

## **HISTORY**

Pfennighausen Ranch is situated on the portion of Bandini's Jurupa Rancho (1838), the first Mexican land grant in California, sold to Abel Stearns in 1857. Arriving in 1829, Stearns adopted Mexican citizenship, converted to Catholicism, and quickly became California's largest landowner by 1860 (CHS 2008), maintaining his lands as ranch property until his death in 1871 (Johnson 2005:16). Though enterprising settlement of the area far predated the founding of Riverside in 1870, the Jurupa Rancho lands across the Santa Ana River became known as West Riverside. Despite intense growth throughout southern California in the late 19th century and the swift division of Stearns' holdings after his death (Patterson 1996; LSA 2008), West Riverside grew slowly, and its progression from rancho to agricultural settlement to commercial/industrial community was unhurried.

By 1892, a 20-acre parcel of the Jurupa (Stearns) Rancho in the east half of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 27, Township 2S, Range 6W, which included the current site, was owned by Rubidoux orange grower, Edward Heller (Bynon 1893-4:181). Heller planted 5 acres to alfalfa and constructed a temporary or minimal house valued at only \$20 in 1895. The property remained under alfalfa production through a brief succession of owners at the turn of the century and was purchased by Bernhard Pfennighausen in 1902 (Riverside County 1892-1970), newly arrived from Arkansas with his wife Emma and seven children (McVey 2010). Born in East Prussia (now Poland) in 1854, Bernhard was descended from a German baroness and Prussian military man who led a Union artillery battalion in the Civil War (McVey 2010; Roberson 2010). A former tugboat captain on the White River in Arkansas, Bernhard settled into rural West Riverside, and constructed a house on the property in ca. 1913 (McVey 2010; Riverside County 1892-1970), which may have been extensively remodeled or considerably salvaged for use in a new dwelling by 1923.

The property would eventually be enveloped in the developing community of Pedley just to the east, which was centered on the intersection of Limonite Avenue and the San Pedro, Salt Lake, and Los Angeles Railroad (later Union Pacific) tracks, near its later intersection with Van Buren Boulevard. The community was conceived by and named for Englishman William E. Pedley, a civil and waterworks engineer and manager of the local San Jacinto Land Company who organized the Riverside Power Company, negotiated the crossing of the rail line through Pedley, and planted the community with citrus. After his death in 1920, the area was taken over by William Sparr who converted Pedley's groves to chicken and rabbit ranches in a development known as the Sparrland Poultry Colony Near the Pfennighausen Ranch. Sparr's financial failure made way for Thomas Clay, who added horse breeding to the mix of rural land uses in the area (PE 1986), but poultry, especially turkey, would remain the most popular livestock (PE 1976), contributing to the establishment of Riverside County as egg capital of the United States in 1969 (PE 1970).

The Pfennighausen Ranch remained under family ownership after Bernhard's untimely death in 1923 (PE 1923a & 1923b) and until at least 1970. The original parcel was reduced to approximately 13 acres in 1947 and again subdivided in the early 1960s, separating the northern and southern parcels and forming the current northern site boundary around a much reduced, 1.15-acre Pfennighausen Ranch (Riverside County 1892-1970). Today, both the northern and southern parcels are again consolidated under common ownership and support light industrial and storage use.

## **CURRENT STATE**

The ranch resides on APNs 162-220-014; -016. It was last reviewed in 2010; the survey results indicated that the property contained historic structures (1913-1967) used for ranching/ ranch housing.

- A 1,655-square-foot craftsman influenced single-family residence (ca. 1913/1923) faces west near the center of the northern property line. Two screened openings have been added to the rear elevation. The spatial relationship of fenestration to wall space on the façade has been arranged in

an unlikely asymmetrical assemblage, indicating structural alterations. The dwelling has been converted into a multi-family residence, and a new porch has been added to the façade (ca.1931-1956).

- A shed constructed around 1930 with an adjoining corral constructed by 1948. The shed is located in between two features (features 1 and 2 described below).
- A barn was constructed in 1948 but was demolished in 2009.
- An original was removed in 1967, but the well pump and tank are still in place
- A Quonset hut was added to the property in 1967.

### **RECORDED FEATURES**

The site records indicate there are two features residing along the Northern edge of the property line and a third feature located along the eastern edge of the property.

1. The first feature is a poured concrete pole foundation located on the inside (south) of the currently situated chain link fence. This feature is associated with the shed.
2. the second feature is a circular concrete support pad for the well site; this feature consists of the original well pump and tank.
3. The feature along the eastern edge of the property is a concrete building footing measuring 27 feet long, 6 inches wide, and 10 inches high.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORIC STRUCTURES**

The 2010 assessment concluded that the property is associated with modest-scale farming/ranching in early 20th century, rural Riverside County, but has been compromised over time. The demolition of associated buildings, and the severe alteration of the Craftsman-influenced residence and ancillary buildings contribute to a low level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and the setting, feeling, and association with agriculture and ranching has been compromised by the drastic subdivision of the property, reduction of the orchard, and the changed use of the property.

### **SUMMARY**

The property was a moderately sized historic ranch in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the current structures on the property fail to meet the criteria for significance. The Project's impacts will be less than significant even though the Project might extend past the current fence and onto the first two features.

Although, I do plan to recommend archaeological monitoring for historic resources just in case buried resources are encountered during construction.