



Test Excavations at the Warner's Ranch Ranch House (Warner-Carrillo Ranch House)

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Introduction

This article provides results of a limited archaeological test excavation at the ranch house at Warner's Ranch, also called the Warner-Carrillo Ranch House, located in eastern San Diego County about one mile east of the intersection of Highways 79 and S2 (San Felipe Road) on the south side of Buena Vista Valley (Figures 10.1 and 10.2). The purpose of the excavation was to acquire data about the structural evolution of the building in conjunction with the preparation of a historic structures report for the building's restoration. The fieldwork took place from May 17-28, 2004, and consisted of nine units and a block excavation in the entry room, as well as a survey and two additional excavation units at a site on the north side of the Buena Vista Valley. The secondary survey and excavation area corresponded with the purported location of John Warner's trading post.

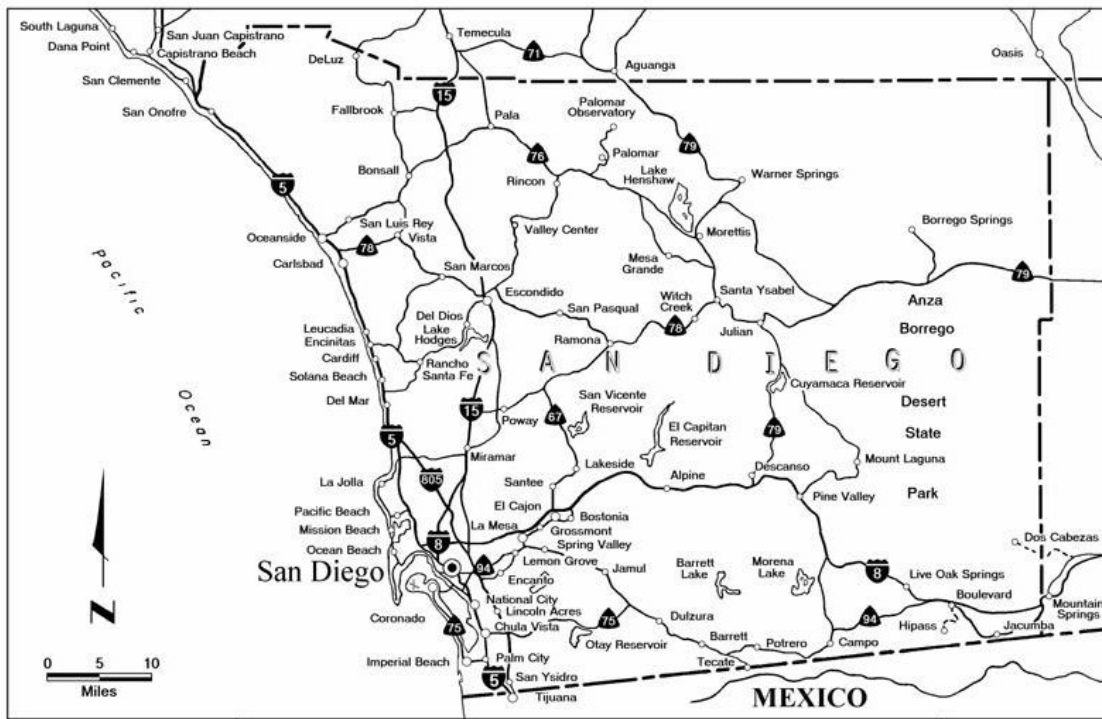


Figure 10.1. Project location. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Historical background

The Warner's Ranch house is a landmark in the history of the American West. It is associated with Mexican exploration, the frontier period in U.S. American westward migration, the California Gold Rush, the first transcontinental overland mail lines, and pioneer cattle ranching. Some historical controversy is associated with the building. The original portion of the existing house may be the remains of a trading post constructed by J.T. Warner in 1849. This building was burned during the Indian uprising led by Antonio Garra in 1851. The Carrillo family then rebuilt it around 1857. Recent research by historian Kathleen Flanigan, however, has identified a possible alternate location for Warner's original trading post. Surveyor William Reynolds recorded this site in 1870, on a low knoll to the north of the existing ranch house on the north side of the Buena Vista Valley. For a detailed history of the ranch see Flanigan (1996) and Van Wormer (1997).

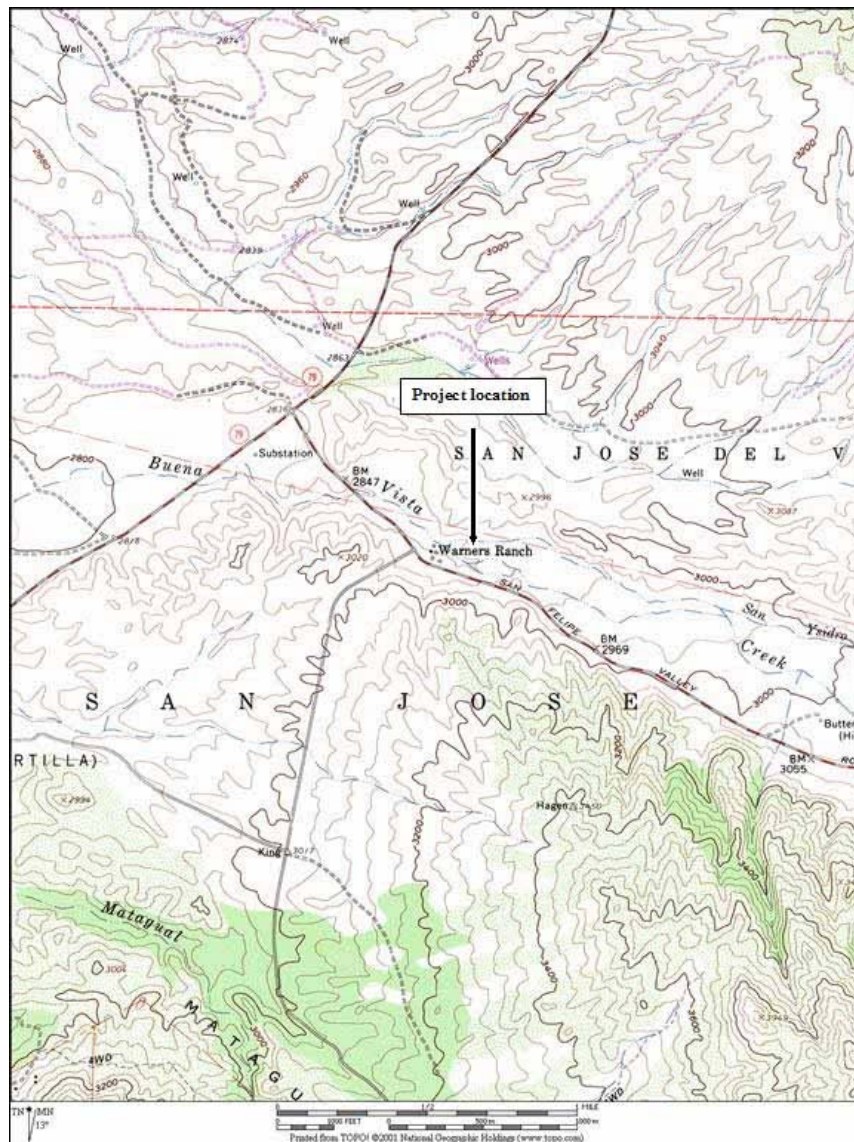


Figure 10.2. Project location plotted on the U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Warner's Ranch Quadrangle topographic map. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Field methods

All units were laid out according to existing orientations and dimensions of the features being investigated (Figure 10.3). Except where noted in the following discussions, excavations were conducted in stratigraphic levels. In units where natural stratigraphic levels exceeded six inches the levels were divided into six-inch increments. All soil was passed through 1/8-inch screen to retrieve artifacts, which were collected and labeled according to the unit and level from which they were recovered. Units were numbered sequentially in the order they were laid out for excavation.

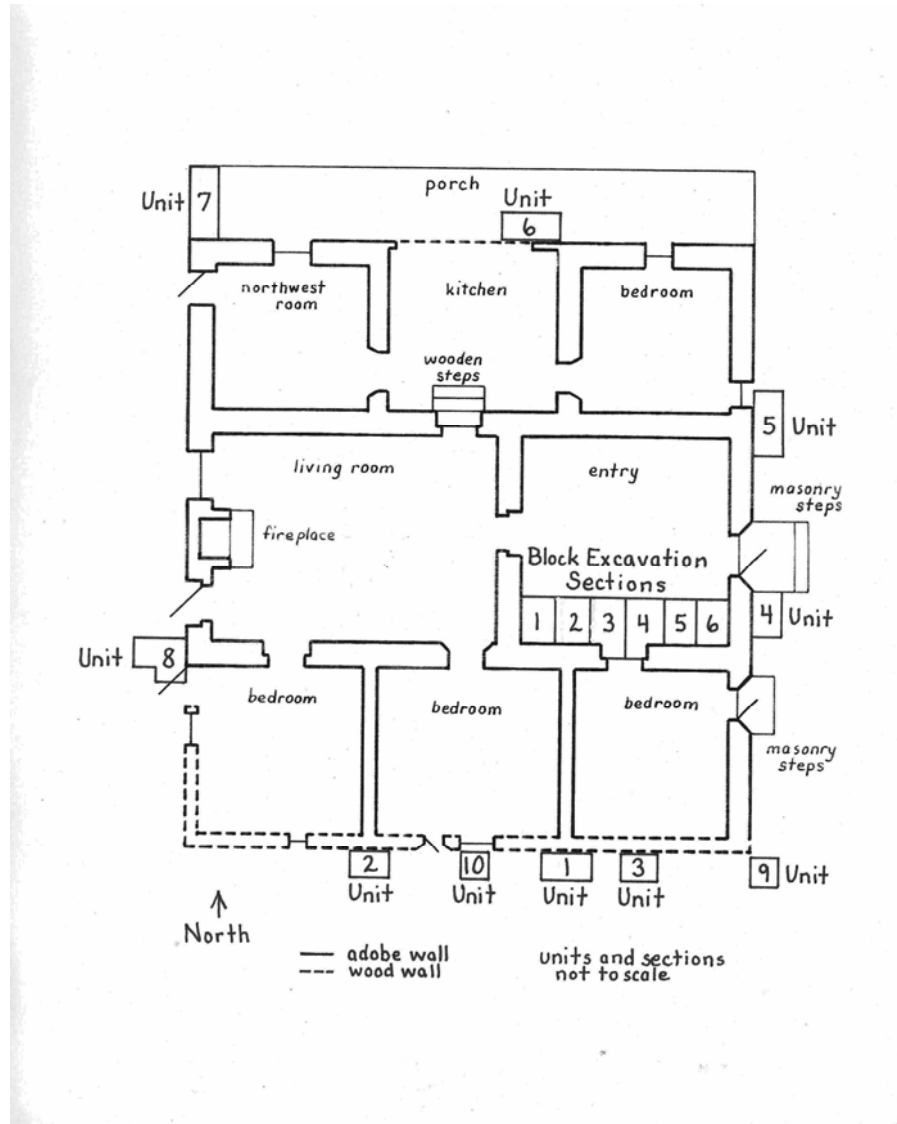


Figure 10.3. Unit and excavation block locations. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

South wall excavations

Excavation along the south wall sought to determine if an exterior adobe wall had existed along this side of the building. The current south exterior wall is a crudely framed wooden structure

covered with extremely weathered board and batten siding. Two adobe block interior dividing walls intersect this wall on its north side to form the bedrooms of the south wing (see Figure 10.3). The existence of these walls suggested that the entire south exterior wall might originally have been constructed of adobe block, which might later have been covered or replaced by the existing board and batten wall.

In order to excavate Units 1, 2, 3, and 10 along the south wall, exterior boards were removed to allow access. Unit 1 was at the south end of the eastern interior dividing wall; Unit 2 was at the south end of the western interior-dividing wall. Both measured 2 by 4 feet. Unit 3 was a 2 by 3 foot unit placed to the west of Unit 1 and Unit 10 was a 20 by 24 inch unit placed midway between Units 1 and 2 (see Figure 10.3). Excavators in these units encountered the remains of a cobble foundation that had originally supported an adobe block exterior southern wall of the ranch house. The foundation consisted of two courses of stones. The top course was of larger water worn granite cobbles measuring approximately 12 to 15 inches in length and 4 to 8 inches wide. The lower course was made of water worn cobbles that measured approximately 4 to 7 inches long and 2 to 3 inches wide. The foundation extended nearly 12 inches below the surface. It had been laid in a moderately compacted tan sandy loam soil. In Units 1 and 2, the foundation was tied into the foundation stones of the interior dividing walls forming a single structural unit and indicating that the footings for both the interior dividing walls and the original adobe exterior south wall were constructed at the same time.

The condition of the foundation varied along its length. At the western most exposure in Unit 2, the foundation is intact and undisturbed (Figures 10.4 and 10.5). Moving east to the next exposure in Unit 10, the upper course of cobbles had been removed leaving the lower row intact (Figures 10.6 and 10.7). Continuing eastward to Unit 1, the foundation was highly disturbed in the west half of the unit, which is on the west side of the eastern most interior-dividing wall and under the center bedroom of the south wing. The upper courses appeared to be missing, and the smaller stones of the lower course were jumbled. Remains of a 4 by 4 inch wood post that had originally been placed against the foundation had been pushed aside to the south. In the east half of the unit under the interior dividing wall and the easternmost bedroom, the foundation was intact (Figures 10.8 and 10.9). In the eastern most excavation at Unit 3, the foundation was intact and undisturbed under the former east bedroom (Figures 10.10 and 10.11).

Artifacts were cataloged by a functional typology (See Appendix A, Table 1). Quantities were recorded by estimated minimum number of items represented and weight. Artifacts recovered from Units 1, 2, 3, and 10 are listed in Appendix A, Table 2. A variety of items were identified including consumer, livery, munitions, personal, farmstead, Native American, kitchen, garment, and household items, as well as building materials. The few datable items were manufactured during the first two decades of the 20th century, suggesting deposition during the time the Taylor family lived in the house. Most of the artifacts likely represent items lost or accidentally discarded along the south side of the building. Some of the garment and personal items, such as the cufflinks, pendant, and pocket knife, may have been lost in the bedrooms and worked their way through cracks in the wall boards, eventually coming to rest in the soil at the base of the framed exterior wall.

Figure 10.4. Cobble foundation and the end of the western interior dividing wall in Unit 2.
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

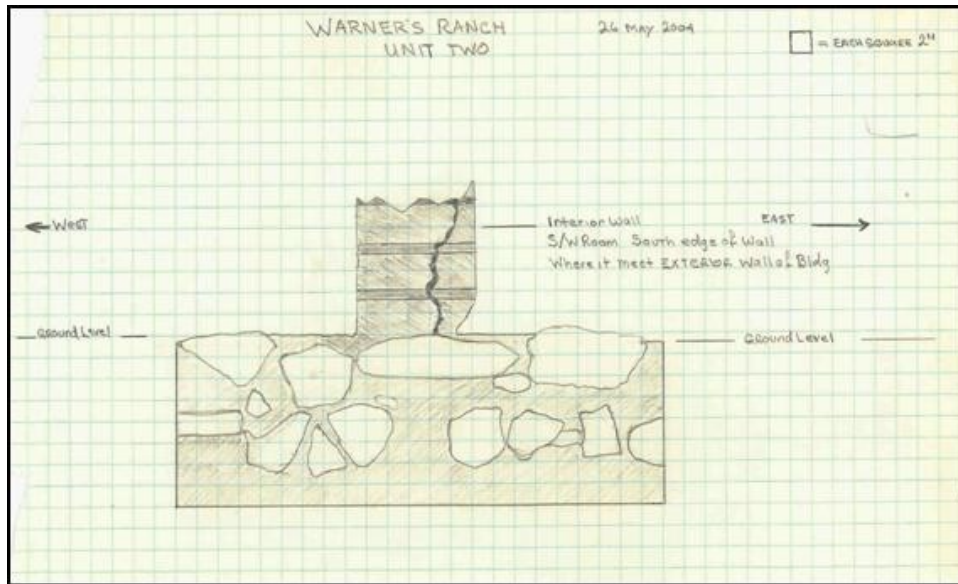


Figure 10.5. Profile drawing of the cobble foundation and the end of the western interior dividing wall in Unit 2.
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Figure 10.6. Disturbed foundation in Unit 10.
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



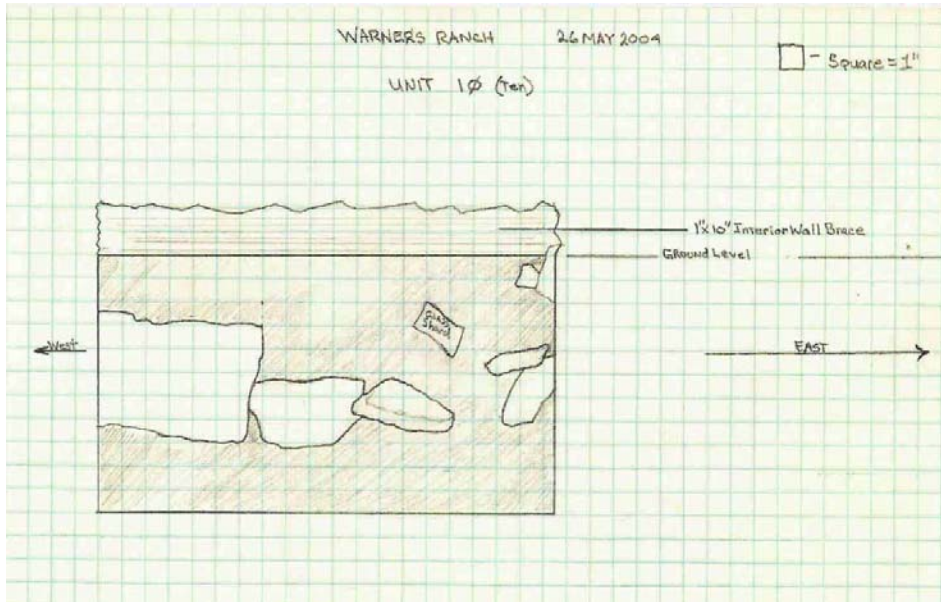


Figure 10.7. Profile drawing of the north sidewall of Unit 10. Only the bottom course of foundation stones remains intact. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Figure 10.8. Cobble foundation in Unit 1. The west half is badly disturbed while the eastern portion remains intact. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Near the southeast corner of the building, a three-foot square excavation (Unit 9) was opened. It contained a light scatter of artifacts, suggesting a buried deposit (see Figure 10.3). The unit was excavated to 12 inches below the surface. Very little material was recovered (Appendix A, Table 3).

South wall observations

Excavation of Units 1, 2, 3, and 10 revealed much concerning the structural evolution of the southern exterior wall of the ranch house. The presence of the cobble foundation and the manner in which it was tightly tied in to the foundation of the interior dividing walls in the south wing indicate that the original south wall of the ranch house had been an adobe block wall laid out and constructed at the same time as the rest of the south wing. No remains of adobe melt or intact

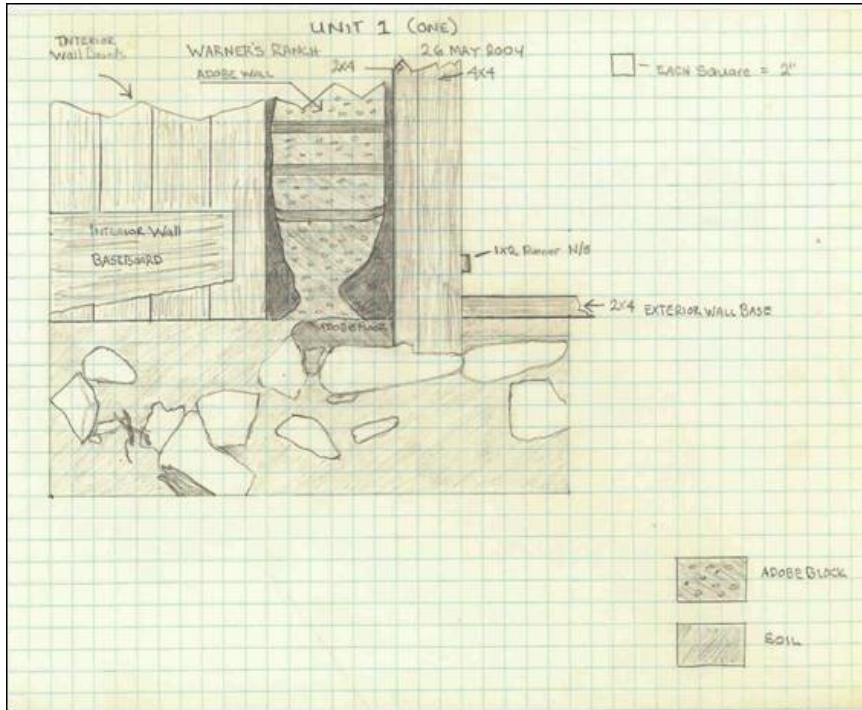


Figure 10.9. Profile drawing of the north sidewall of Unit 1, showing the end of the eastern interior dividing wall and partially disturbed foundation. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.10. Intact foundation stones in Unit 3. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

articulated adobe block were encountered within the existing frame wall on the south side of the ranch house. Thus, the adobe wall had been removed prior to construction of the existing frame wall rather than melting away behind board and batten siding. This conclusion is in contrast to the 1963 Historic American Building Survey (HABS) drawings of the house, which show adobe walls behind the board and batten exterior siding on the center and east bedrooms of the south wing (HABS 1963). The highly disturbed condition of the stone foundation under the south wall of the center bedroom makes it highly unlikely that an adobe wall existed on this portion of the adobe in the 1960s. The wall must have been removed and the foundation disturbed when the original board and batten siding was constructed circa 1900.

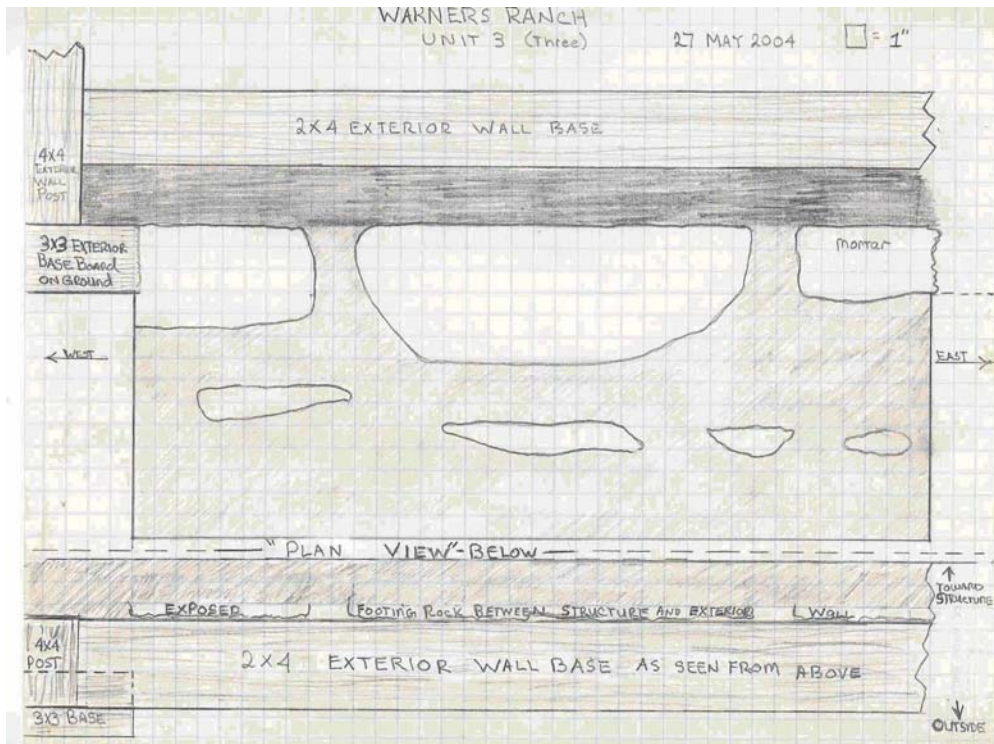


Figure 10.11. North side wall profile and partial plan view of Unit 3, showing undisturbed foundation stones.
 Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

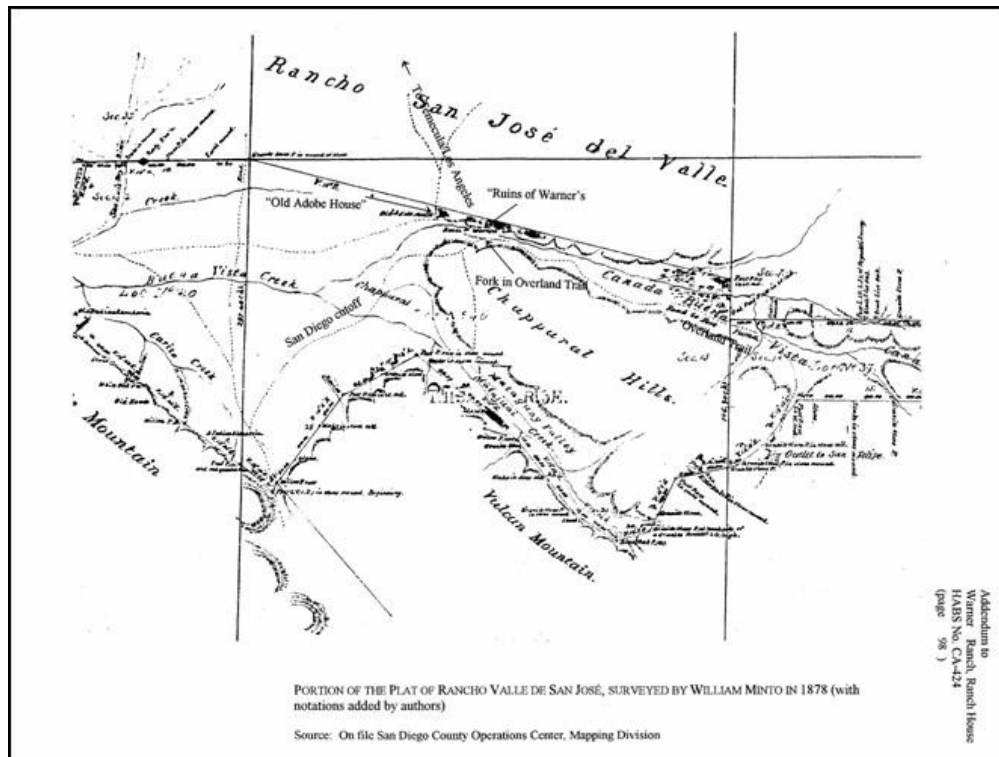


Figure 10.12. 1878 map of Rancho Valle de San Jose, showing the Warner's Ranch House in ruins.
 Courtesy San Diego County Operations Center.

In addition to the disturbed foundation, other physical evidence indicates that the southern wall had been physically removed from this location and did not simply melt away after it was covered by the board and batten exterior. The east and west side at the end of the western interior dividing wall, as well as the west side of the eastern interior dividing wall, are even and smooth where they would have bonded with the exterior southern wall. When the southern wall was removed it was cut away from these junctions in a neat and well thought-out manner. The sides were smoothed, leaving no ragged edges where the junction of the walls had been. Had the southern wall simply melted away, it would have also affected the ends of the dividing walls and they would not be as neatly finished as they currently are at these locations.

The east side of the south end of the eastern interior dividing wall, however, was not as neatly finished as it was on the west side or the two sides of the south end of the western interior wall. On the east side of the east wall, the jagged remains of blocks that were originally part of the junction between this and the southern exterior wall protruded in rough jagged edges. Here the blocks were not cut away as neatly as when the south wall was removed nor was this side of the dividing wall smoothed. This suggests that the southern exterior wall may have been removed at a later date at this location. There could have been an adobe wall here behind the board and batten siding as shown in the 1963 HABS drawings. It may have been removed in the early 1970s when a restoration attempt was conducted at the southeast corner of the building and the modern adobe block currently making up this portion of the wall was inserted.

The original southern exterior adobe wall west of the southeast bedroom might have been taken out when Vail Ranch personnel reoccupied the building and converted it into a family home for its foremen in the late 1880s and early 1890s. This observation is based on structural evidence in the building and documentary evidence from historic plat maps. The interior board siding of the existing southern exterior wall exhibits machine-cut square nails. Newspaper under the wallpaper on this wall in the west bedroom has masthead dates of 1874. The framing and exterior board and batten siding of the southern exterior wall was constructed with round wire nails indicating a construction date later than the board siding on the interior of the wall. Based on the square nails and newspaper dates, it would appear that the interior siding was attached to the original adobe exterior south wall sometime after 1874, during the later part of the Carrillo occupancy of the building. An 1878 plat map of Rancho Valle de San José shows the building in ruins, indicating that the Carrillos had left and the building was abandoned by this date (Minto 1878) (Figure 10.12). Sometime after 1888, when the house was reoccupied and had become a family home for the Vail Ranch foreman, the remains of the original adobe block wall were torn out and replaced with the crude framing and exterior board and batten siding that presently exist, which was constructed with round nails. The adobe interior dividing walls and original interior board siding from the Carrillo period was left intact. This must have occurred in the 1890s or very early 1900s since photographs of the ranch house taken during the first decade of the 20th century show the exterior board and batten siding on the wall (Figures 10.13 and 10.14).



Figure 10.13. Sam Taylor and son in front of the ranch house in 1904. Note the board and batten siding along the south wall. Courtesy San Diego Historical Society.



Figure 10.14. Photograph of the ranch house circa 1910. Note the board and batten siding along the south side and the masonry steps and facing along the base of the east wall. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

East wall excavation

Two units were excavated in hopes of gaining insight into the structural evolution of the exterior east wall. The base of this wall is faced with a semi dressed, cement-mortared stone facing. Prior to the investigation, this facing appeared to be a foundation for the east wall. There are also two sets of masonry steps that provide access to the two doorways located on this side of the building (see Figure 10.3). Both the stone facing and steps were in place during the early 20th century and appear in circa 1910 photographs of the building (see Figures 10.13 and 10.14). The steps are built of cement-mortared cobbles coated with an exterior layer of cement.

In order to see how the mortared facing tied into the steps, Unit 4 was placed adjacent to the south side of the front steps that are centered on the east side of the ranch house. Unit 5 was laid out beneath the division in the wall between the north and central wings to determine if the distinct building episodes of the central and north wing seen in the separation of the walls on the east facade were reflected in the supposed footing. Excavation resulted in the identification of a cement-mortared facing of semi-dressed granite fieldstones 16 to 18 inches thick that extended 8 to 10 inches below the present surface. The surrounding soil was the same moderately compacted tan to brown sandy loam soil that surrounded the entire building. Excavation of Unit 4 confirmed that the front steps were constructed in the same manner as the mortared facing but had been covered with a cement coating. In Unit 5, the facing did not reflect the separated building episodes indicated by the separation in the walls of the central and north wings since it covered the actual building foundation (Figures 10.15-10.18).



Figure 10.15. Cement mortared facing at the base of the Warner's Ranch House east wall in Unit 4. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Examination of the central doorway on the east side of the house and in the east entry room of the central wing provided additional insight into the nature of the mortared stone footing. The semi-dressed mortared granite stone did not function as a foundation; it covered the bottom two courses of adobe block and the top portion of the original cobblestone foundation of the east side of the building (Figure 10.19). Given that both the dressed stone facing and steps can be seen in the circa 1910 photographs, they appear to have been added during the early 20th century when the Sam Taylor family occupied the building. By this time, erosion had apparently lowered the ground surface considerably from where it had been when the building was originally constructed. Photographs indicate that the ground level at that time was significantly below that of the entrance to the main doorway on the east side of the central wing, resulting in a highly elevated step from the ground to the level of the floor in the main entry room of the house. In addition, the original adobe walls had probably been undermined, exposing the original foundation stones. It is likely that the dressed cement stone facing was placed to cover and protect the lower courses of adobe block and the original cobble footings from further erosion, and the steps built to provide access to the doorways, which had become difficult as a result of surface erosion and the lowering of the ground surface on this side of the building.

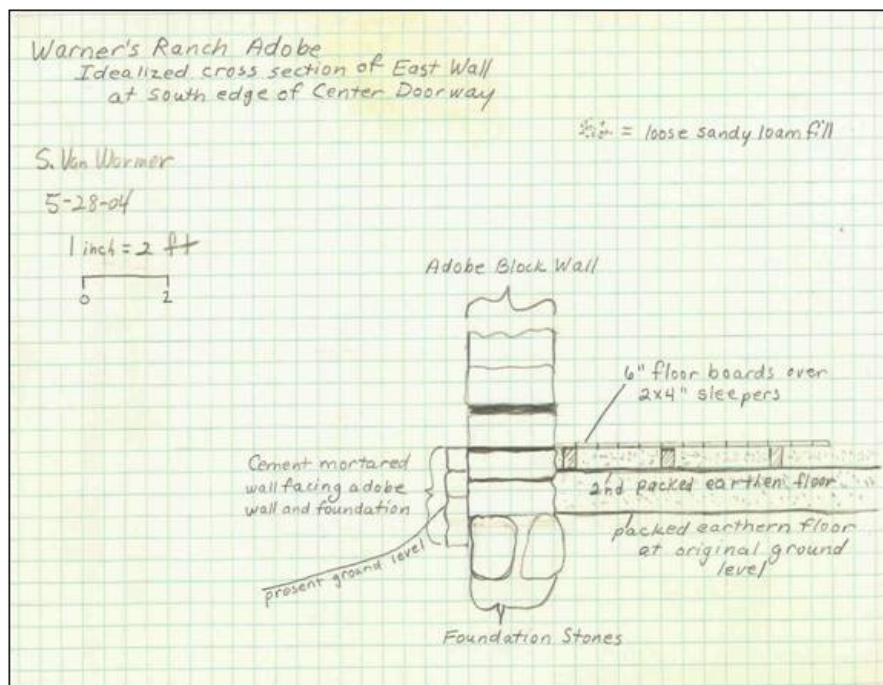


Figure 10.19. Idealized cross section of the base of the eastern wall of the Warner's Ranch House at the south edge of the center doorway, showing how the cement facing covers both bottom course of adobe block and the upper part of the original granite field stone foundation. The various levels of the packed earthen floors encountered while excavating the interior of the Entry Room, as well as the current wooden floor are shown. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

A variety of artifacts were recovered, representing a gradual accumulation of debris along the east side of the building over many decades. The artifact types in this deposit are listed in Appendix A, Table 4; they included personal, kitchen, and household items, as well as Native American pottery.

North wall excavation

Units 6 and 7 explored the structural evolution of the wall and the porch along the north side of the building (see Figure 10.3). The north wall is constructed of adobe blocks. However, the blocks are missing from the central third, which consists of a wooden board, and batten infill. Unit 6 measured 2 feet by 5 feet 8 inches and was placed at the east end of the wooden infill to determine the existence of an adobe block wall there. Wooden floorboards of the presently existing porch had to be removed to allow access. Excavation revealed the remains of an adobe block wall that originally stood where the wooden infill presently exists. These remains consisted of a stone foundation under a single course of adobe blocks. The foundation was made of two courses of stone. The bottom course consisted of angular granite fieldstones with little or no water rounding. They measured approximately 12 to 16 inches long and 8 to 12 inches wide. They were laid in a moderately compacted brown sandy loam soil and extended to a depth of approximately 18 inches below the surface.

The top course of the foundation was made of rounded stream cobbles approximately 5 to 8 inches long by 3 to 5 inches wide. These rocks were mortared in place with a dark brown mud. This same material was used to mortar existing adobe blocks on top of the foundation stones. A single course of these blocks continued across the base of the wooden infill. In the unit's east sidewall, the edge of the builder's trench that was dug for construction of the foundation was apparent. It was sealed by 4 to 5 inches of a tan hard packed soil in a semi uniform layer. This fill likely represents the original porch on this side of the building. It appears to have been put in as a layer of mud slurry. The current wooden porch was added in the late 19th or early 20th centuries (Figures 10.20-10.23).



Figure 10.20. The stone foundation and the bottom course of the original adobe wall in Unit 6 underlying the northern wall wooden infill. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

In order to examine further the construction of the original porch, an area measuring approximately 4 by 6 feet was cleared of debris to the west of the unit that exposed the dried slurry surface. The slurry layer of the original porch is about 6 feet wide and runs the entire length of the building along the north side. It is relatively level and supported by a cobble footing along its north side, which appears to have originally acted as a small facing wall along

the north side of the slurry porch. The slurry layer served to compensate for the difference in surface level between the edge of the north wall of the building and the northern edge of the porch, which was caused by the northerly slope of the ground surface. In places, the tan-colored slurry has been patched with dark brown mud, apparently to restore a level surface in areas that had become worn and rough (Figure 10.28).

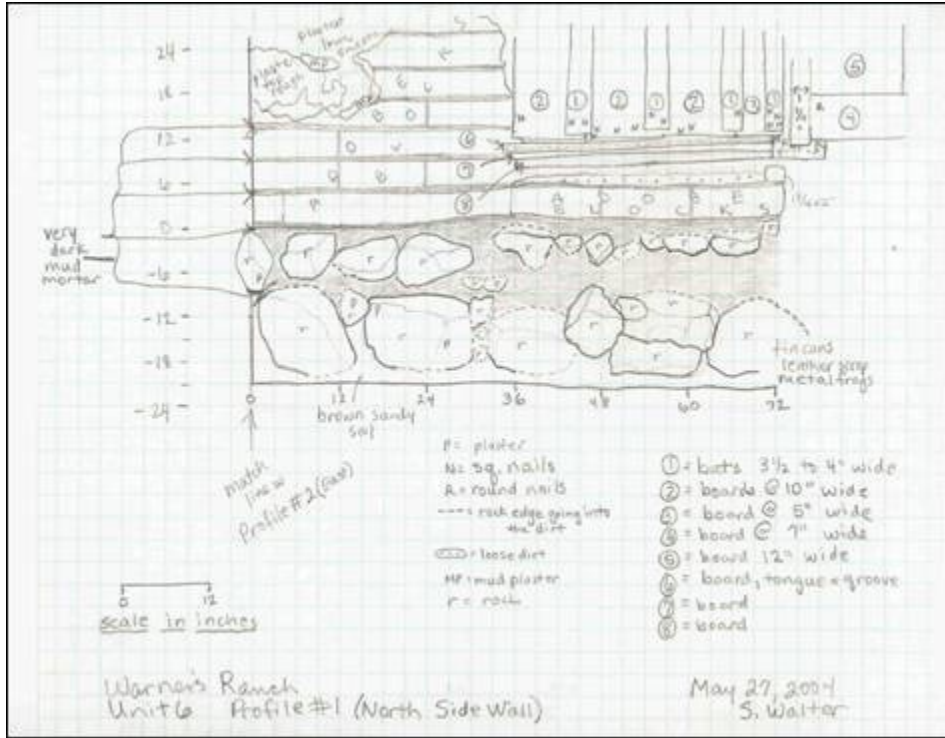


Figure 10.21. Unit 6 south sidewall profile sketch of the stone foundation and adobe block under the wooden infill. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

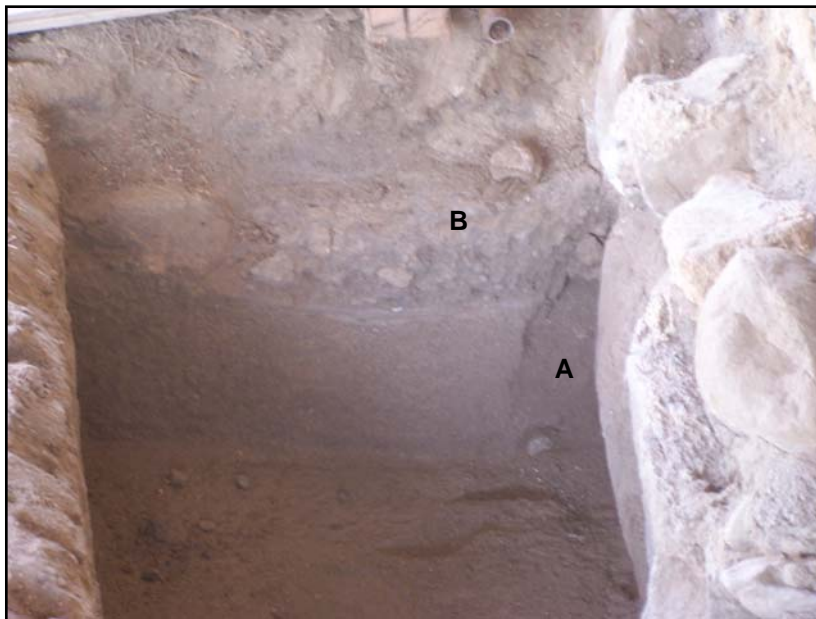


Figure 10.22. East sidewall of Unit 6, showing the builder's trench for the northern wall foundation (A), and the packed mud surface of the original porch (B). Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

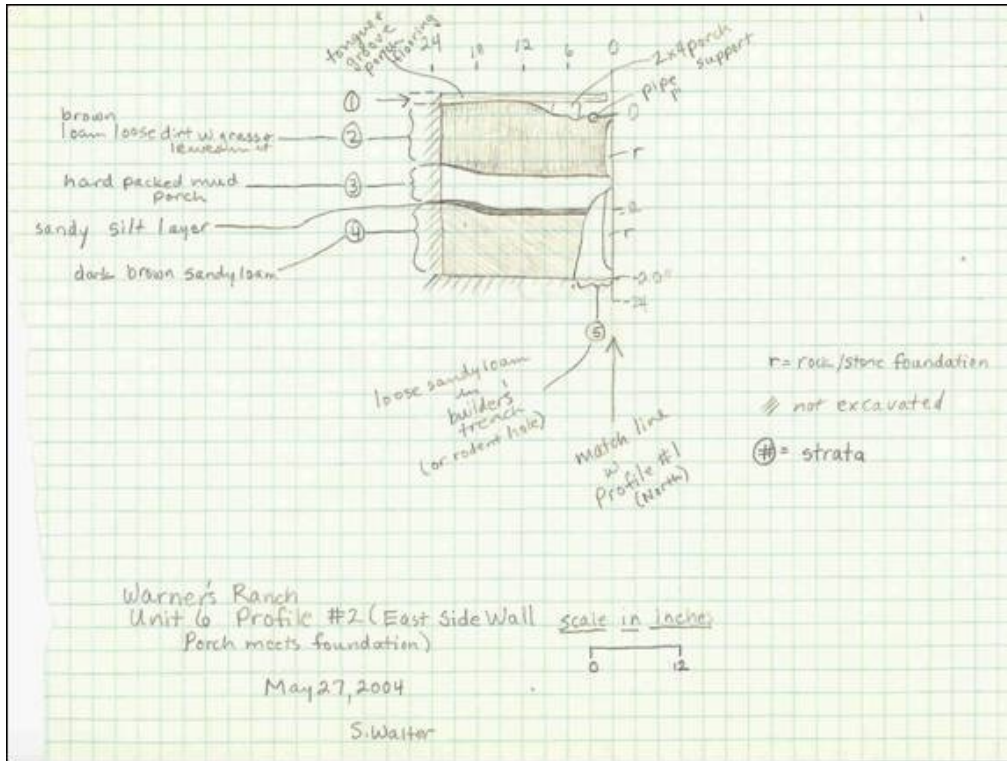


Figure 10.23. Unit 6 east sidewall profile. Note the packed mud porch (#3), and the builder's trench (#5).
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.24. An area of the original porch cleared of debris. Note the hard packed earthen surface that appears to have been laid as a mud slurry (A) and the shallow cobble footing at along the north edge (B).
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.25. Unit 7, looking south. Note the stone foundation of the northern wall (A), the north end of the cement mortared stone facing along the east wall (B), the original surface of the packed mud porch (C), and the cobble footing along the north edge of the mud porch (D).
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Unit 7 was placed at the west end of the northern porch where a semi-dressed mortared stone foundation on the west side of the building abuts the unmortared field stone foundation of the north wall (see Figure 10.3). The unit measured 3 by 9.5 feet. It was extended lengthwise to the north in order to bisect the original slurry porch and obtain a stratigraphic cross section of its construction. As in Unit 6, the north wall foundation at this point consisted of water worn cobbles in mud mortar over angular granite fieldstones. Semi-dressed granite stones with cement mortar face this foundation on its west end at the northwest corner of the building. This facing runs along the base of the west wall in the same manner as the mortared granite stones that are oriented with the base of the east wall.

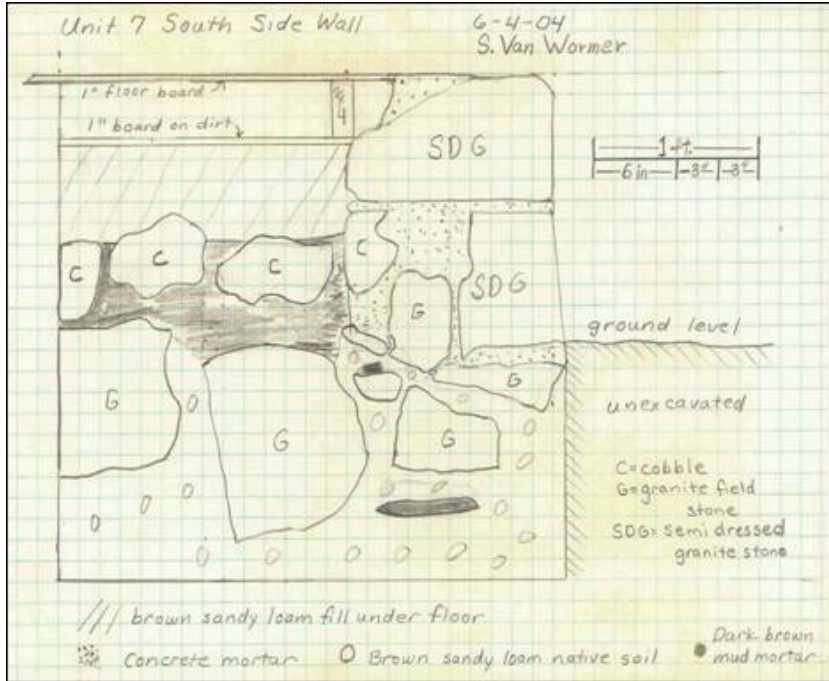


Figure 10.26. Unit 7 north sidewall profile showing the stone foundation of the ranch house northern wall and the mortared stone facing of the eastern wall. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

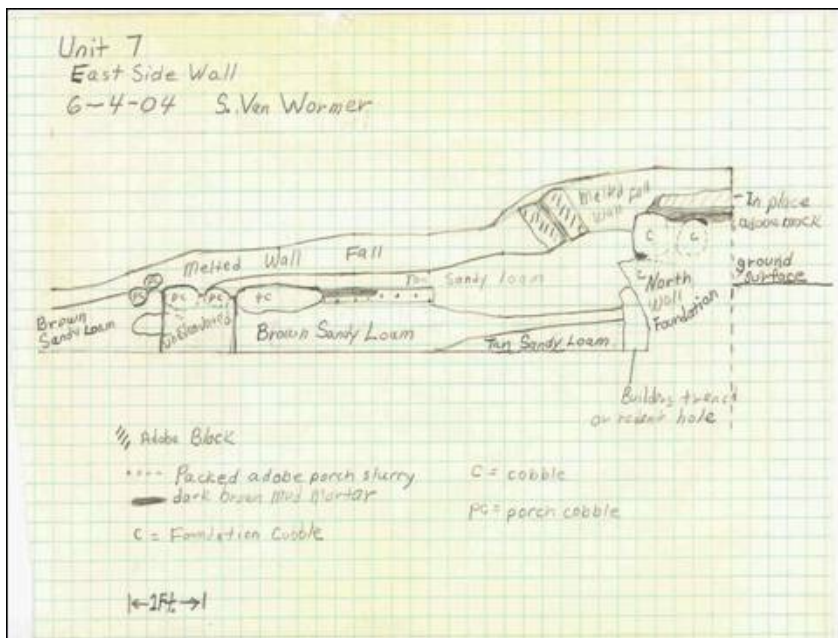


Figure 10.27. East sidewall profile of Unit 7, showing a collapsed portion of the ranch house north wall covering the original dried mud porch. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Since the original slurry porch was badly disturbed, the stratigraphic cross section revealed little information. Only a portion of the north end was partially intact. At this locus, the original slurry porch was about two inches thick. It was faced on the north side by two courses of rounded cobbles varying in size from approximately six to 12 inches in diameter. The northern edge of this facing was approximately 6 feet from the north wall of the building. The slurry rested on a leveled layer of moderately compacted brown sandy loam soil. It is likely that the porch was formed by constructing a small dry stacked cobble wall parallel to and approximately 6 feet from the north side of the building. The space between this wall and the building was filled within two to five inches from the top with soil to form a semi-level surface. The mud slurry was poured on top (Figures 10.25-10.27).

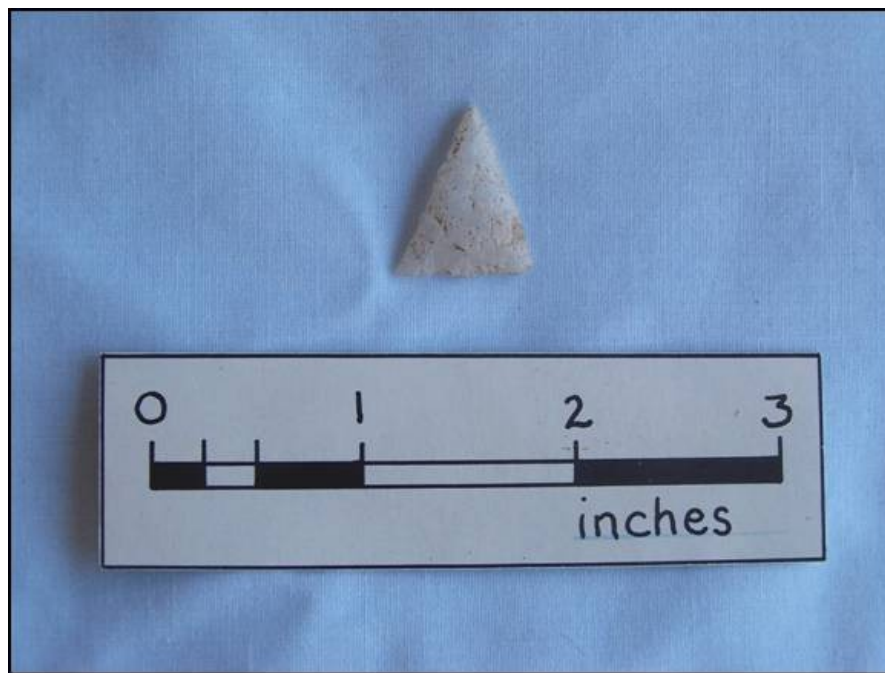


Figure 10.28. This arrow point was found at the base of the stone foundation in Unit 6. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Artifacts recovered from the north wall excavations are listed in Appendix A, Table 5. Consumer, kitchen, personal, livery, and household items were recovered as well as Native American pottery. The artifacts likely represent a gradual accumulation of discarded materials along this side of the building over many decades. Of special interest was a white quartz Cottonwood Triangular style arrow point found at the base of the foundation in Unit 6 (Figure 10.28). Excavation did not detect evidence of Native American occupation of the site prior to the time the ranch house was constructed. There were no concentrations of Indian artifacts in areas outside of historical contexts. The few native artifacts that were recovered, including this arrow point, were all within historical contexts and represented interaction with local natives living nearby and working on the ranch.

West wall excavation

Unit 8 was placed along the west wall at the junction of the center and north wings to see if the separation in the walls of these two wings, which could be observed on the east side of the building, could be detected at this point in the foundations (see Figure 10.3). The unit was originally laid out as a 1.5 by 3 foot rectangle. It was expanded as a result of the various features that were encountered. Overall, excavations revealed that the foundations at this point on the building had been highly modified as a result of changes to the structure over the years. In addition, a refuse pit dating from the 1860s, during the Carrillo period of occupancy, was encountered on the western edge of the unit.

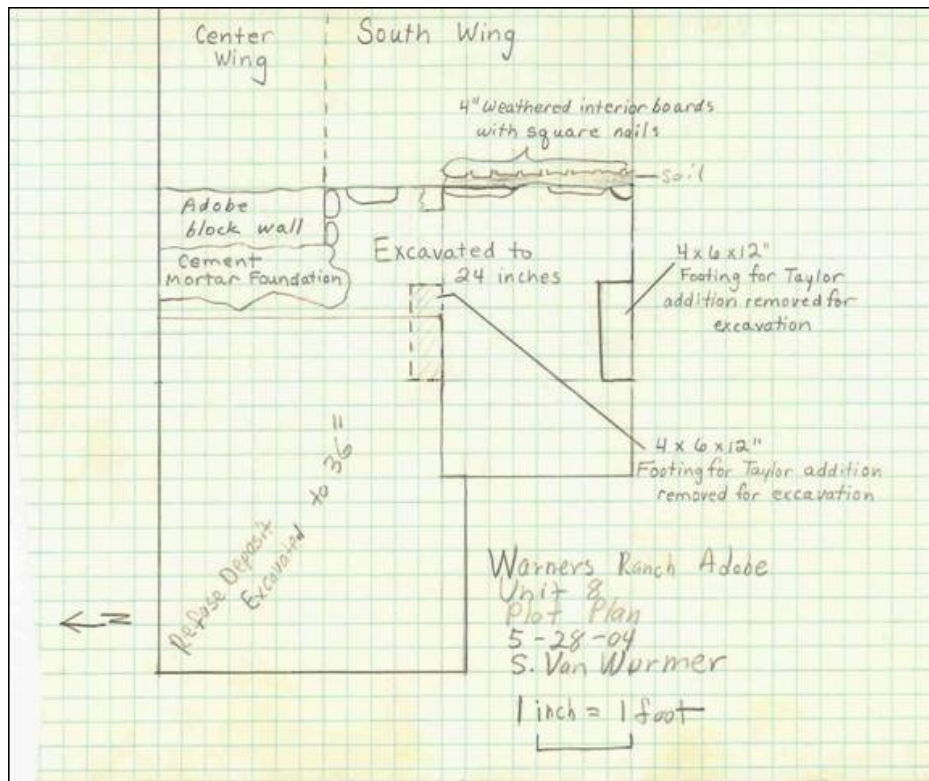


Figure 10.29. Plot plan of Unit 8 showing area excavated.
 Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

The original exterior adobe west wall of the south wing had been entirely removed. Two large rounded granite cobbles represented the remains of a stone foundation that originally supported an adobe wall, but even this foundation had been highly disturbed. At this point, it was in worse condition than the footing remains along the south wall. As with the south wall, the interior board siding along this wall contained square nails where they were attached to the original adobe wall. The exterior construction was done with round nails. During the early 20th century, when the Taylor family occupied the building, a wooden addition was built onto this side of the ranch house. Two 4 by 6 by 12 inch wooden supports for this addition were still present on the ground surface prior to excavation (Figure 10.33).

The cobble foundation supporting the west wall of the center wing is faced at this location with a layer of white lime mortar and small river cobbles. This was probably done at about the same time and for the same reason as the cement mortared facing at the north end of this wall and



Figure 10.30. Unit 8, showing the adobe blocks of the western wall of the center wing (A), lime mortared cobble facing on the foundation of the center wing (B), and the remains of the cobble foundation for the original adobe wall on the west side of the south wing (C).
 Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

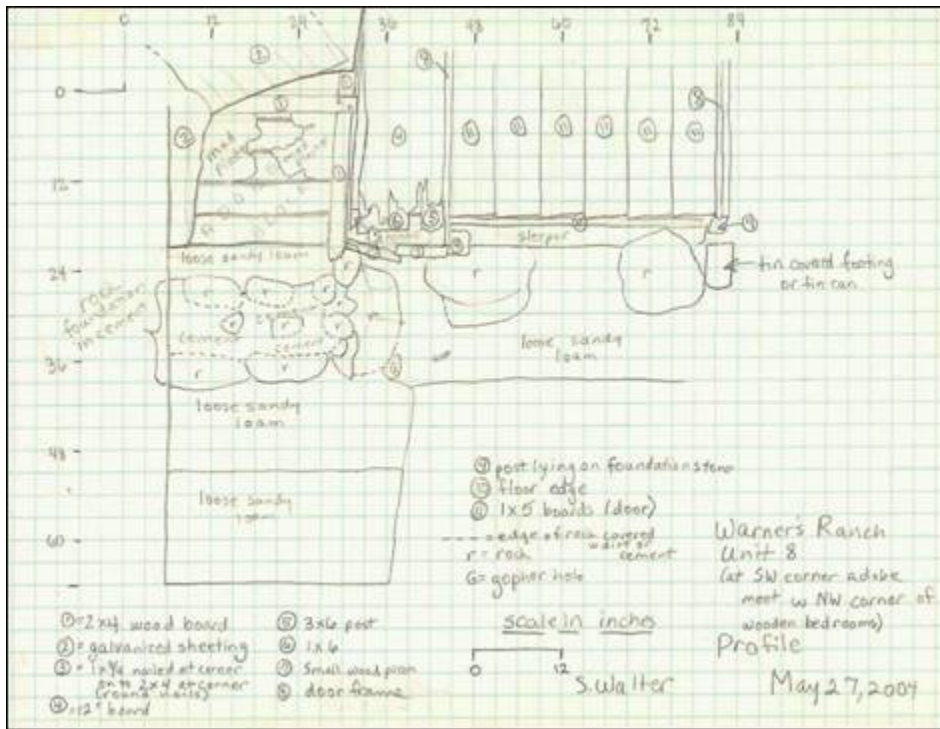


Figure 10.31. East sidewall profile of Unit 8. The cobble and lime facing is labeled "rock foundation in cement."
 Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

along the east wall of the building. Here, however, much less care was taken; the work is much cruder. A refuse deposit was also encountered in the west end of the unit. The unit was expanded to the west and a sample taken from an area that measured approximately 3 feet by 3.5 feet by 3 feet deep (Figures 10.29 and 10.30).

Artifacts recovered from Unit 8 are listed in Appendix A, Table 6. The majority of the items were from the refuse pit deposit, which occurred in levels 2 and 3. This unit was excavated in 12-inch levels. The top of the refuse deposit was encountered at 12 inches below the surface as the excavators were cleaning the floor of the first level. A sample of material was taken to a depth of 36 inches below the surface. The deposit continued deeper into the earth and also to the west and south for an unknown distance. Excavation was terminated, however, when a sufficient sample was recovered to define and date the material.

Artifacts included consumer, kitchen, garment and household items as well as building materials. Consumer items consisted of ale/porter bottles. Kitchen items included undecorated and molded earthenware cups, a saucer, a plate, and a bowl. In addition, various pieces of Native American pottery were found as well as a stone mano and a stone metate fragment. Over 300 grams of butchered beef bone were also recovered. Garment items included corset hardware and shell and metal buttons. Household remains consisted of a ceramic spittoon and a hand decorated earthenware ewer (Figure 10.32). Datable artifacts included an earthenware plate with the Fig pattern of J. Wedgwood and Company, which was registered in 1856 (Wetherbee 1985:87), and an undecorated earthenware saucer manufactured by G. Wooliscroft and Company between 1860 and 1863 (Godden 1999:359). A blown in mold black glass porter/ale bottle could only be dated as to having been made before 1920 but is typical of beverage containers that were common in the 1850s and 1860s. A crown cap recovered from level 2 dates after 1900 and is intrusive to the trash deposit and was probably carried to this depth by rodent activity.

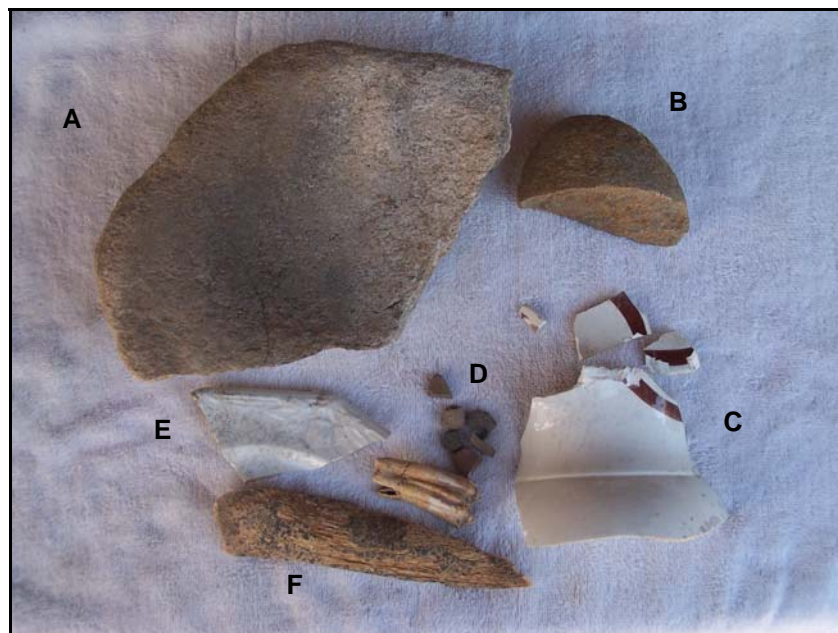


Figure 10.32. Artifacts from the refuse pit in Unit 8. (A) metate fragment, (B) mano fragment, (C) hand painted ewer, (D) Native American pottery sherds, (E), molded decorated plate, and (F) butchered beef bone fragments. The metate is approximately 10 inches across at its widest point. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

The deposit appears to be a kitchen and household refuse pit dating from the 1860s when the Carrillo family occupied the ranch house. Carrillo kitchen refuse would likely include the Native American pottery as well as the mano and metate fragment. Native pottery was used by Hispanics living in Southern California for cooking pots and storage vessels throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century (Wade 2004). For this reason, and because it has occurred only in historical contexts, all Native American pottery recovered throughout the project has been considered to be from the historical period after the ranch house was built. The mano and metate are also items that would have been found in most Hispanic households. They were used for processing a variety of foods including corn to make tortilla masa, and to pound dried meat for machaca.

Interior floor excavation

A block excavation was conducted under the existing wooden floor in south half of the entry room to look for evidence of original packed earthen floors, examine wall foundations, recover artifacts that may give some indication of room function, and search for remains of the 1851 fire and an earlier structure on this site (see Figure 10.3). Evidence of either the fire or an earlier building could confirm that J.T. Warner's original trading post was at this location.

To begin excavation in this area, the existing 6-inch wide floorboards were removed from the southern 4 feet of the entry room. They were supported by 2 by 4 inch wooden sleepers resting on the ground and running lengthwise north/south. The sleepers were approximately two feet apart, although none are exactly 24 inches on center from the others. The area between the sleepers was filled with an extremely loose sandy loam soil, identical to the topsoil around the exterior of the house. This soil appears to have been brought in to fill in the hollow areas between the sleepers under the floor. Excavators designated the spaces between the sleepers as sections and numbered them 1 through 6, running from west to east.

Under the loose soil fill remains of two hard flat earthen floors were encountered, consisting of packed clayey loam. In the east side of the room in Sections 5 and 6, the upper floor was intact and well preserved. However, on the east side of the room in Sections 1, 2, and 3, excessive past foot traffic between the doorway on the south wall of the entry room and the door on the room's west wall leading into the parlor had worn through the upper floor and exposed the extensively worn lower floor. The adobe blocks in the threshold of the southern doorway were also worn down to the second floor level (Figures 10.33-10.35).

Three-foot square units were excavated at the southwest and southeast corners of the room. In the southeast corner, the second earthen floor was encountered in stratigraphic sequence approximately 6 inches below the upper packed dirt floor. The lower floor consisted of a clayey loam layer about 1 inch thick and occurred at the bottom of the lowest level of adobe block. This probably represented an original ground level at this location. It was covered with around 6 inches of moderately compacted sandy loam fill. The upper packed earthen floor was placed on top of this fill layer. It was identical to the first in soil type and thickness. The sleepers supporting the existing wooden floor rested upon this second packed earthen surface. In several places pieces of scrap lumber had been placed beneath the sleepers to compensate for unevenness in the earthen floor and keep them level. In other spots shallow trenches had been

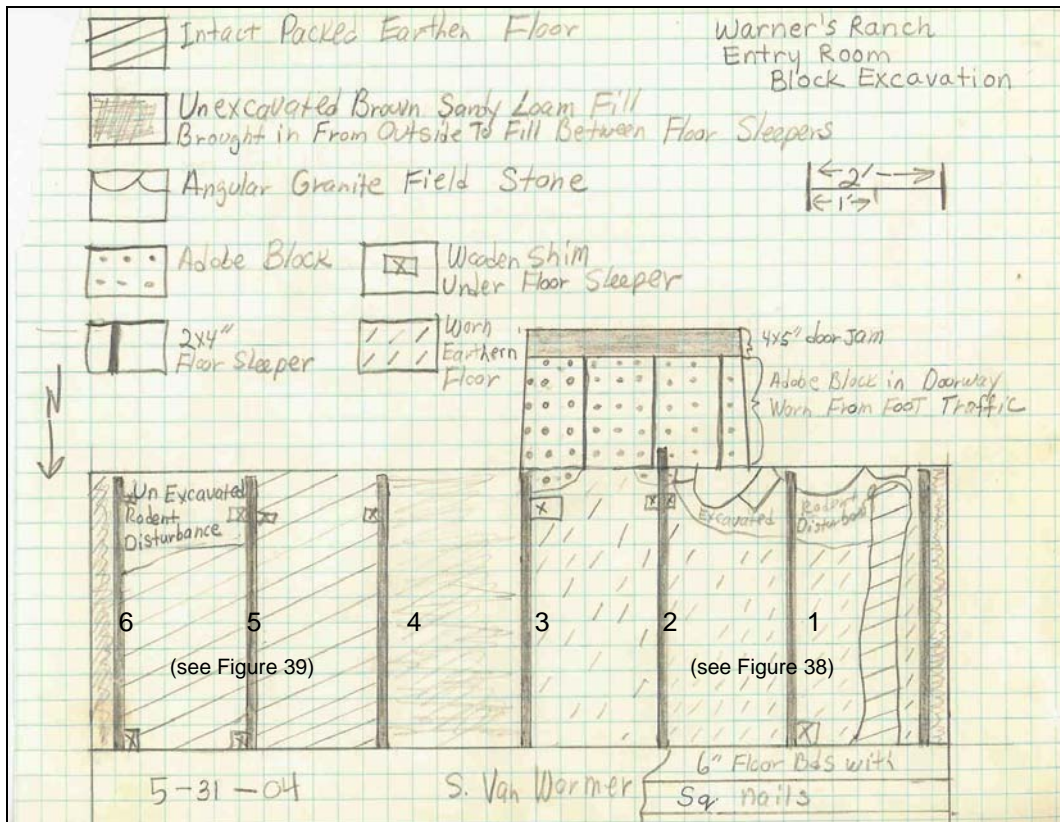


Figure 10.33. Plan view of Entry Room block excavation prior to excavation of the corner units. Except for Section 4, which was not excavated, only the loose sandy loam fill between the sleepers has been removed. The cobbles at the west end of the south wall were exposed by rodent burrowing. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

dug out to fit the sleepers into the old packed earthen floor's surface. Loose dirt fill was then added between the sleepers to the level of the floorboards. As previously noted, the existing wooden floor was then nailed to the sleepers with machine cut square nails, suggesting a construction date prior to 1890 and certainly before 1910 (Figures 10.36 and 10.37).

Foundations for the east, south, and west walls of this room consisted of a single course of irregular shaped granite fieldstones, varying in size from less than 6 inches to over 12 inches in diameter. They had been placed in the same moderately compacted brown sandy loam soil as the other foundations of the building. The foundation extended to a depth of approximately 8 to 10 inches below the bottom course of adobe block (Figures 10.38-10.43).

A wide variety of artifacts were recovered from the block excavation in the entry room; they are listed in Appendix A, Table 7. These included consumer, livery, personal, kitchen, garment, Native American and household, items as well as building materials. Clothing parts and sewing pins and other small objects made up the largest part of the assemblage. The area beneath the wooden floor was badly disturbed by rodent activity. Nesting material was heavily concentrated in the first level of loose fill, and rodent burrowing had severely loosened the soil in the southwest corner next to the foundation stones and along the west wall. Much of the artifactual material was found in the areas that showed significant rodent disturbance. It would appear,



Figure 10.34. Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the Entry Room block excavation showing the earthen floors exposed after removal of the loose sandy loam fill. The upper floor has been worn away at this point due to traffic between the doorways. Only a small fragment remains on the west side (A). The blocks in the threshold of the doorway have been worn down to the level of the lower packed earth floor at (B). A wooden shim has been placed under the sleeper to level it (C). Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.35. Sections 4, 5, and 6 of the Entry Room block excavation showing the upper packed earthen floor surface that was exposed after the loose fill between the sleepers was removed. The fill has not been taken out in Section 4. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

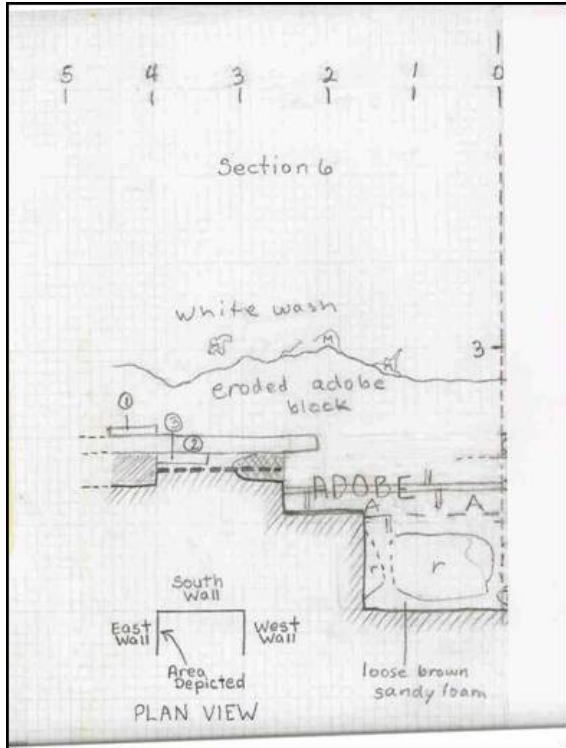


Figure 10.36. Profile of the east wall of Block Excavation Section 6, following excavation of a 3 foot square unit in the northeast corner. Note the current wooden floor (1), the sleeper supporting the floor (3), the two earthen floors, and the single course of granite field stones making up the foundation. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

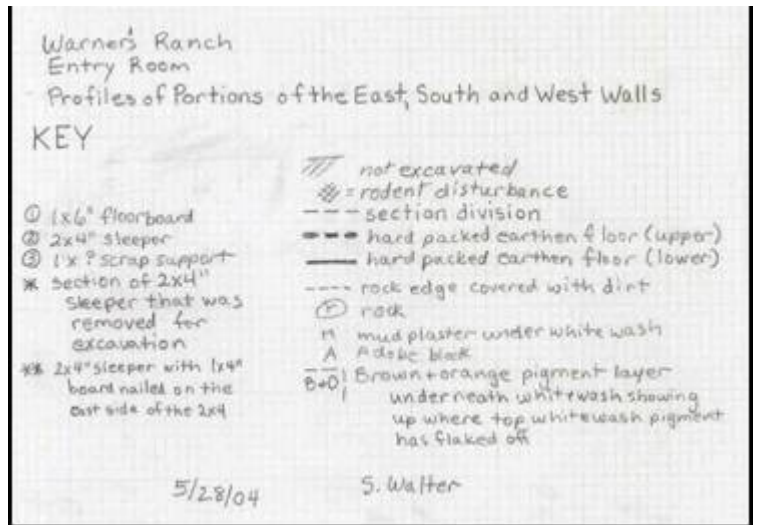


Figure 10.37. Entry Room Excavation Block Section 6 following excavation of the northeast corner, looking east. A portion of the far sleeper has been cut off to allow excavation access. Note (A) the present wooden floor board, (B) sleepers, (C) upper earthen floor, (D) lower earthen floor, (E) adobe blocks at the base of the wall, and (F) a single course of field stones underlying the wall.

Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

then, that the majority of the artifacts recovered under the floor were brought there from other areas by mice and other rodents rather than having fallen through cracks or holes in the floor board, or having been lost on the earthen floors while they were in use, and do not reflect past activities associated with the entry room.

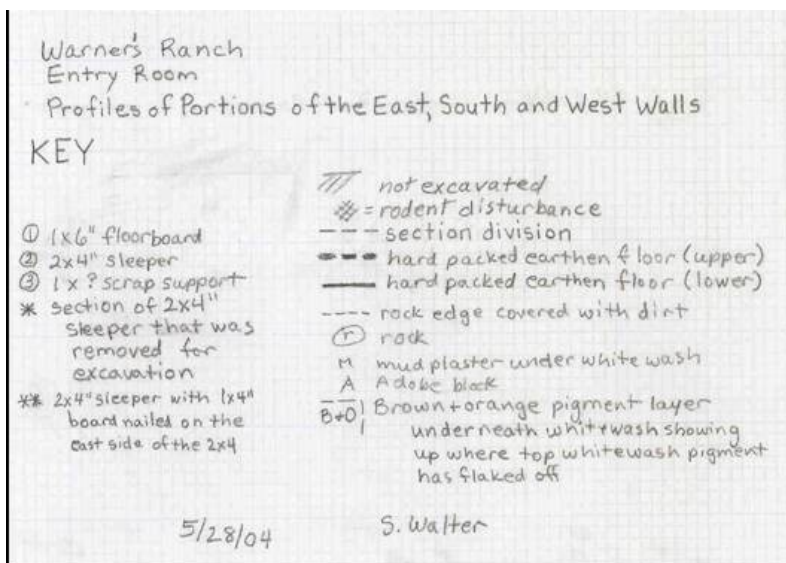
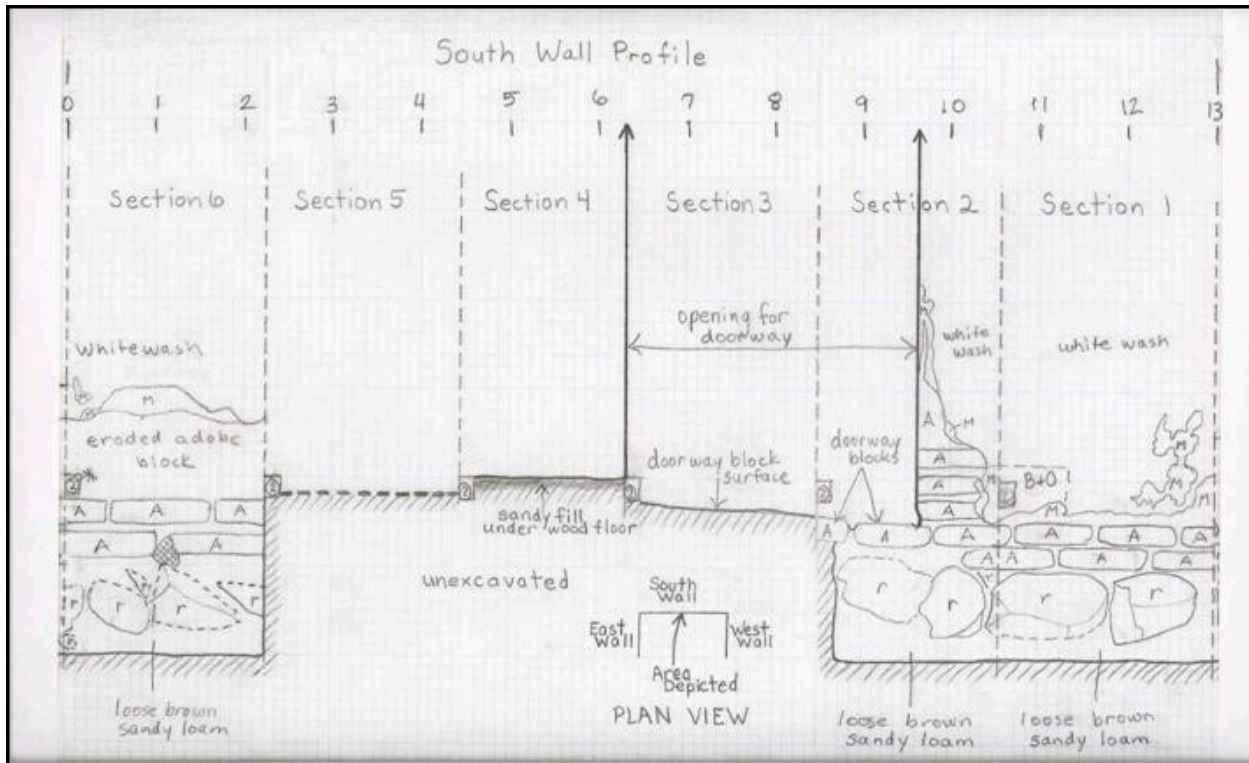


Figure 10.38. Southern wall profile of Entry Room block excavation.
Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.39. South side wall of excavated unit in Excavation Block Section 6. Note how the sleeper is resting in a shallow trench in the upper earthen floor. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.40. Block Excavation Sections 4 and 5. The upper earthen floor was left intact in Section 5 and the loose fill was left in place in Section 4. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.41. Block excavation Sections 2 and 3. The badly worn lower earthen floor and blocks in the door way can clearly be seen. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.42. Overview of the excavation unit in the southwest corner of Excavation Block Section 6. Note the single course of large irregular shaped granite field stones in the foundation. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

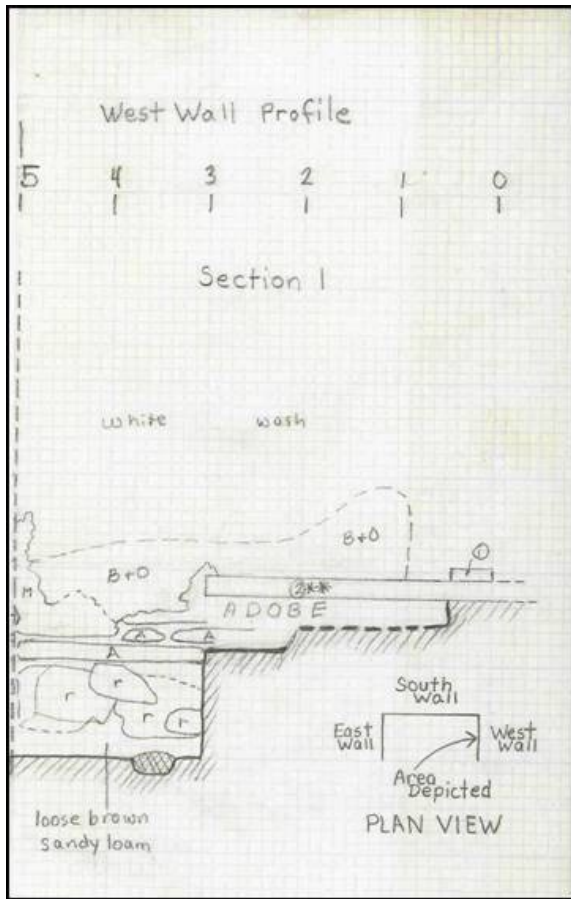
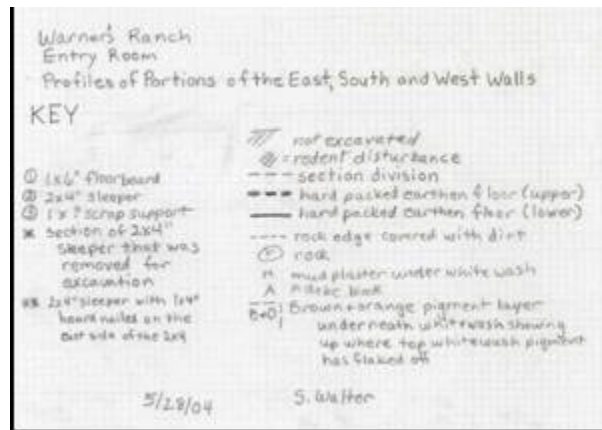


Figure 10.43. Western wall profile of Excavation Block Section 1 following excavation of the unit in the southwest corner. Most of the same features can be noted as in the eastern wall profile of Section 6. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Reynolds' Ruins

During this project, a survey was made of the knoll directly north of the ranch house on the north side of Buena Vista Creek, where Deputy Surveyor William Reynolds recorded ruins in 1870 that were identified by the Carrillos as the location of John Warner's trading post. The post had been burned by Indians in 1851 (Figures 10.44 and 10.45). A small reservoir, which cowboys currently working at the ranch believed was excavated by Sam Taylor in the early 1900s, is on the spot that Reynolds recorded as the location of Warner's house (Figure 10.46).

Approximately 100 feet to the northwest on the edge of the knoll, a rectangular cobble foundation was encountered that measured approximately 15 by 20 feet and was open on the south end. This is near the spot that Reynolds recorded as the ruins of Warner's blacksmith shop (Figure 10.47). Between the reservoir and the cobble foundation, a scatter of artifacts was observed that had been brought to the surface in gopher mounds. Just to the east of the cobble foundation, there is a rectangular earthen mound, which may be the remains of a structure. To the east of this mound and to the north of the reservoirs are a series of rectangular depressions that may also be building remains (Figures 10.48 and 10.49). Time did not permit more accurate mapping and measuring of this site.

Two 3 by 3 foot test units were excavated in the area between the reservoir and the cobble foundation, where gophers had brought artifacts to the surface, in order to determine the date and nature of activities that occurred there. The units were excavated in 6-inch levels and terminated

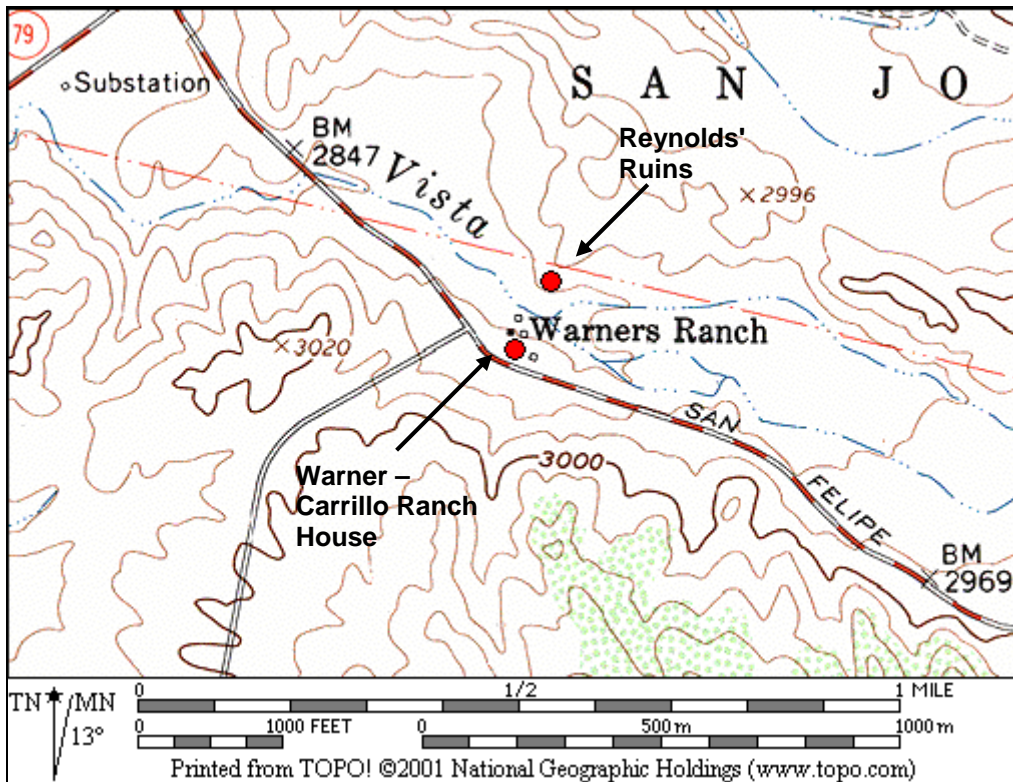


Figure 44: The locations of the Warner – Carrillo Ranch House and the ruins recorded by Reynolds in 1870 plotted on the 1995 USGS Warner's Ranch Quadrangle topographic map.

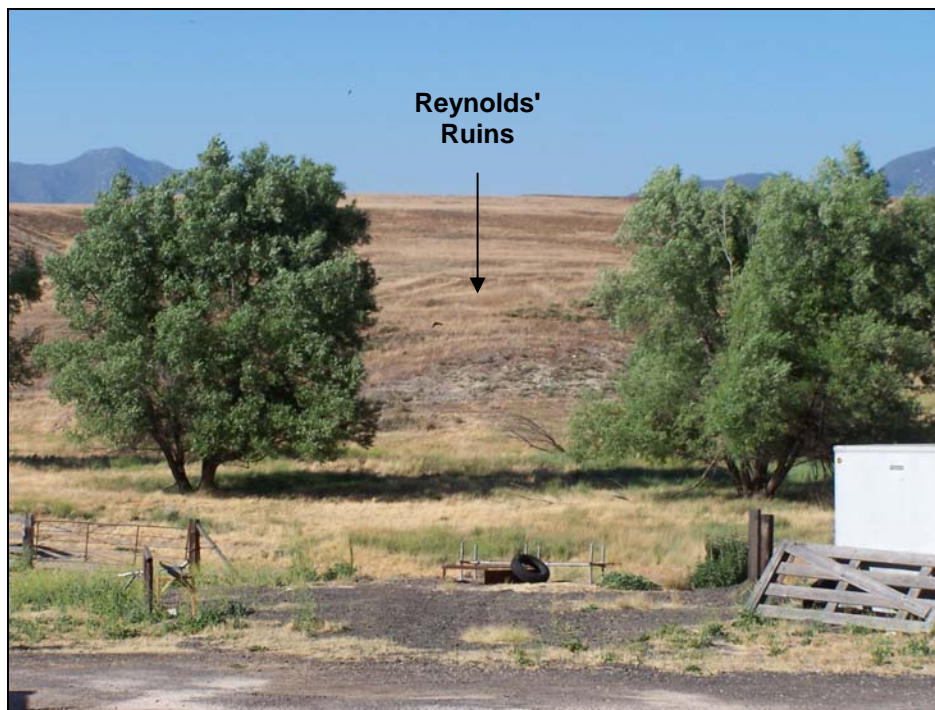


Figure 10.45. The location of the ruins recorded by Reynolds in 1870 as seen from the north side of the Warner's Ranch (Warner-Carrillo) Ranch House. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

at 12 inches below the surface on a layer of dense cobbles (Figure 10.50). Artifacts identified are listed in Appendix A, Table 8. The assemblage is dominated by kitchen items, although consumer, and livery items, as well as hardware and building materials were also recovered. Bottle glass fragments exhibited pontil marks and hand-applied lips, which date prior to 1885. Ceramics showed a wider range of dates. A bowl with the Sydenham, or one of the many imitations of the Sydenham pattern, was identified. This pattern was registered in 1853 (Wetherbee 1985:49-59). A cup decorated in the Colombia pattern dated after 1855 (Wetherbee 1985:56-57), and a flow mulberry plate exhibiting the Pelew pattern was manufactured after 1840 (Williams 1981:45; 1986:177) (Figure 10.51). The ceramic dates of 1853 and 1855 are too late to be associated with Warner's trading post, which burned in the fall of 1851. This preliminary examination would suggest that the refuse on this site is associated with the Carrillo period of occupation.



Figure 10.46. This small reservoir dating from the early 1900s has been excavated into the site where Reynolds' mapped the ruins of Warner's House in 1870. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.47. Historian Chris Wray points to the corners of a small rectangular cobble foundation near the location where Reynolds' mapped the ruins of Warner's blacksmith shop in 1870. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

Conclusions

Limited archaeological test excavations at the Warner's Ranch Ranch House revealed significant insight into the building's upkeep and evolution. A portion west of the southwest bedroom was purposefully removed during the late 19th or early 20th centuries while the building was a family home for the Vail ranch foremen. A granite facing was added to the base of the east and west walls and foundations during the late 19th or early 20th centuries, perhaps to control damage from erosion, and a wooden porch replaced a packed mud porch.

Excavations offered a clear chronology of the building interior's construction, use, and repair. In the entry room, two earthen floors and a wooden floor constructed with square nails reflect the extended use of this room, which is suspected to be one of the oldest in the house. The lower packed earthen floor was later replaced with a second upper packed earthen floor. In the west side of the room, the upper floor wore through down to the level of the original earthen floor, likely due to the amount of foot traffic between the doorway on the south side of the room and through the entry room to the parlor. And lastly, the current wooden floor was constructed. The fact that it is constructed entirely of square cut nails strongly suggests that it was built before 1890.



Figure 10.48. Chris Wray is standing on a rectangular earthen mound directly east of the cobble foundation shown in Figure 10.50. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.49. Chris Wray standing in one of several shallow rectangular depressions located approximately 100 feet east of the cobble foundation shown in Figure 10.50 and approximately 50 feet northeast of the reservoir shown in Figure 10.49. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

In addition to the floors in the entry room, the foundations also show evidence of the building's prolonged evolution. Although all are cobble or field stone foundations typically used for supporting adobe block walls, each is different. The three distinct ways in which these foundations were assembled strongly suggest that they were not built by the same individuals, and not at the same time. The foundations confirm what has been suggested by the disconnected seams in the adobe walls between the central, north and south wings: that the adobe was built in three distinct stages over a period of many years. Finally, it should be noted that such improvements as wooden floors, stone facings and board and batten siding appear to be part of a general rehabilitation of the building that can be documented by its appearance in photographs taken during the first decade of the 20th century. During the Vail Ranch period beginning in 1888, the building was rebuilt as a family home for the company's foremen and achieved its current configuration and appearance.



Figure 10.50. Unit 2 was excavated to obtain a sample from the artifact concentration at the Reynolds' Ruins site. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.



Figure 10.51. Ceramic sherds from the Reynolds' Ruins site. From left to right: unidentified transfer blue plate, flow mulberry Pelew pattern plate manufactured after 1840, Columbia pattern molded earthenware cup manufactured after 1855, and molded earthenware Sydenham pattern bowl manufactured after 1853. Courtesy Stephen R. Van Wormer and Susan D. Walter.

The limited survey on the north side of Buena Vista Valley recorded architectural remains and artifacts on the site where William Reynolds had noted the location of the ruins of Warner's house in 1870. The exact spot where Reynolds shows the house ruins was excavated out for a reservoir around 1900. A rectangular cobble foundation and several rectangular mounds and depressions are present in the general area as well as an artifact deposit consisting largely of kitchen refuse. Associated ceramic dates of 1853 and 1855 are too late to be associated with John Warner's trading post, which burned in 1851. More work is needed on this site to understand the nature of its occupation.

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