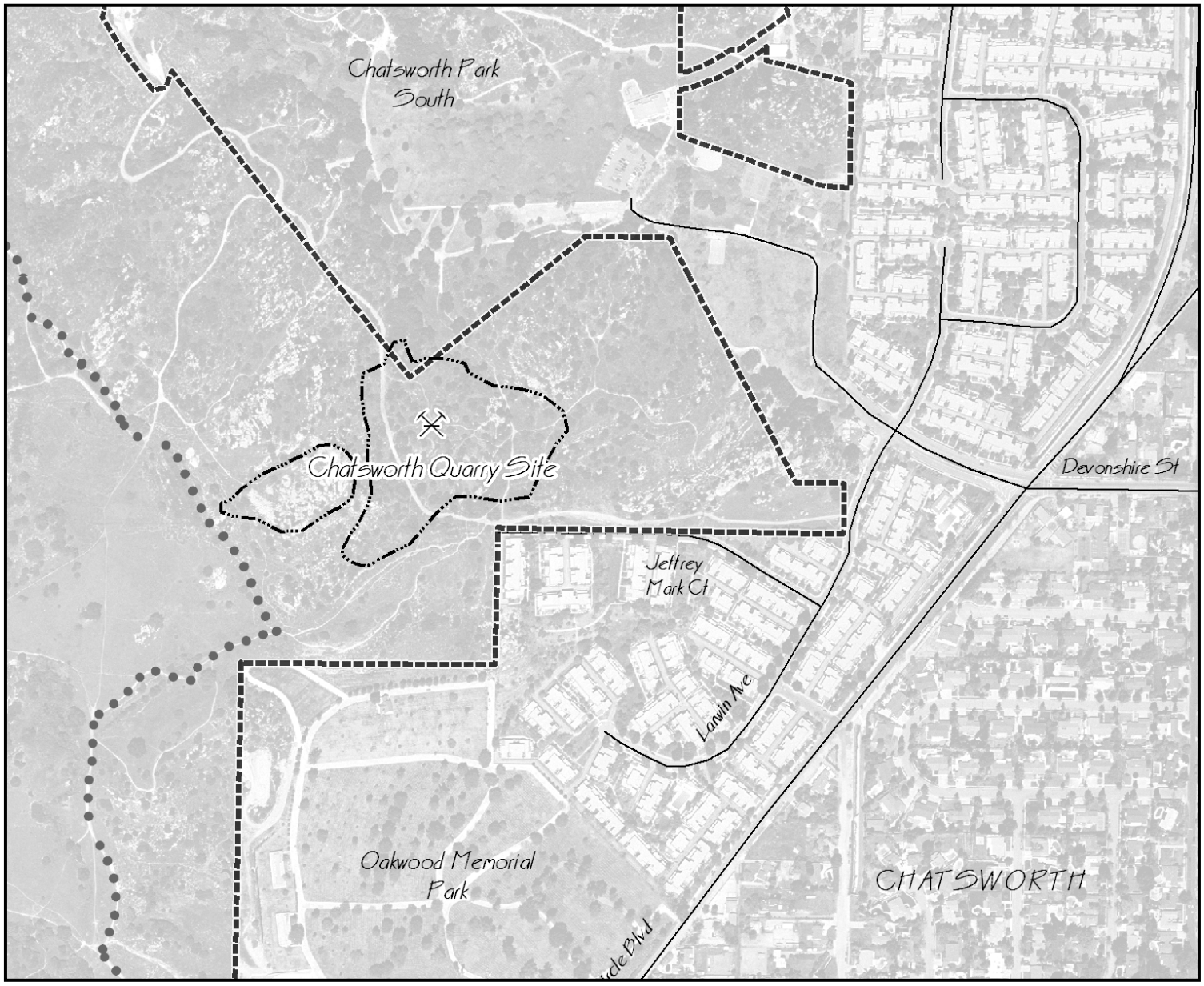
An Irish-American stone cutter by trade, William Bannon may have built the "barn and additional house" to facilitate his stone quarrying operation nearby. Between September 6, 1898 and May 16, 1901 he purchased a 120-acre tract in the West ½ of the Southwest ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 13, and a 40-acre tract the Southwest ¼ of the Northwest ¼ of Township 2 North, Range 17 West, SBM for $2.50 and acre. Bannon was taking advantage of the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, by which the federal government sold western timberland in the public domain for $2.50 per acre in 160 acre blocks. The land was deemed "unfit for farming" and sold to individuals who might want the "timber and stone" on the land (NARA 1898 and 1901b: and Robinson 1948: 170-171).

The type of stone that Bannon was seeking to quarry was a local form of arkose sandstone. A feldspathic sandstone deposited during the Chico or Cretaceous geological period, arkose sandstone was heavily bedded in the hillocks and mountain slopes facing the historic stage road. While the moderately fine-grained stone's exposed surface color is tawny or a yellowish-tan, below it is a bluish-gray. When saw-cut at a mill, the stone splits evenly, producing an excellent dimensional architectural stone for use as building and/or ornamental stonework. The latter contributed heavily to the building boom of the Greater Los Angeles area during the Turn of the Twentieth Century. Larger blocks were sent to the Bly Brothers Stone Cutting yard in Los Angeles, The Bly Brothers stone mill handled a considerable amount of sandstone and marble. Located at 720 Alameda Street, Los Angeles, here workers used mechanical drills, saws, planers, and surfacing machines to cut and shaped the stone for use as dimensional stone and distributed throughout the greater Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino areas. Among the noted buildings that featured what became known as "Chatsworth Park Sandstone," were several downtown Los Angeles landmark buildings: the Stimson

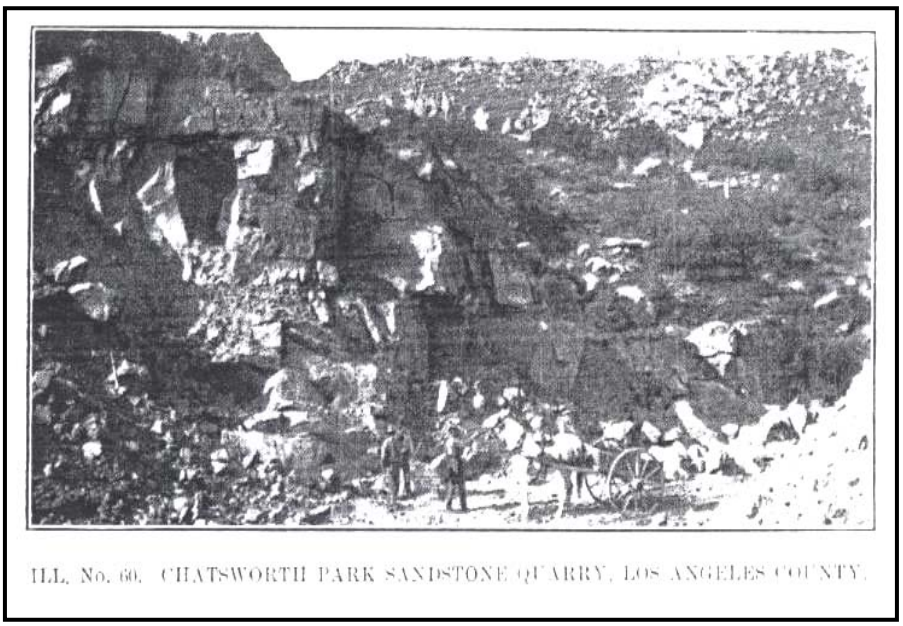
Building, the California Club, Christ Episcopal Church, the Police Station and Jail, and the Southern California Edison Company Building. Other noted buildings that featured Chatsworth Park Sandstone were the 1887 Church of the Angeles near Garvanza, the San Bernardino Courthouse, and the Santa Ana Public Library building. Another historic uses for Chatsworth Park Quarry stone was for "riprap"—coarse, angular, irregular stone blocks—that went into the construction of the "Long Wharf" (Southern Pacific Railroad pier) at Santa Monica. Completed in 1893, it was the longest stone and wood timber pier in the world at the time and acted as Los Angeles' major port of call until the 1912 completion of the "Angel's Gate" breakwater at San Pedro Harbor. Examples of the type and size of Chatsworth Park Quarry sandstone can still be seen in a section of the breakwater near a pedestrian stairway close to shore (Arkansas 2004; Bannon 1974:19-20; Cal 1906:128; Howell 1982:1 and addendum; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:191-192; Poultney 1938:4; Roderick 2001:40; and Turhollow 1975:38).

In addition to modifying the original stone cisterns, Bannon constructed a new, larger circular stone cistern. He extended a new tile pipeline to the cistern from a nearby fresh-water spring fed by groundwater emanating at the base of Pointed Hill [sic]. Downhill from the adobe house, on a level terrace near the lower cistern, there was a subsistence garden. Near the garden was a flat area where Bannon built a barn, corral, water troughs, and storage yard for the quarry's freight wagons. Herman Akerman, who lived in a nearby cabin, took care of the stock. Bannon also built structures associated with his quarry's work camp. A short distance up the old stagecoach road from the house was another clearing or "*petraro*" [sic; more likely *potrero*, Sp. "pasturing place"] down slope and to the right which Bannon farmed, possibly to supply fresh vegetables for the quarry commissary's kitchen. Originally fed by a nearby spring, work on the nearby Southern Pacific (SP) tunnels interrupted the flow of groundwater to the spring, which subsequently dried up. To compensate, the SP redirected water draining through the tunnels to the quarry (Bannon 1974:4, 9, 17 and 26; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:191-193 and 195; and NARA 1870-1972:85-86 and 1896-1928).

William Bannon's son, Joseph W. Bannon, described the flow of water coming to "a big wooden tank right by the railroad track." Revisiting the area around 1969, he noted that the water still flowed down to that section of Santa Susana State Historic Park; but, because the quarry was no longer in operation, flowed from the wooden tank into the man-made Palmers Trout and Bass Lakes. Actually two co-joined ponds, they, along with the neighboring Aqua Sierra Sporting Club, which included a skeet range, and the Devonshire Golf Course, were part of a now defunct country club (Bannon 1974:17; and CSUN 1928).



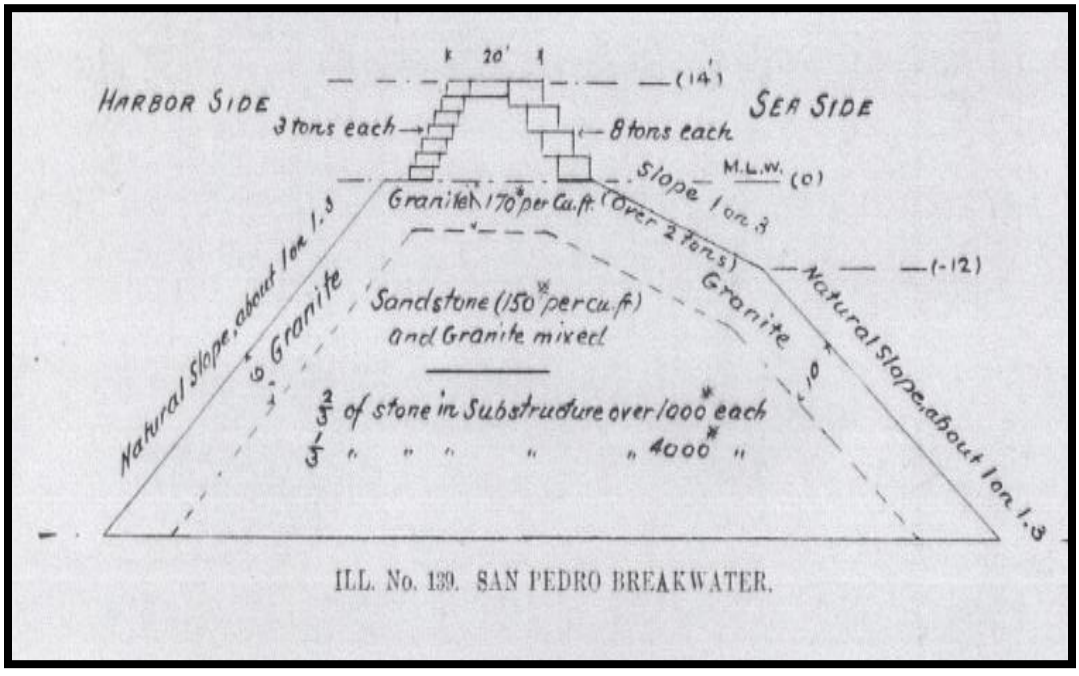
Chatsworth Quarry Site
Map Prepared by Michael Bonk, 27 April 2007



ILL. No. 60. CHATSWORTH PARK SANDSTONE QUARRY, LOS ANGELES COUNTY.

View of Bannon Quarry Site, Ca. 1906
Source: California State Mining Bureau Bulletin #38, 1906
Page 130

Bannon continued to improve the quarry's infrastructure to accommodate increased orders for stone. Among the improvements was the installation of carbide floodlights, steam-powered derricks, and a 1½-mile standard-gauge spur track to haul rock-laden rail cars from the quarry to the SP Railroad's switchyard near the intersection of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Marilla Street. All of this was in response to Edward P. Gray, secretary of the California Construction

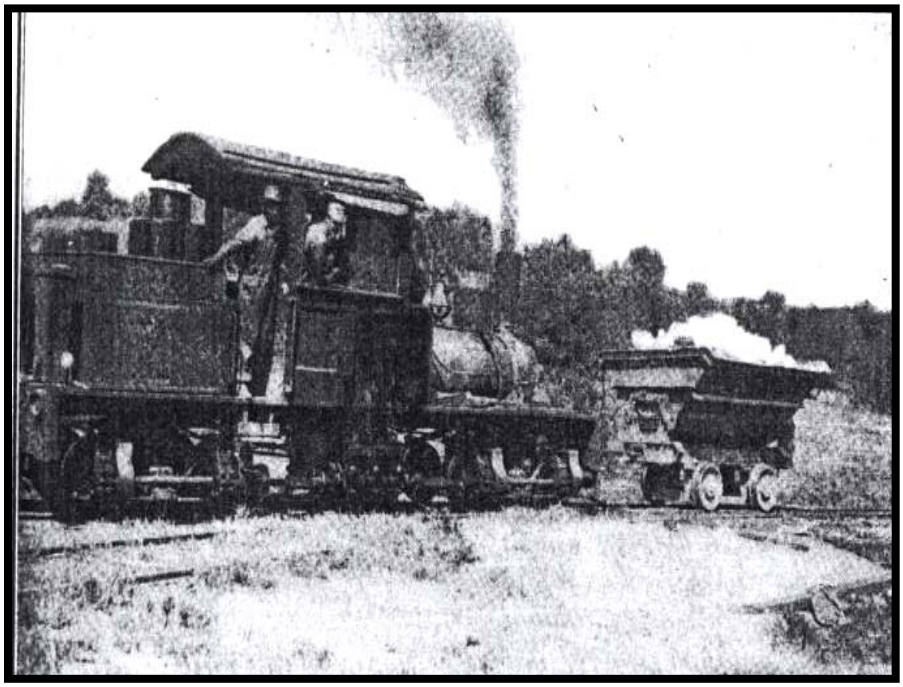


ILL. No. 139. SAN PEDRO BREAKWATER.

San Pedro Breakwater Project Schematic
Source: California 1906: 317

Company, awarding Bannon a contract to supply tons of irregular sandstone riprap for the construction of the San Pedro breakwater between 1899 and 1909. Under the supervision of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the company was involved in one of the most important engineering accomplishments in Southern California's history. The proposed 9,000-foot long by twenty-foot-wide federal breakwater's substructure was to be set fifty-two feet below, while its superstructure was fourteen-feet above mean low tide. At its end were to be concrete blocks set forty-foot-square by twenty-foot-high, set three feet below the mean low water mark. When completed, it would allow the dredging of the inner harbor between San Pedro and Wilmington, which would provide a protected anchorage for deep-draught commercial and naval vessels. Work on the $3 million breakwater began on April 26, 1899. An estimated crowd of between 10,000-15,000 people was on hand at San Pedro Point that day to witness and celebrate the first barge-load of rock dumped into the San Pedro Bay. As the breakwater progressed eastwardly out into the bay, crews extended a wooden trestle alongside the breakwater's projected route on which SP railway flatcars dumped roughly three million tons of rough granite and sandstone riprap, some weighing in at some eight tons each. While the sandstone came solely from the Chatsworth quarry, two other rock quarries supplied granite. One was the Declez quarry, and the other was the Casa Blanca quarry, at San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, respectively (Cal 1906:130 and 317; Cal Bannon 1971:4; Davies 1905: 27-28; Pitt 2000: 451; Roderick 2001:40-46; and Silka 1984: 52-54).

Although planned to be completed by 1907, the breakwater wasn't finished until 1912. The cause of the delay was the near-disastrous flooding of the Imperial Valley in 1906. The SP had to divert all available rolling stock and manpower to fill a breach in the Colorado River, which was threatening to flood the entire Imperial Valley. After its completion, the 9,250-foot-long long Angels Gate Breakwater at San Pedro was the longest in the United States at the time. Realizing the breakwater's potential for providing a protected deep-water port, the City of Los Angeles annexed San Pedro and neighboring Wilmington as the Port of Los Angeles. The extension of three major railroad lines to the harbor, along with the federal government's construction of two additional breakwaters ("Middle" and "Long Beach") assured Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors' future as major international maritime shipping centers (Bannon 1971:19; Pitt 2000: 451; Roderick 2001:40; Turhollow 1975:31, 32, 65).



Gear-driven Shay Locomotive Pushing Hopper Car of Quarried Limestone Shingle Springs Quarry, El Dorado County Ca. 1917

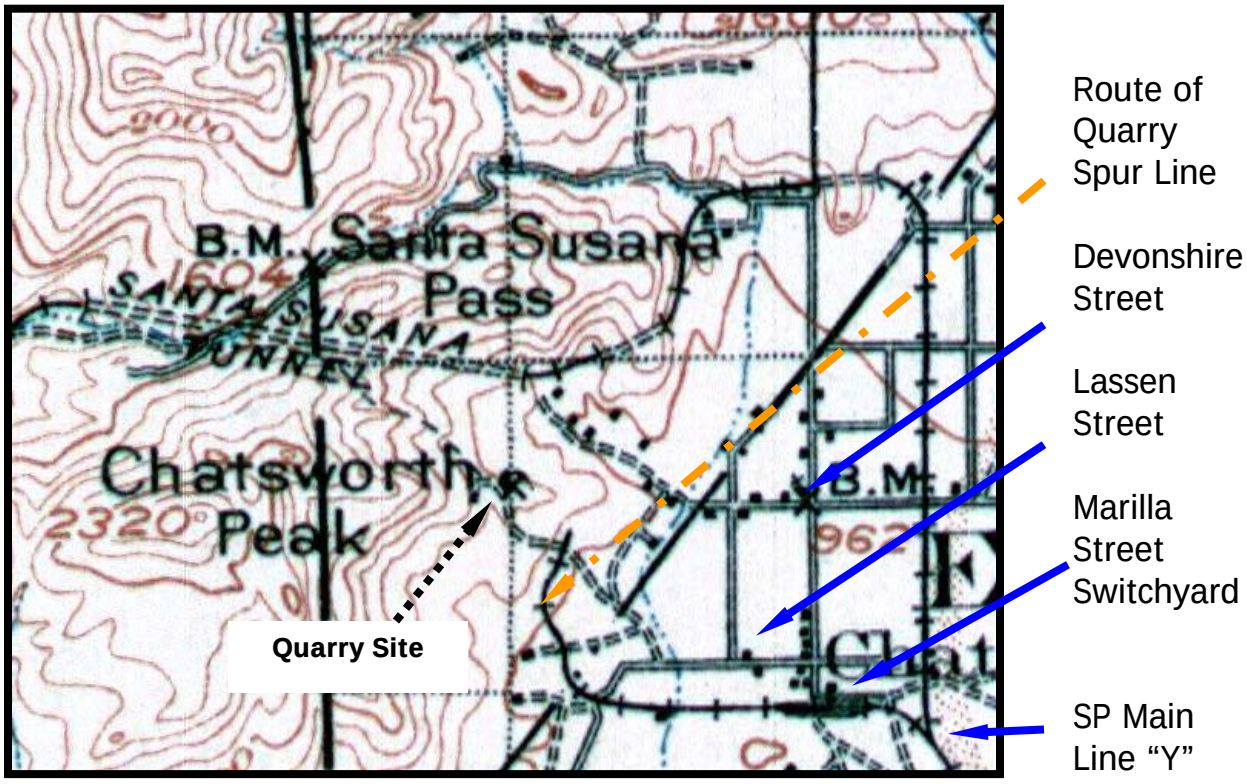
Source: Cal 1918: 97

In response to the Angel's Gate breakwater contract, as many as fifty quarrymen drilled, blasted, hauled, and deposited between 500 to 700 tons of quarried blocks from the Chatsworth Park Quarry a day, using as many as five steam-powered derricks, one of which was mounted on a railroad flatcar, to load the rock onto rail cars for shipment out of the quarry. Work was delayed in January 1902 when crews had to relocate the derricks and railroad tracks further into the quarry site (Bannon 1974:33; and LAT 1902b:10).

While the spur rail line into and through Santa Susana State Historic Park is no longer extant, there are surviving segments of raised earthworks within and south of the quarry area that intimate its possible route through Santa Susana State Historic Park to a point where Santa Susana State Historic Park's southeastern boundary meets Shoup Avenue. Joseph W. Bannon recalled that the spur line actually entered what is now State Park property by way of the present Oakwood Memorial Park cemetery. According to Mr. Bannon,

> [The spur line] went across the Miranda property because . . . where they put the church that they moved from down Chatsworth [now in the cemetery's western quadrant] . . . , there's a little canyon [that] comes down and there's a fill across that. That was a fill in there for the railroad roadbed to get the railroad over to our quarry (Bannon 1974:7).

According to Bannon, the spur line ran west of where the church building is today and that there was a "roundtable" [turntable] situated on the hill "on the left [west?] side" of Lassen Street. "They [brought] the crane up to [the quarry] and then they [SP] would bring what cars that were going up to our quarry and then turn the engine around on the turn table and be ready to go back" (Bannon 1974:6-7).



Source: U.S. Topographic Map
Chatsworth Ouad. 7.5. 1903/1912

There seems to be some discrepancy in Mr. Bannon's recollections. If an uncoupled locomotive relocated itself from the head of the cars it pulled into the quarry, then how did it reach the turntable? Mr. Bannon does not mention the existence of rail switches or a short parallel track or turnout necessary to move the locomotive down the line to the turntable. Neither does the topographic map of the quarry area printed in 1912 show anything but a single track leading from what is now the Lassen/Andora intersection. Does that mean there never was a turntable? Perhaps the locomotive pushed the two cars into the quarry, unhitched itself, proceeded to the turntable, turned itself around, backed up to connect itself to the now-filled cars, then proceed to the switchyard. Here the cars could have been added to a string of others waiting for a larger and stronger locomotive to haul them to San Pedro. Photographs taken during the latter's construction show

consists of up to twenty-three flatcars carrying huge boulders to the site (Davies 1905: 27-28; Silka 1984:52-55; and USGS 1903-1912). Several artifacts found within the former quarry site may be associated with the spur line's operation. The first is a length of iron rail partially buried in the east central pit area. Another is a long length of wire rope cable running in an approximately east to west orientation south of the rock cisterns. While previous researchers claim that it was used to power a cable railroad, there is no written or oral evidence to support this. As mentioned earlier, historical records indicate that a gear-driven steam locomotive (similar to a Shay locomotive) hauled the cars through the quarry to the SP's Chatsworth switch yard (Cal 1906:128 and 130; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:191-192; Howell 1982:1-2; and Poultney 1938:3).

It is possible that the wire rope is the "cable" that Joseph W. Bannon refers to in his description of the quarry's operation:

> They take a chisel [and make] a little notch in the side of the stone or the end and fasten . . . [a pair] of tongs into it. [They] used [the tongs] like an over grown pair of ice tongs. Soon as they took a strain on ... the cable, it'd tighten up, why dig right in and they'd lift one of those stones, swing it around. They used what they called a tag line—a rope with a hook you fastened in and they'd pull that by hand to the car and load it on a railroad car (Bannon 1974:30).

During the quarry's 1891 to 1915 operational period, crews utilized traditional drilling techniques and methods for quarrying the sandstone. Joseph W. Bannon described the process as such:

> They drilled using—they call it [a] single jack to start the hole. They get it down about two feet or so . . . , then they [used] what they called [a] double jack . . . hitting it with a sledge hammer. Two of them [would] swing [the] sledge hammers [while] one turns the drill. Then when they get the hole down as far as they can go efficiently double-jacking, they do what they call churn drilling. That is just - two men will take hold of a drill and jab it down – that's churn drilling. And those holes they put down about twenty feet. They put a whole series - row of them across the face of the quarry about ten feet apart. Then they put a stick of dynamite or [a] couple of sticks down in what's called a spring hole that makes a pocket and it also opens seams. They tie them to fuses because they didn't have electric detonators then. They cut their fuses, tie them so those would go off just about together and create a crack or seam. Then they load those up with

> black powder which is 40% or lower in strength and it follows the line with least resistance and it would get their dimensions. Otherwise it would be shattered up (Bannon 1974:18-19).

Once the stone was split from the face of the hill, the process became a little bit more delicate. According to Bannon:

> They'd get out stones that would probably weigh a couple of tons. Then they had to square those up –- they snap a line where they wanted to break the some, then they take a stone chisel and chisel a little . . . series of them on [a] line and put wedges in. then when the wedges would get in about as deep as they would go, they'd knock those out and put a steel piece of flat steel on each side – that they called *feathers*. A whole series of those and they'd break just as true and even as though it had been cut with a saw. But it takes time. And it would take a lot of men. But that's the way all the dimension stone – now, for a building like the Stimson Building, where the blocks were probably 12 inches by 12 inches by 2 feet. My father would ship the big blocks of stone, rough cut, to the Blythe Stone Cutting Yard in Los Angeles. They had the big diamond saws and they would cut those to whatever size you wanted (Ibid.:19).

Plug and Feather Device Still in Use Today to Split Sandstone

Source: Natural Stone Institute

Overall, the process produced the following results: about 45% of the rock was large blocks over 4,000 pounds each; 20% were blocks from 1,000 to 4,000 pounds each; 15% consisted of smaller 100 to 1,000-pound blocks. The remaining

20% was rocks under 100 pounds, which were discarded and deposited in dumps. Similar to mine tailings, several of these thirty-to-one-hundred-foot-high conical mounds dot the quarry site's landscape (Cal 1906:130; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:192; and Howell 1982:1).

Work at the quarry was extremely hazardous. On January 17, 1902 a delayed blast nearly killed a small crew working the rock. A small premature explosion, later thought to have been caused by black powder collected in a shallow crevice igniting along the fuse line, had fooled them. Because there was no secondary blast, they thought that the smaller explosion had severed the fuse line. After waiting a few more minutes, they approached the work area. The resulting blast of between three or four kegs of black powder rocked the quarry. The powder man, a man named Patty Fitzgerald, was standing directly over the blast site. He was reportedly propelled into the air and landed with a broken leg and collar bone. A piece of rock flew ten feet and hit the timekeeper, a Mr. Farmer, who was hurt badly by the impact. Luckily, except for bruises, cuts and powder burns, no one was severely hurt or killed. Both Farmer and the powder man recovered from their injuries (Bannon 1974:33; and LAT 1902a:5).

The most serious accident recorded at the quarry occurred on July 1, 1904. Thirty-year-old Florentino Marin and six other quarrymen were drilling holes into the face of a sandstone rock cliff preparatory to blasting. Above the men was a huge rock ledge that jutted out perpendicularly from the rock wall. Apprehensive about working in such a precarious position, Marin's fellow workers asked him to inspect the rock ledge. He did so twice by walking around, over, then onto the ledge without incident. Reassured, the men resumed working under the ledge. Unfortunately, the ledge soon dislodged itself from the rock face, causing the crew to scamper out from under the falling rock. Because he was stooped over a drill hole, Marin failed to see or hear his fellow quarrymen shouting to him, and was killed instantly when crushed by a five-ton boulder. The physical trauma to his body was so horrific that men throughout the quarry refused to work; forcing its closure for the day (LAT 1904:3).

During the height of the San Pedro Breakwater riprap contract, Mrs. Bannon worked as hard as anyone else at the quarry; preparing meals for the night and the dayshifts.

> Breakfast included five pancakes, plus four fried eggs per person. All of her food supplies came directly to her by rail, because it was too expensive to have it shipped in by wagon. Joseph W. Bannon related the scenario, she bought her flour by the barrel . . . . [and] got personal delivery service right up [the] spur from the railroad. Well, we had the spur track right down into the quarry. Normally we bought groceries by the box car load. They'd come out maybe two or three box car loads and they'd run them down that spur track and then the men would unload them and put them in our store room . . . . She had the storeroom and what she called her meat room: cold storage but it was merely burlap with water running down to saturate that and let the wind blow through it. That kept things cold (Bannon 1974:31-32).

The kitchen was down on the flat area near the two bunkhouses, "almost," according to Joseph W. Bannon, "down to the railroad tracks." His mother would go down from the family residence to the kitchen. Mrs. Bannon didn't do all the work, though. She had help from Mrs. Akerman, who lived with her husband and family in a small cabin on the western end of Devonshire Street where it entered the quarry. She would have gotten the fire going in the kitchen stove and have a pot of coffee already brewing by the time she got there. Mrs. Bannon would then prepare the menu and prepare the meals with their help. Her two daughters would also help setting up the dining room where crews ate twice a day. During off hours they also frequented the nearby Chatsworth Inn, which also had a post office, train depot, and general store nearby (Ibid.: 32-33; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:197).

The California Construction Company's original contract with William Bannon was for fifty railroad carloads of sandstone riprap a day until the breakwater was completed. However, after Bannon delivered some sixteen carloads, subsequent observations of the submerged sandstone showed that it would disintegrate when it was exposed to air during low tides. Critics chided that the sandstone from the Chatsworth Park quarry was ""much like sand cemented with mud, and [that it] melts quickly under the action of water, and [would] crumble under pressure in the hands." As a result, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers halted the subsequent delivery of thirty-four carloads of rip rap. However, Bannon's contract was not contingent on this unforeseen problem. So, instead of accepting fifty carloads of useless stone a day, on October 6, 1903 the California Construction Company bought him out for $10,000. By 1906 the California Construction Company owned 200 acres of land in Section 13, Township 2 North, and Range 17 West of the SBM for quarrying purposes. Although they now owned the land, it does not

appear that the company continued to quarry any of the sandstone from the former Bannon Quarry site. First, the California Construction Company's quarry at Declez and another on Santa Catalina Island supplied the needed sandstone rip rap. Second, in 1915 the Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank and later the First National Bank took over the Chatsworth Park Quarry property in receivership due to failure to pay back taxes. Third, the 1918 Report of the California State Mineralogist stated that the quarry had been out of operation for some time, and the quarry equipment, including the spur rail line, had been dismantled and removed from the site. Fourth, within the historic quarry site is a rocky hillside composed of tons of rip rap abandoned in place. The massive pile of rocks appear frozen in time, just waiting for the order to be placed onto waiting rail cars that will never come (Bannon 1974:3-4 and 8; Cal 1906:128; Cal 1918:97; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:191-192 and 195; Davies 1905:27; Howell 1982:addendum; LAT 1901a:8 and 1901b:8; NARA 1870-1972:85-86 and 1896-1928; and Watson 2004).

H. CLEMENT & COMPANY QUARRY—1906-1915

There were other rock quarries operating at the same time as the Chatsworth Park Quarry. H. Clement & Company leased part of the California Construction Company's holding in Section 13, T2N, R17W. They quarried dimension stone from a 20-25 foot-thick bed that dipped about 20 degrees to the northwest. Their quarrymen reportedly also used the "plugs and feathers" method to split the rock along vertical fracture points (Cal 1906:130-131).

SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD QUARRY—1902-1915

C. Bertelson of Los Angeles leased land belonging to the Southern Pacific Railroad in Section 12, T2N, R17W, SBM. The 1906 California State Mining Bureau bulletin described the quarry as being "along the railroad right-of-way near the middle tunnel's eastern end." Nine quarrymen were on hand to operate a horse-driven derrick, drill, and produce a railroad carload of stone (25 tons) a day. After hand-drilling and using black powder to break down the stone, they drove wedges to split it further. Organized initially to provide ballast rock during the 1902 construction of the Southern Pacific railroad tunnels, the quarry later produced dimensional stone similar to that of the previous quarries. There is corrugated metal roof sandstone block-constructed shed located in what is now Chatsworth Park South that was allegedly used to store blasting powder and dynamite for the this quarry as well as the tunnel construction work. It may serve

as a model to either reconstruct or interpret similar structures in Santa Susana State Historic Park (Cal 1906:131; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:201; and Watson 2004).

SUGAR LOAF HILL / O. A. CHARLTON QUARRY—1906-1915

Sometime prior to 1906, A. Charlton of Los Angeles purchased land in Section 7, T2N, R16W, SBM (near the present Twin Lakes area) for the purpose of quarrying rock. Coincidentally, Charlton hired William Bannon to direct the quarrying operations. Bannon had relocated to Texas around 1902 where he had been engaged to quarry stone for the Pacific Railroad Company. He returned to California in 1906, when the SP hired him to blast rock that went into the levee used to redirect the runaway Colorado River back into is channel. The Bannons lived in a cabin leased from "old Bob [sic] Charlton" near the quarry, which produced some sandstone boulders similar to those produced by the former Chatsworth Park Quarry (Bannon 1974: 3-4 and 8; Cal 1906:130; and Ciolek-Torrello 2001:191-6).

DILLON / SANTA SUSANA QUARRY—1906-1919

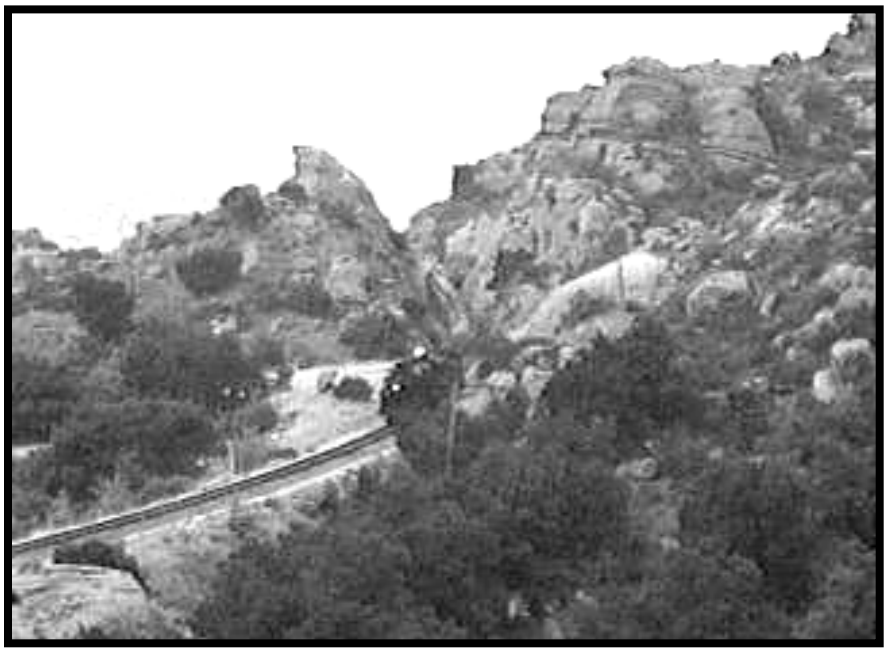
After the Charlton contract was up, Bannon relocated to another quarry site on the western side of the Santa Susana Pass. Located near the former Larry's Station stage stop, Joseph W. Bannon referred to it in his memoirs as the "Dillon Quarry." However, he also incongruously recalled that his father leased the land from its owner, "Old Man Smith" near the old stagecoach station (Larry's Station). He and his family lived in a cabin across the road from the Smith house, as did their neighbor, Ed Hall, a retired brakeman from the SP. Boarding house in what they now call the Santa Susana Park. The Ciolek-Torrello report states that "the Dillon Quarry operated for ten years." However, Joseph W. Bannon claimed that his father died sometime between "1907 or 1908." Whether this is true or not would have to be verified because Joseph was only five or six years old at the time of his father's death and seventy-two-years-old during his reminiscing. The widow Bannon was listed as living in Los Angles in the 1910 U. S. Census. However, according to the Ciolek-Torrello report, she had remarried by 1912. That year she and her new husband William Morris relocated to the former De la Osa adobe at the base of the pass road. They leased the land from the heirs of Edward P. Gray, who had passed away sometime earlier. The Morrisses lived there until at least 1919 (Bannon 1874:4 and 8; and Ciolek-Torrello 2001:197-198).

The history of the quarries operating in the Santa Susana Pass area can provide important information that will help researchers identify, evaluate, and interpret quarry-related features and artifacts found within Santa Susana State Historic Park. By placing these in their proper historic context, researchers will be able to tell the story of the men and women who literally scratched a living out of the stone mountains.

SANTA SUSANA PASS RAILROAD TUNNELS—1900-1941

Although the Southern Pacific Railroad's 1876 connection to Los Angeles curtailed the need for long-distance stage coach service in California, the railroad did not have a direct impact on the western San Fernando Valley and the area that is now Santa Susana SHP until after the turn of the 20th Century. This was due in part to the lack of a demand for rail service until the need rose to ship goods to and from the Chatsworth town site. In 1893 the Southern Pacific extended track off the main line from Burbank along the San Fernando Valley's southern region to Owensmouth (today's Canoga Park), where it extended northward to Chatsworth Park. Along the route were a number of small loading platforms and stock pens. The coming of the railroad to Chatsworth would play and important role in the shaping Santa Susan State Historic Park's cultural landscape. Without the railroad, William Bannon and others would not have been able to haul tons of sandstone out from their quarries. The result, unfortunately, was the scarring of the hillsides and the deposition of tons of debris and abandoned riprap. The extension of the railroad up, over, and through the Santa Susana Pass has also left an indelible mark on the landscape. In response to its unsuccessful effort to obtain a coastal right-of-way from Santa Monica to Ventura through the privately owned Malibu ranch, in 1900 Southern Pacific decided to bypass the latter in favor of a more inland route through the San Fernando and Simi Valleys to Ventura. Again starting at Burbank, the new line would travel diagonally to Chatsworth Park, where it met the earlier Owensmouth Branch Line. From here work crews marshaled men and equipment for the assault on the Santa Susana Pass tunnels. Completed in 1904, the three tunnels were tantamount to the completion of the railroad's Coast Line from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Serving as the "Coast Line Gateway" into the Los Angeles Basin, the Santa Susana Pass route became a major railroad passenger corridor. By 1910 it was responsible for carrying ten of the fourteen daily passenger trains running north between Los Angeles and San Francisco, supplanting the arduous Tehachapi route to the Central Valley (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:197 and 201; Roderick 2001:47 and 57; and Mullaly and Petty 2002:35, 40, 44 and 45).

The tunnels are historically significant for their engineering as well as economical importance. They represent part of the Southern Pacific Railroad's $247 million dollar investment in upgrading its rail network between 1900 and 1910. The new Coast Route provided a direct rail link for passengers, freight, and mail between Los Angeles and the Central Coast via the Santa Susana Pass. The 7,368-foot long west Tunnel No. 26 in particular, was the longest railroad tunnel in the United States at the time of its completion. Economically, the tunnels contributed to the Southland's growth and prosperity during the early 20th Century. First, they provided jobs for hundreds working directly on the tunnels as well as support enterprises. Second, their completion, along with the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913, attracted new settlers into the San Fernando Valley, which led to its annexation by the city of Los Angeles in 1915 (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:197; Pitt 2000:448; Roderick 2001:47, 54 and 62-63; and Mullaly and Petty 2002:47).



Steam Railroad Engine Traversing Santa Susana Pass, ca. 1948
Source: Duke 2006

The tunnels' construction also took its toll in human lives. During its 1900 to 1903 construction period, as many as eleven workers were killed, with many more injured and maimed from cave-ins, toxic gas, explosions, electrocution, even murder. For example, on October 9, 1903, a work train failed to stop and slammed into stationary work cars inside one of the tunnels. One of the worst accidents to occur after the tunnels' completion occurred on November 19, 1941. A malfunctioning steam locomotive hauling a 51-car freight train, including twelve loaded stock cars near the engine, stalled in Tunnel No. 26. Smoke, steam, and an ensuing fire killed the three crewmen in the engine cab, as well as two vagrants, and the three hundred head of cattle in the stock cars. The fire burned inside the

tunnel for three days, while the SP diverted rail traffic via the Santa Clarita Valley line. Local residents still remember the horrific stench that emanated from the tunnel as the burned up train was hauled back down to Chatsworth. In spite of these incidents, the tunnels continue to serve as part of a major rail transportation corridor. Likewise, they, along with the tracks and the mountains that they pierce, have been a major tourist destination for over sixty years. Beginning in the late 1940s, "rail fans" have traveled to and through the Santa Susana Pass tunnels just to observe and photograph trains. So much so that the area has become a familiar subject among railroad photographers (Ballard 2000; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:197; LAT 1901c:10; Mullaly and Petty 2002:172; and Watson 2004).

Because of their association with early 20th Century railroad engineering practices and link to the Coast Route's historic development, Southern Pacific Railway Tunnels Nos. 26, 27, and 28, and the right-of-way through the pass are potentially eligible for placement on both the California State Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. Although the tracks' right-of-way is an easement through Santa Susana State Historic Park, the area along same may contain historic archaeological artifacts associated with the tunnels' construction, such as the sites of work camps, power plants, and rock quarries used to produce roadway ballast.

"VALLEYWOOD": EARLY MOTION PICTURE LOCATIONS—1910-1970

In 1908, Gilbert Anderson began scouting film locations in a rugged little canyon near the village of Niles, just southeast of Oakland. Anderson had starred in the first major motion picture ever to be produced in the United States, Thomas Alva Edison's 1903 *The Great Train Robbery*, which was filmed in the wilds of New Jersey. Seeking to establish a motion picture production company of his own, he chose to relocate to California, to distance himself from Edison and other East Coast filmmakers, who controlled the patents on nearly all the available motion-picture cameras and projectors. Over the next six years, "Outlaw" filmmaker Anderson produced and starred in 375 Westerns as "Bronco Billy" Anderson. After visiting "sunny" Southern California, especially in the area around Los Angeles, he and other fledgling film producers realized that the region offered a longer filming season than Northern California, with a greater variety of scenic locations. More important, Southern California was a lot closer to the Mexican border which they could escape from Edison's patent attorneys (CHS 2000).

The San Fernando Valley, with its sunny climate, broad flat grassy plain, historic mission, adobes, and rugged mountains, offered a cornucopia of exotic movie locations. Among the pioneering and innovative early motion picture producers and directors to film in the valley were D. W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille, who produced over ten one-reel films in the valley between 1910 and 1915, the majority of which were "oaters" or westerns. Besides the topography, there were plenty of real cowboys and ranch hands on hand to work as extras, wranglers, or odd jobs. William Bannon's son, fifteen-year-old Joseph W. Bannon, was one such person. In 1916, Fox Movie Studio directors Chester A. and Sidney Franklin were filming *Jack and the Beanstalk* in what is now Santa Susana SHP. According to Bannon, "All the kids in the [Chatsworth] area" were in the film, with "Some [working] as pigmies in a village in the little canyon back of [the Miranda] home." Nearby, "up on the hill on the left side of the [current Oak Wood] cemetery was a "false-fronted castle." The latter may be the spot where an abandoned iron boilerplate water tank now stands. Bannon's primary job was to drive a wagon carrying actor Jim G. Tarver, who played the "giant" up the hill to the "castle" each morning. Bannon remembered that Tarver was "huge—he was 8 foot 4 . . . . and weighed 350 pounds" (Bannon 1974:5; IMDb 1990-22007; and Roderick 2001:85-87).

Besides Jack and the Beanstalk, five additional motion pictures appear to have been filmed within what are now Santa Susana State Historic Park's boundaries prior to World War I. They were *Man's Genesis*, *Home Sweet Home*, *Brute Force*, *Judith of Bethulia*, and *Twas Ever Thus*. Pioneer film director D. W. Griffith (*Birth of a Nation*) directed the first four, which (combined) featured the early work of Mack Sennett (who would go on to found a studio of his own) and noted actors Lionel Barrymore, Donald Crisp, Dorothy and Lilian Gish, Western hero Harry Carey Sr., and Elmo Lincoln (The first film Tarzan). The fifth was the work of Hobart Bosworth, the "Dean of Hollywood," who directed, wrote, produced, and acted in over 332 motion pictures from 1908 to 1942 (IMDb 1990-22007; and Schneider 2005b).

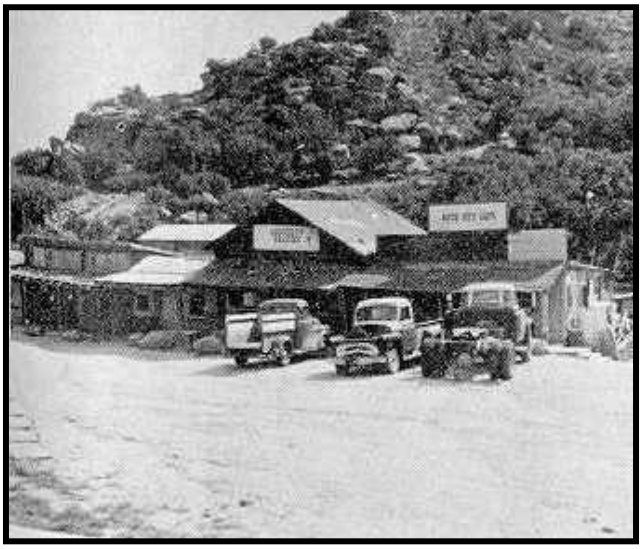
As the motion picture industry developed, the Santa Susana Pass' rugged landscape began to attract more and more film production companies looking for exotic exterior locations. This was especially true for Westerns, in which spectacular landscapes were an essential part of the genre. Additional research may reveal additional movies filmed within the Park that featured the historic quarry site or the Devil's Slide wagon road. For example, the 1949 Republic Pictures oater, *Susanna Pass*, the title of which bears a more than coincidental similarity to Santa Susana State Historic Park, featured the nearby Chatsworth

Reservoir to the south and the Corrigan Ranch on the western side of the Santa Susana Pass summit as location backgrounds. The film's star, the phenomenally popular Roy Rogers, lived on a ranch close to Santa Susana State Historic Park's southern boundary (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:69; IMDb 1990-22007; and Watson 2004).

MOVIE RANCHES

As the genre's popularity increased, more and more motion picture and later television production companies frequented the Chatsworth/Santa Susana Pass area for location shoots. Taking advantage of the situation were a number of local ranchers who converted sections of their ranches into mock "Western Towns," complete with false-front main street, barns, and corrals. Two of the most famous located near Santa Susana State Historic Park were the previously mentioned Iverson and Corrigan ranches. Among the most utilized ranches in motion picture history, over 800 motion pictures and television series were filmed at these two locations. Among the more notable were Cecil B. deMille's *Squaw Man* (1914), John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) and *Fort Apache* (1948) both starring John Wayne, *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin* (1954-1959), *The Cisco* Kid (1950-1956), *The Lone* Ranger, *The Roy Rogers Show* (1951-1957), and *Bonanza* (1959-1973) (IMDb 1990-22007; and Schneider 2005a and 2005b).

Three lesser known "movie ranches" in the neighboring area were the Bell, Berry, and Spahn ranches. The Bell and Berry ranches were located northwest of Santa Susana State Historic Park, past Lilac Lane, between Studio and Box Canyon roads. With the exception of *Hombre* (1967), starring Paul Newman, they were used primarily for B-Western movies. However, a number of television Westerns, which helped to define the genre during the early to mid-1950s, utilized these ranches for location shots. They included the Disney Studio's *Zorro* (1957-1959) *Have Gun Will Travel* (1957-1963) *Gunsmoke* (1955-1975), and *Bonanza*. Exterior locations for the *Lone Ranger* and *Bonanza* were also shot at the third movie ranch. Located along Santa Susana State Park's northern boundary, less than 20 yards south of the Santa Susana Pass Grade Road, the Spahn Ranch also featured a mock Western town, with the Longhorn Saloon, Rock City Café, and undertaking parlor, jail and horse corrals. However, the ranch never attracted the type of A-list film producers, directors, and stars like its neighbors. By the late 1960s movie production consisted of low-budget pornographic films (Bonanza 2004; Bugliosi 1974:100 and 120; and IMDb 1990-22007).



Spahn Ranch, ca. 1955
Upper Left: "Main Street"
Right: Ranch Complex; Santa Susana Pass Road at Bottom of Picture
Source: Schneider 2005b

The decline of the Spahn Ranch mirrors the problems that eventually beset its neighbors. By the mid-1960s the movie-going public had lost its interest in Westerns, especially the formulaic television variety. Acerbating the problem was the construction of the Simi Valley Freeway beginning in 1968. The freeway's construction, which cut through the Iverson and Corriganville ranches, created so much noise that filming at the other ranches was next to impossible. Only the Spahn Ranch seemed to attract some filming, albeit pornographic, which reflected a growth industry developing throughout the San Fernando Valley at the time (Bonanza 2004; and Smith 1963:C14).

SPAHN MOVIE RANCH AND THE MANSON FAMILY

Whether due to advanced age, economics, or personal choice, 90-year-old George Spahn allowed his ranch to attract real life "outlaws" who used the abandoned ranch as a major auto theft "chop shop." One of the thieves was 35-year-old Charles Miller Manson, who, along with his "family" of followers, was associated with one of the most notorious and highly publicized mass murders in modern

times. On August 9 and 10, 1969, several select Manson Family members conducted raids from the Spahn Ranch which resulted in the horrific murders of seven wealthy people in the Beverly Hills section of Los Angeles, among them motion picture actress Sharon Tate. While not the first, and sadly not the last case of serial killings in the United States, the murders committed by Manson and his "Family" while living at the Spahn Movie Ranch are regarded as "a watershed moment in the evolving social structure of our society." The Manson case can be regarded as a metaphor for the end of innocence of the decade of love, peace, and sharing that changed the heart of America. Some thirty-five years later, the bizarre murders, trial, and participants have not lost their impact on the nation's psyche (Bugliosi 1974:56 and 129).

In September 1970 a huge brushfire extending from Newhall to the sea completely destroyed the Spahn Movie Ranch complex. The following year George Spahn sold his property to a German real estate investment company, which planned on developing it into a dude ranch resort for German tourists. The plan never materialized, sections of the ranch were eventually sold to the Church at Rocky Peak, while that part of the ranch that contained the site of the Western town and corral was sold to the State of California around 1984 and incorporated into the newly proposed Santa Susana State Historical Park (Bugliosi 1974:514-515; and Cal 1984:1).

A COMMUNITY REMEMBERS—1939-1993

As a result of the influx of new businesses and residents into the San Fernando Valley both before and immediately after World War II, old time residents became increasingly alarmed at impending threats to the area's character and sense of place. Suburbanization was inexorably creeping into the valley along major highways impacting the very attributes that made the area desirable to live in the first place. Among the earliest loss of historic resources was the previously mentioned Lopez Station that was obliterated by a 1912 reservoir construction project. Local and statewide historic organizations and groups like the Landmarks Club and the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West soon formed to promote the identification and preservation of historic resources through their own landmarks recognition program. Their work, which resulted in the first state-wide historic resource survey, served as a model for subsequent generations of preservationists to follow (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:69; and Roderick 2001:30).

NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF THE GOLDEN WEST COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

Almost forty-five years after the old stage route's abandonment, shortly after 3 p.m. on March 17, 1939 members of the Topanga Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW), along with a large number of local residents and members of pioneer California families, including noted motion picture actor and California Beach and Parks Commissioner Leo Carrillo, hiked midway along the Devil's Slide to commemorate the road's historic significance. An organization composed of native-born California women; the NDGW, like the Native Sons of the Golden West, was dedicated to preserving the state's historic sites through a landmark designation program. Five days earlier, it had donated and presented a dedicatory bronze plaque to the curator of Mission San Fernando to commemorate the mission's religious and historical significance. One of the NDGW's local members, 43-year-old Mrs. Minnie Hill Palmer, was instrumental in organizing the event at Santa Susana Pass. Mrs. Palmer, whose family had homesteaded the area while she was a child, offered to have a commemorative plaque affixed to a rocky knoll overlooking the road (Goldman 1973b:33; LAT 1939a:A9, 1939:10; and NDGW 2004).

Still visible from the old stagecoach road, the mosaic tile plaque reads:

OLD SANTA SUSANNA

STAGE COACH ROAD

1859-90

MARKED MARCH 17, 1939

NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

TOPANCO [SIC] PARLOR 269[6]

Heralded by the Canoga Park Girls' Drum and Trumpet Corps, members of the NDGW, some in period dress, along with author and self-appointed promoter of Mission-era California John Steven McGroarty, dedicated the plaque in memory of the early Franciscan padres and Mission Indians for pioneering the first road

[6] Goldman (1973b) refers to the local NDGW parlor as "Topanga." It is possible that it was misspelled on the plaque and never corrected.

over the Santa Susana Pass as linking Mission San Buenaventura with San Fernando, indicating that the road's provenance was earlier than its use as a stagecoach road. Another of the participants, Willard C. Johnson, the son of homesteaders Neils and Ann Johnson, reported what it was like riding his horse and wagon over the road. Johnson also stated that his and "other pioneer families . . . have relics [that] they dug up on the [stagecoach] depot site [sic]." Among these items were "pieces of old harness, rusty buckles and horseshoes and spokes from wagon wheels" (LAT 1939c:18; and SSMPA n.d.:1).

NDGW Plaque
Looking Southwest
Taken 4-August-2004 by
Alexander D. Bevil
Photograph Number:
04_08_10_SSP_NDGWPlaque_2150.JPG

When Mrs. Palmer sold the property to the Birkenkamp family, the latter promised to have the NDGW hold an easement on the plaque. As of 1973, it was not known if such an arrangement had ever been recorded. At that time Douglas Palmer (no relation to Minnie) owned the property. Palmer also owned 136 acres within Santa Susana State Historic Park encompassing the remains of the De la Osa stage relay station and Bannon quarry site. His neighbor, Leland Webster, reportedly owned forty-two acres to the north (Goldman 1973b).

THE SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION—1969-1979

While the NDGW's efforts were commemorative in nature, another thirty years would pass before there was a concerted effort to actually preserve the remains of the stage coach road and other historic sites within the area. The actual and potential loss of the natural environment through encroaching residential development initiated the preservation process. The seemingly callous destruction

of an ancient stand of oaks north of the Chatsworth Reservoir, and a proposed trash dump site in a beautiful canyon south of the stagecoach road were the catalysts that caused a number of local activists to organize themselves to protest such activities. Known as the "Chatsworth Beautiful" group, it would evolve into the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association [SSMPA], which sought to preserve the Santa Susana Mountains' "freshness, openness, unplanned, and unstructured beauty" by having this area set aside as a regional Park (Hinkston 1973:6)

The SSMPA, along with the Sierra Club, America the Beautiful, and Simi Valley Beautiful groups, conducted natural, archaeological, and historic studies of the Santa Susana Mountains, especially the eastern and western approaches to the Santa Susana Pass. Through their efforts they were able to persuade local and state politicians to convince federal authorities to consider expanding their study of a proposed Santa Monica Mountain Park to include the Santa Susana Pass area northwest of Chatsworth. Unfortunately, the project was set back when the 1970 wildfire swept through the area, destroying many homes nearby. If anything positive came out of this, the fires helped to clear brush, revealing more of the stage coach road and other historic features. This in turn led to the SSMPA initiating and conducting a series of guided tours or "hike-ins" along the road. Volunteer guides would point out and explain the historical significance of several important features along the route, including the De la Osa swing station and Bannon Quarry sites. This led to the road's designation as a Los Angeles County and State of California Point of Historical Interest, City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 92, and listing on the National Register of Historic Places on January 10, 1974. The latter included the way station and quarry operation site ruins, along with several prehistoric sites (Cal 1971:1; Ciolek-Torrello 2001:201-202; Hinkston 1973:7-8; and Besson 1971 and 2004).

In 1973 the State of California conducted and produced a "Reconnaissance Study of the Santa Susana Mountains" which recognized the historical importance of the stagecoach road and the 178 acres surrounding it. That same year, Charles Outland discussed the significance of the Santa Susana Pass stagecoach road in his book, *Stagecoaching the El Camino Real*. Synonymous with Outland's publication, the SSMPA published a booklet, *Santa Susana, over the Pass, into the Past* that was based on its research into the road and the surrounding area's historic significance in preparation of the National Register and other nomination reports. Both publications stressed the road's importance as "the major transportation link between Los Angeles and San Francisco during the years 1861-1874" (SSMPA n.d.:1)

SANTA SUSANA STATE HISTORIC PARK—1979-1993

Despite the historic designations, the area was still threatened by development. In 1972 property owners Douglas Palmer and Leland Webster had proposed to develop their respective parcels. Webster's proposed project in particular, a mobile home Park near the upper stagecoach road, was met with renewed local opposition. This led the SSMPA to intensify its campaign to preserve the area's natural and historic resources. As a result, in 1972 the City of Los Angeles acquired fifty-five acres west of Devonshire Street and Shadow Oak Drive, which included the Minnie Hill-Palmer House, a branch of the Santa Susana Pass stagecoach road, and the former Devonshire Golf Course and adjacent skeet range, all of which became the Chatsworth Park South. On January 5, 1972 the City of Los Angeles designated road section as a Historic/Cultural Monument. Two years later, on November 20, the city designated the Minnie Hill-Palmer House. The Chatsworth Historical Society has restored and maintains the latter as the Homestead House and operates an adjacent historical museum and archive center. The historic stagecoach road section has been preserved and adapted as a hiking/equestrian trail. Three years later, the State of California acquired the upper forty-two acre Webster property and included it into the California Department of Parks and Recreation system as the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. From 1979 to 1992, it sought to acquire and attach additional parcels into Santa Susana State Historic Park's boundaries. When the California Department of Parks and Recreation acquired the Ramsbottom parcel in 1992, it added a large section to the Park's lower half that included additional prehistoric and historical sites (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:202; Hinkston 1973:9; and Roderick 2001:195; and Miller 1998:B1).

Another devastating wildfire in 1993 produced both positive and negative results. First, it exposed a previously hidden stone cistern and other historic archaeological features. Second, in an attempt to clear access roads, Southern California Edison crews damaged a number of these resources. The resulting mitigation provided funding for several archaeological and historical surveys and studies performed by private consultants and California State Park staff to determine the extent of the damage. Based on these studies and reports, a large body of information has been gathered that has contributed to a greater understanding of Santa Susana State Historic Park's history and the value of the archaeological and historical sites and features contained within its boundaries (Ciolek-Torrello 2001:227).

CONCLUSION

The Santa Susana Pass Wagon Road, particularly the Devil's Slide section, along with the ruins associated with the De la Osa swing station and Bannon's Quarry are listed on national, state, and local registers. However, recent historical research and newly discovered physical evidence suggests that there are additional historical resources within the Parks boundaries to build upon and update the National Register designation. The designation may expand into a larger Cultural Landscape District, or historic Preserve that would include previously and newly recorded character-defining features and elements, both natural and man-made.[7] Within the district's expanded boundaries would be a number o component historic landscape features that would include paleontological as well as historical archaeological sites, structures, objects, and features like the stagecoach road segments, the De la Osa/Bannon Adobe ruins, and the sandstone quarry site, that add depth and context to the Park's historical significance.

Taken within the larger context of the its historical record, Santa Susana State Historic Park has been witness to the ebb and flow of activities that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of California's settlement, transportation, and stone extractive industry for over 145 years. In addition, these activities are associated with the lives of significant historic individuals who played major roles in local, state, and national history. The changes they made to the land, along with the remnants of their homes and activities, have the potential to yield important information critical for understanding and interpreting our collective past.

[7] A Cultural Landscape District is a geographic area, including natural and cultural resources and wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. See: Birnbaum 1996:4.

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APPENDIX 1

DESIGNATED/LISTED HISTORICAL RESOURCES AT SANTA SUSANA SHP

OLD SANTA SUSANA STAGE ROAD

Old Santa Susana Stage Road, aka Stagecoach Trail, Devils Slide, El Camino de Santa Susana y Simi

Status: National Register Listing, 1971
Los Angeles County Point of Historical Interest, 1971-72
City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 92, 1971-72

Location: WNW of Chatsworth off CA 18; in the N.W. Corner of the San Fernando Valley within Township No. 2, North Range, 17 West. Going east from the NW corner of Section #14 at the intersection of Lilac Lane Road to a point ¼ mile north of the SE corner of Sections #13 and #14, which is approximately north of the Oak Wood Cemetery.

Significance: One of principal roads over the Santa Susana Mountains, used as regular stage coach trail by 1859 [sic]. Parts of trail and foundations of 2 relay stations visible. Also included are two archeological sites—a midden and rockshelter with pictographs representing Late Period (c. 800-1000 to 1800) base-camp occupations. *Multiple private.*

Period of Historic Significance: 1850-1895

Comments: The original nomination should be re-written and updated to reflect current scholarship. For example, the resource's Period of Historic Significance

SANTA SUSANA STAGE ROAD

Status: State of California—Point of Historical Interest, 23 September 1971

Location: N.W. corner San Fernando Valley Township #2, North Range 17 West, Sections #13 and #14

Significance: The Old Santa Susana Stage Road originated [in] 1859 and improved to full completion [in] 1875. during those years it was used as a stage route over [the] Santa Susana Pass from Los Angeles to Ventura, carrying mail, freight, and passengers, by the Butterfield Co. [sic] and the Overland Mail Co. Daughters of the Golden West placed a plaque on the Stage Road in 1939, high in the mountains, marking the route. Near the plaque are steps cut in stone on the stage road to prevent horses from sliding on the steep incline. Some early maps indicate this stage road as the Overland Stage Road from Simi

Valley over Santa Susana Pass to San Luis Obispo. Records indicate many difficult rides over this pass.

Owners: Mr. and Mrs. Leland Webster, Douglas and Clarence Palmer (1971)

APPENDIX 2

The following is a set of guidelines that can be used to identify, record, and evaluate previously recorded or newly discovered historic resources for inclusion into the expanded Santa Susana Pass Cultural Landscape District National Register property boundaries. To do so, they must first be categorized as to whether or not they constitute a building, structure, object, site, or district. Secondly, they must be determined whether or not they are eligible for listing on the National and/or State Registers of Historic Places. Thirdly, they must be evaluated within an approximate historic context to determine their historic significance. Finally, it must be determined whether of not they have maintained their historic integrity or ability to convey their significance.

RESOURCE CATEGORIES

Historic resources can include buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes. Both the NRHP and the CRHR classify historic resources as the following:

A. Building: a structure created principally to shelter any form of human activity. The term "building" may also refer to a historically related unit, such as a house and barn or a house and corral.
B. Structure: a building used for purposes other than human shelter. Examples: earthwork, rockwork cistern, graded road, or a railroad grade.
C. Object: a construction that is either artistic in nature or relatively small in scale. Examples: monument plaque, steel cable, metal can or glass bottle
D. Site: the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself maintains associative historical or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure. Example: ruins of a building or structure, quarry site
E. District: a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district may also comprise discontiguous individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history. Example: transportation networks, industrial complexes
F. Cultural Landscape: a geographic area, including natural and cultural resources as well as the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated

with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

There are four types of cultural landscapes, that are not mutually exclusive of one another:

a) Historic Site—associated with a historic event, activity of person.
b) Historic Designed Landscapes—consciously designed or laid out by a professional landscape architect, master gardener, architect, engineer, or horticulturist according to design principles, or by an amateur gardener working in a recognizes style or tradition
c) Historic Vernacular Landscapes—evolved through use by people whose activities or occupancy shaped it.
d) Ethnographic Landscapes—contains a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as a heritage resource (Birnbaum 1996:4-5; and NPS 1998:4-5).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The California Department of Parks and Recreation recognizes historic cultural resources within its purview based on their eligibility, or potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Only by applying the criteria for eligibility can significance be determined. Normally a resource has to be at least fifty years old for consideration for listing on either the NHRP or CRHR registers. In certain cases, however, a resource less than fifty years old may be eligible for listing if it is an integral part of a historic district that meets the criteria or if it is of exceptional importance in its own right.

To qualify for listing, a historic cultural resource must meet one or more of the following criteria:

A. The resource is associated with an event, or series of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history.
B. The resource has an unequivocal association with the lives of people significant in the past.
C. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
D. The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to history or prehistory (NPS 1998:2).

EVALUATING HISTORIC CONTEXT

A principal means for evaluating a property's historic significance is to determine its relationship to a particular theme within its historic context. These themes can be used to create research questions that, when combined with the historical and archaeological record can help California State Parks better understand and interpret Santa Susana State Historic Park's historic significance (NPS 1997:38-39 and NPS 1998:4-5 and 22).

The following is a list of themes that can be used to organize historic time into coherent patterns that have influenced Santa Susana State Historic Park's development during one or more periods of its history. They can be used to place and categorize Santa Susana State Historic Park's recorded and potentially eligible historic resources into their applicable historic context. In addition, several research questions are included that will hopefully stimulate further research into developing and broadening these historical contexts:

ARCHEOLOGY

Period: 1804-1942
Theme: The archaeological study of non-aboriginal people during historic times
Significance: Understanding the lives of people who lived, worked, died, or traveled through the Santa Susana Pass area during historic times.
Research Questions: What information can be gleaned from archaeological resources within Santa Susana State Historic Park that would help California State Parks to better interpret the lives, ethnicity, living, and work habits of those living and working in the area? Can the archaeological record be used to provide information on their ethnic makeup, social, marital, and economic status? How can this information be used to complement, supplement, or refute the historic record? Is there physical evidence of the second wagon road within the State Park's Boundaries? Is their enough surviving historic archaeological features to constitute a cultural landscape?

NATIVE AMERICAN CONTACT WITH EURO-AMERICAN EXPLORERS AND SETTLERS

Period: 1769–early 1900s
Theme: Conflict, change, and accommodation between opposing cultures
Significance: First contacts between native California Indian and Euro-American Colonial cultures; rapid deterioration of Native American settlements, lifestyles, cultures, and traditions due to Euro-American diseases, acculturation, and encroachment; adaptation of Native California Indian populations to resist or accommodate Euro-American encroachments.

Research Questions: Is there any physical evidence of the interaction of California Indians with Euro-American colonists during the Spanish Colonial, Mexican Republic, and Early American Periods? At what levels were local California Indians integrated into the work force?

ETHNIC HERITAGE

Period: 1804-1892

Theme: The history of persons having a common ethnic or racial identity

Significance: The lives of pioneer Hispanic Californians who settled, lived, or worked in the area and how they interacted with other ethnic groups

Research Questions: Who were the De la Osas? How did their ethnic heritage, tradition, religion, and mores translate themselves in their perception and interaction with the physical world?

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period: 1769-1888

Theme: The investigation and expansion of geographical knowledge by an individual or group of explorers; the establishment and development of new settlements and communities

Significance: The exploration and development of new routes of travel and communication and areas of settlement in the northwestern section of the San Fernando Valley.

Research Questions: Is there any physical evidence of the relationship between Santa Susana State Historic Park and the periods of Spanish exploration and settlement of the western San Fernando Valley? What role did the area play during the Mexican Republican period? What was the relationship between the area's settlement and the economic growth of the nearby community of Chatsworth Park? Who were the people who lived and worked at the De la Osa and subsequent Bannon family adobe? What were their ethnic makeup and social status?

AGRICULTURE

Period: 1858-1903

Theme: The process and technology of cultivating soil, projecting crops, and raising livestock and plants

Significance: Early agricultural methods and techniques in use in the northwestern San Fernando Valley.

Research Questions: Is there any evidence of agricultural activities or stock raising within Santa Susana State Historic Park during the Mexican and immediately after the subsequent Early American Periods? Who were involved in

these activities? What was their ethnic makeup? Is there physical evidence of historic campsites associated with transient herders? How old are the lines of olive trees associated with the De la Osa/Bannon adobe at La Cuesta? What role did they have in the lives of the families? Were they used as windbreaks in addition to fruit-bearing trees for food and oil, or a combination of both?

TRANSPORTATION

Period: 1804-1955
Theme: The process and technology of conveying passengers or materials
Significance: Pioneer individuals and organizations and the efforts and technology they used to transport goods and people up and over the Santa Susana Pass
Research Questions: Did the early stage lines follow trails first used by California Indians, early Euro-American colonial explorers, or Mexican *vaqueros* or *pastores*? How were the wagon roads constructed and by whom? What was it like traveling along the road, especially up or down the Devil's Slide? What types of vehicles were used? Who drove them? Where were they manufactured? How can the historic wagon roads be distinguished from other dirt roads within Santa Susana State Historic Park? How much of the quarry railroad spur line's embankment is extant? Is there physical evidence of the temporary work camps and structures built to support the construction of the three railroad tunnels? What were their ethnic makeup and social status? What were the hazards inherent in their work? Is there physical evidence that can be used to trace the historic route of the railroad spur used to haul rip rap out of the quarry site to the San Pedro breakwater? Is there evidence of other wagon roads within the State Park's Boundaries?

INDUSTRY

Period: 1891-1919
Theme: The means by which people applied labor, technology, and equipment to extract, process, and transport raw materials from mines or quarries
Significance: The early development of extractive industries in the Chatsworth Hills area.
Research Questions: Who worked in the quarries? Who supervised their work? What were their ethnic makeup, social status, and pay scale? What were the techniques used to quarry sandstone? How did they choose areas to quarry? What were the hazards inherent in their work? Where did they live while employed at the quarry? What were their living conditions like? What products did they consume on a daily basis? Where did they acquire these goods from? Was there a concerted effort on the part of William Bannon to defraud the contractor by supplying substandard stone for the San Pedro breakwater project or was he a victim of circumstance? How can the visible drill holes, tool marks, and debris

scattered throughout the quarry area be used to explain blasting and other quarry activities? Is there enough physical evidence to suggest that the quarry site constitutes a historic landscape? Are there surviving examples of quarried rip rap and dressed sandstone from the Chatsworth Park Quarry in the Greater Los Angeles area? Did prospectors drill test holes in the area looking for petroleum deposits?

ART
Period: 1939
Theme: The creation of a painting, sculpture, or other decorative art for commemorative purposes.
Site/Object: The Native Daughters of the Golden West's mosaic plaque commemorating the Santa Susana Pass Wagon Road.*

PERFORMING ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT
Period: 1915-1954
Theme: Pioneer motion picture and television production using the natural landscape as a backdrop for exotic locales
Significance: Hollywood studios' use of the Chatsworth Hills area as a popular location for motion pictures and television series during their pioneer and golden ages.
Research Questions: Other than *Jack and the Beanstalk*, what other motion pictures and/or television productions were filmed within Santa Susana State Historic Park's current boundaries? What role did these films and television shows have in promoting the viewing public's perception of the American West? Were there any notable producers, directors, or stars associated with these productions? Were there any innovative production or directorial techniques associated with these productions?

INTEGRITY

Even if a historic cultural resource has meet one or more of the above criteria within the context of the themes by which a specific event, person, design, workmanship, or activity contributed to its period of historic significance, it must retain enough of its historic integrity. This is the resource's ability to convey its significance through the retention of enough historic material or fabric from its period of historic significance. In order for a resource must be able to convey its historic integrity, it must retain enough, but not necessarily all, of the following aspects:

A. Location—the place where a historic event occurred or the place where a historic resource was constructed.
B. Design—the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
C. Setting—the physical environment of a historic resource.
D. Materials—the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic resource.
E. Workmanship—the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history of prehistory.
F. Feeling—a resource's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
G. Association—the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic resource

The ultimate question of integrity can only be answered by whether or not the resource has been able to retain the identity for which it is significant. While alterations or changes in their historic use may impact a resource's historic integrity, sometimes these changes may add to the resource's historical, cultural, or architectural significance. However, if a historical resource has lost sufficient integrity to meet the National Register criteria for listing, it may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources if it maintains the potential to yield significant historical or scientific information. Likewise, if a resource has lost its historic appearance, it may be listed as a historic site if the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value (NPS 1998:5, 44-45).