

HABS \_\_\_\_\_ HAER \_\_\_\_\_ Loc \_\_\_\_\_ Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
SHL No. \_\_\_\_\_ NR Status 3  
UTM: A \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Wilder Ranch State Park
2. Historic name: Wilder Ranch / Bolcoff Adobe Bonny Doon Area
3. Street or rural address: 1401 Coast Road  
City Santa Cruz, Ca Zip 95060 County Santa Cruz
4. Parcel number: 059-141-02, 03, 10
5. Present Owner: State of California Address: 7500 Soquel Dr.  
City Aptos Zip 95003 Ownership is: Public XX Private \_\_\_\_\_
6. Present Use: State Park Original use: Dairy Ranch

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Mixed including adobe, 19th Century vernacular, and Eastlake
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical appearance* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

Please see description attached



See description

8. Construction date: ca. 1835 - 1946  
Estimated \_\_\_\_\_ Factual \_\_\_\_\_
9. Architect For Melvin Wilder House  
Edward Van Cleeck, others unk.
10. Builder For Melvin Wilder House  
H.L. Middleton, others unknow
11. Approx. property size (in feet)  
Frontage \_\_\_\_\_ Depth \_\_\_\_\_  
or approx. acreage 4,000 acres
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)  
June 1988

Melvin Wilder House: Excellent

Meder farmhouse, bunkhouse, horsebarn, granary, and garage: Fair Cow Barn: Good Adobe, most outbuildings: Deteriorated

13. Condition: Excellent \_\_\_ Good \_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_ Deteriorated \_\_\_ No longer in existence \_\_\_

14. Alterations: See Architectural Description

15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land XX Scattered buildings XX Densely built-up \_\_\_ Residential \_\_\_ Industrial \_\_\_ Commercial \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_

16. Threats to site: None known \_\_\_ Private development \_\_\_ Zoning \_\_\_ Vandalism \_\_\_ Public Works project \_\_\_ Other: weathering and neglect

17. Is the structure: On its original site? XX Moved? \_\_\_ Unknown? \_\_\_

18. Related features: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly-state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

Wilder Ranch was one of the largest, most prosperous, innovative and prestigious dairies in Santa Cruz County from the 1870s through the early 1900s. It was a leader in an industry that was once a widespread and thriving throughout the county. The Wilder family introduced a number of innovations, of which evidence still remains: the use of Pelton water wheels to run farm machinery including a mechanical cream separator, the early introduction of electricity for home and dairy use, and purchase of a car in 1903.

The ranch is also significant for the adobe, one of only four remaining in the county from the Mission/Rancho era. It was built for Jose Antonio Bolcoff, a Russian who settled in the Monterey Bay area and married Candida Castro, who had inherited the property that was originally a land grant to her father. It was known in the Bolcoff/Castro era as Rancho Refugio. Recent research indicates that dairying was done at the Ranch by Bolcoff; this was very unusual for the Spanish and Californio settlers of the Rancho era, but was associated with other Russian settlers in the Fort Ross area and further north. Thus the Ranch was probably the forerunner of the dairy industry in Santa Cruz County.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)

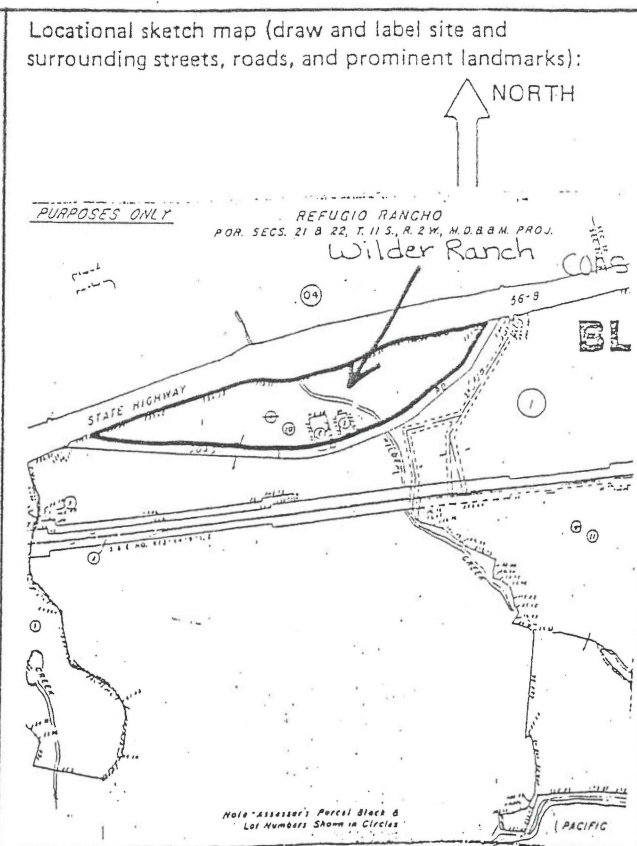
Architecture \_\_\_ Arts & Leisure \_\_\_ Economic/Industrial X Exploration/Settlement \_\_\_ Government \_\_\_ Military \_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_ Social/Education \_\_\_

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

Edna Kimbro, 1987  
Wilder Family records  
State Parks Interpretive Plan  
1986

22. Date form prepared June 30, 1988  
By (name) Cynthia Mathews  
Organization Historic Resources Commission  
Address: 701 Ocean St., Rm 40B  
City Santa Cruz CA Zip 95060  
Phone: 408 425-2785

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



7b. Describe present physical appearance:

The Wilder Ranch is a complex of homes and dairy buildings clustered in a protected vale; all but one of the structures were built between 1830 - 1912. They can best be described individually:

A. Bolcoff adobe, constructed ca. 1835. Sandstone foundation and adobe walls with red tile roof that projects the full length of the front facade. Two wooden doors provide separate entrance to the two interior rooms. Dirt floor. Adobe is badly deteriorated on back side. Cement buttresses added in the 1950s.

B. Moses Meder Farmhouse, 1850s, later remodeled, with 1912 addition. Older part of the house is a story and a half house with cross gables, originally built with carpenter gothic details. Now considerably simpler; shiplap siding with touches of gingerbread trim over front porch; double hung windows. Addition was built in 1912 after fire destroyed an earlier wing. Simple two story vernacular house with shiplap siding, double hung windows, and particular elements of style. Original bell to call workers to meals is by back door.

C. Melvin Wilder House, built 1896-7. An imposing two story Eastlake style home with considerable embellishment, similar to many built in the city of Santa Cruz at this same time. Multi-gabled, semi-hipped roof with incised bargeboard, turned gable ornaments, and dormers. Slanted projecting bays at front and side. Shiplap siding on first story; fishscale shingles on second story, with decorative brackets at corners. During the 1930s the front porch was enclosed and a second-story addition built on the back.

D. Cow Barn, ca. 1860. Whitewashed board and batten barn with pitched roof of corrugated metal and small windows running the length of the barn on both sides. Main doors at both ends, with secondary (smaller) doors on the sides. Inside reveals original hand hewn beams and second floor loft. Barn straddles Meder Creek. An extension was built in the later 1800s and demolished in the 1950s.

E. Granary, ca. 1880s: Whitewashed board and batten barn, two stories with door raised 4-5 feet from ground level. Simple pitched roof with composition shingle.

F. Horse barn, ca. 1891-2. Elegant and imposing two story barn of painted shiplap siding; hipped, broken pitch roof has fishscale shingles and front dormers. Inside, arched stalls are carefully detailed and painted in three colors. Floor is of original bitumen, quarried locally. Windows at front and sides; major entrance at front with secondary access on east side. Original weathervane is on top.

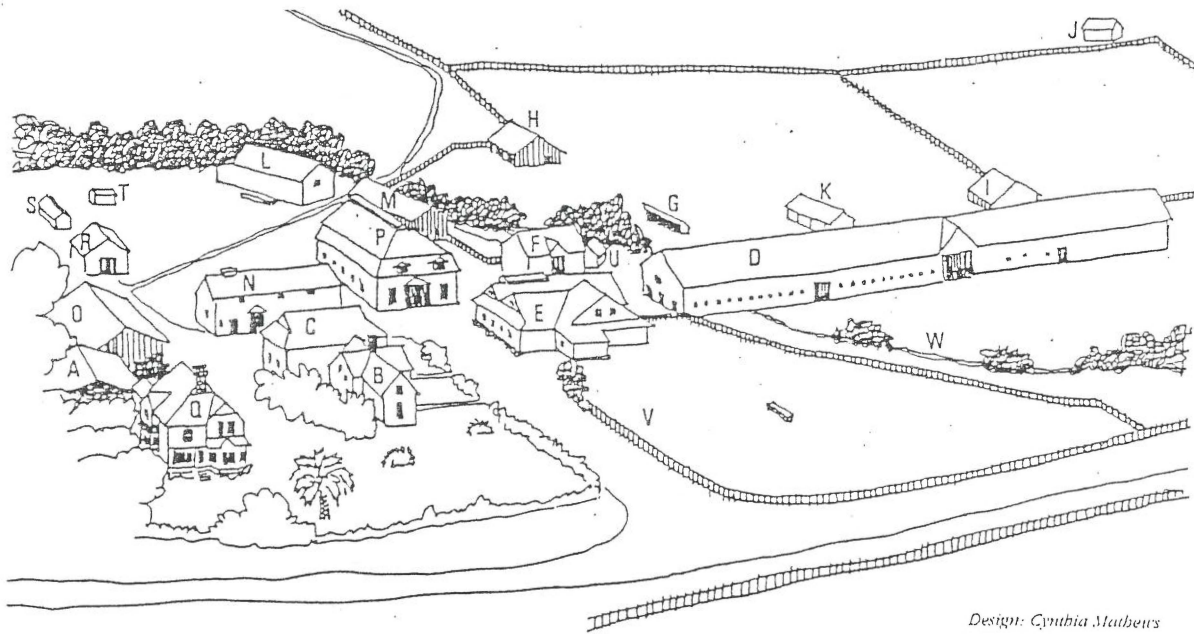
G. Shop and bunkhouse, ca. 1900. Vernacular two story building of shiplap siding, multi-paned windows. Classical detailed pediment over door uses details similar to horse barn: patterned shingles and dentelles. Left side houses blacksmith shop with forge; right side houses workshop with Pelton water wheels driving a variety of machinery with overhead shaft and belts. Bunkhouse for hired hands on second floor.

H. Garage, ca. 1903: vernacular board and batten, whitewashed with shake roof.

Numerous other outbuildings contribute to the historic appearance and significance of the ranch. Most are weathered board and batten (originally whitewashed) with pitched or shed roofs of shake. See attached map.

## Buildings of the Historic Wilder Ranch Complex *from an aerial photo, late 30's*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Bolcoff Adobe (1830's)</li> <li>B. Moses A. Meder House (1850's, remodeled later)</li> <li>C. Wilder addition (Ca. 1912)</li> <li>D. Dairy barn (left portion Ca. 1860's; right portion demolished 1950's)</li> <li>E. Creamery (remodeled after 1892; burned 1957)</li> <li>F. Granary (1880's)</li> <li>G. Dairy heifer training shed</li> <li>H. Dairy heifer feed shed</li> <li>I. Bull shed for breed bulls</li> <li>J. Springhouse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>K. Manure storage shed</li> <li>L. Storage barn; pig pen in rear</li> <li>M. Dray horse (work horse) barn</li> <li>N. Shop and bunkhouse (Ca. 1900)</li> <li>O. Equipment and wagon house (Ca. 1879)</li> <li>P. Horse barn (Ca. 1891-92)</li> <li>Q. Melvin Wilder House (1896-97)</li> <li>R. Garage (Ca. 1903)</li> <li>S. Corn Crib</li> <li>T. Old wooden tank</li> <li>U. Slaughterhouse</li> <li>V. Site of newest house (Ca. 1946-48)</li> <li>W. Meder Creek (also: Arroyo de Matadero, Wilder Creek)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

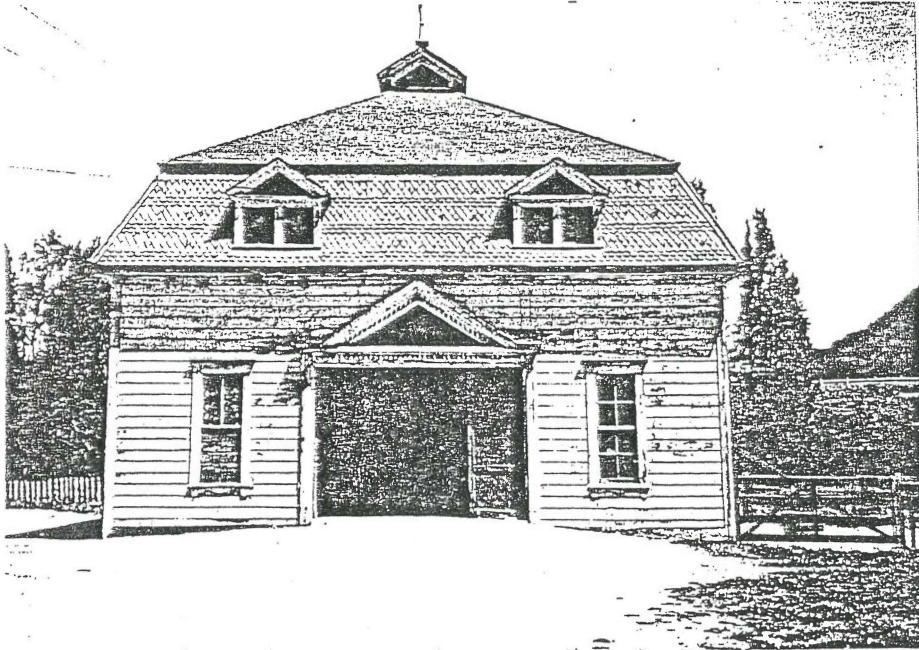




MELVIN WILDER HOUSE, BUILT 1896-97



MOSES MEDER FARMHOUSE, BUILT CIRCA 1850



HORSE BARN, CIRCA 1891-92



BOLCOFF ADOBE, CIRCA 1835

**Wilder Ranch State Park**

**ADDENDUM—1994**

**PHYSICAL INSPECTION**

**Date:** April 14, 1994

**Result of Inspection:** No apparent major changes to exteriors of buildings although there has been considerable earthquake damage. Restoration continues on some structures but there appears to be a great need for maintenance and repair. According to State Parks Staff, there are plans for repairs pending availability of funds.

**CONSULTANT'S PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

No change.

**(Change of rating pending public hearing before the Historical Resources Commission with final approval by the Board of Supervisors).**

**Context:** 1 (agriculture), 2 (architecture)

**Property type:** farm houses and associated buildings