

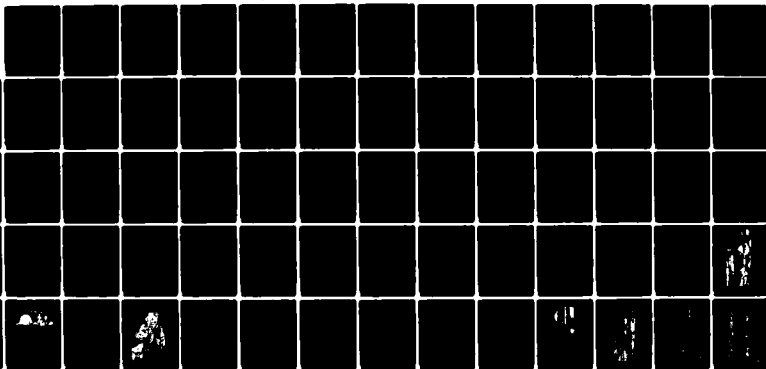
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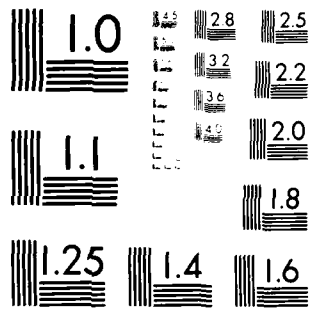
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WHITTIER NARROWS FLOOD CONTROL BASIN
HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Prepared for the
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District

Purchase Order # DACW09-76-M-1709

Submitted by:

David Lindsey and Martin Schiesl

Department of History
California State University,
Los Angeles

October 15, 1976

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WHITTIER NARROWS FLOOD CONTROL BASIN
HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Prepared by David Lindsey and Martin Schiesl
of California State University, Los Angeles

September 1976

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nature and Extent of Historic Resources Survey

This survey aims to locate, describe and evaluate the historic resources lying (1) within and adjacent to the Whittier Narrows Flood Control Basin and (2) along the banks of the Rio Hondo channel from Whittier Narrows Dam to its junction with the Los Angeles River and along the banks of that river to the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach. The areas examined are those encompassed within the red lines marking the set of six maps (dated 1-15-76 under Williams Brothers Co. imprint) supplied by the Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this survey is fourfold: - (1) to locate and identify historic resources within and adjacent to the above specified areas; (2) to evaluate the effects of the proposed project upon those resources; (3) to propose ways of mitigating any harmful effects on those resources in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (PL 93-291-190), the Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act (PL 93-291) and Executive Order Number 11593, May 15, 1971, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment;" and (4) to nominate qualified historic resources or sites for potential inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and for potential inclusion in the California State Historic Landmarks program.

1.3 Significance of Whittier Narrows Area

Upon close scrutiny the Whittier Narrows appears to be one of the most critically significant areas in California's historical development. From many points of vision--- water supply, Indians, historic beginnings, commercial and economic growth and association with prominent, influential persons-- Whittier Narrows occupies a unique and vitally significant place in the history of California.

In the Whittier Narrows, water, that crucial ingredient for human existence, has always been in ample supply. Since the Narrows serves as the drainage spout for the water run off of the extensive San Gabriel valley and since the region's geological formation is such that subterranean water remains close to the surface, water has long been readily available in the Narrows. This factor, of course, early attracted settlement nearby by the original Indian inhabitants, and by the later Spanish occupiers. The Whittier Narrows became the point of entry for European civilization and culture which in the late 18th century the Spanish introduced at the original site of San Gabriel Mission to what would become the Los Angeles region of southern California. From the commercial and economic point of view, too, Whittier Narrows served as a critical throat for the passage of men and goods and a center for the production of important raw materials. In Spanish days, the Camino Real, that loose set of trails and roads providing a rough highway from San Diego to Los Angeles and north to Monterey, passed through the Narrows. Later, with the coming of railroads, two transcontinental lines -- the Southern Pacific on the north side and the Union Pacific on the east side -- traversed Whittier Narrows. As the 20th century's automobile revolution demanded greater supplies of fuel, the Whittier Narrows again proved vital as the oil strike there in 1917 opened the way to exploiting the immensely productive Montebello Oil Field, still producing today. Finally, Whittier Narrows area over the years has been owned - all or in part -- by a succession of historically significant, colorful figures -- early immigrant from the United States William "Julian" Workman and his son-in-law Francis Pliny Fiske Temple, Mexico's last Governor of California Pio Pico, and mining speculator, real estate promoter and horse breeder Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin of Santa Anita fame.

2. METHODS USED IN MAKING SURVEY

- 2.0 General In making this survey of the Whittier Narrows and Los Angeles River-Rio Hondo historic resources, the investigators have pursued the following lines of investigation:
- 2.1 Libraries and Agencies The pertinent historical literature has been examined at the following institutions:
- 1) University and College Libraries
 - California State University, Los Angeles
 - California State University, Long Beach
 - Occidental College
 - Rio Hondo College
 - University of California, Los Angeles
 - University of Southern California
 - Whittier College.
 - 2) Public Libraries
 - Alhambra
 - El Monte
 - Los Angeles City, Main Library
 - Long Beach City, Main Library
 - Montebello
 - Pico Rivera
 - Rosemead
 - San Gabriel
 - Whittier
 - 3) Other Institutions and Agencies
 - California Historical Society
 - Henry E. Huntington Library
 - Historical Society of Southern California
 - Historical Societies of El Monte, La Puente, Montebello, Pico Rivera, San Gabriel, Whittier
 - Los Angeles County Flood Control District
 - Los Angeles County Museum, History Division
 - Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department
 - Standard Oil Company of California, La Habra Division
 - Southwest Museum
 - U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District Office

2.2 Oral Interviews Oral interviews have been conducted with an extensive group of persons ranging from local historians, long time residents of the Whittier Narrows area, local government officials, historical collectors, operators of concessions within the County Recreational Parks in Whittier Narrows, living descendants of families who owned land in the Whittier Narrows or who ran farms or other enterprises there. These interviews were geared to elicit information about historic resources or sites that either once existed or still exist in the Whittier Narrows area. As this report shows, such interviews proved productive of historical information not otherwise obtainable.

2.3 On Site Inspection On the basis of information obtained in oral interviews and evidence uncovered in the course of research in the above libraries and other institutions, the investigators undertook numerous field trips to the Whittier Narrows area to verify or, confirm the existence or non-existence of reported historic resources by on-site inspection. In some instances, as this report indicates below, the historic resources or sites were discovered and verified. In other instances, while field inspection revealed no actual physical remains still existing, the historic sites were identified.

3. PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN MAKING THE SURVEY

The following persons engaged in making the investigation and survey of historic resources in the Whittier Narrows area. A sketch of their training and qualifications in the field of historical investigation follows:-

David Lindsey, Ph. D., Professor of History, California State University, Los Angeles, Professor Lindsey earned the B. A. degree at Cornell University, M. A. at Pennsylvania State University, Ph. D. at the University of Chicago. He has taught American history at various institutions -- Oberlin College, Baldwin -Wallace College, Western Reserve University, and since 1956 at California State University, Los Angeles, where he was Chairman of the Department of History 1964-66. He has twice been Fulbright Professor of

American Civilization -- at the University of Athens, 1962-63, at the University of Madrid, 1968-69. His publications include seven books and numerous articles in the field of American history. He has been listed in Who's Who in America since 1968. Among his specialties is the history of California.

Martin Schiesl, Ph. D., Associate Professor of History, California State University, Los Angeles. Professor Schiesl earned his degrees-- B. A., M. A. and Ph. D. at the State University of New York, Buffalo. He has taught American history at that institution and since 1970 at California State University, Los Angeles. His publications include one book and several articles in American history and he has frequently presented research papers at professional meetings throughout the country. Among his specialties is the history of Los Angeles.

David Forte holds the B.A. degree from California State University, Los Angeles. He majored in history with a heavy additional concentration in geography, including California geography. He has served as managing editor of the historical publication, Perspectives, and as an officer of Phi Alpha Theta, history honorary society. He is currently engaged in graduate study, pursuing the M.A. degree in history.

4. HISTORY OF WHITTIER NARROWS AND CONTIGUOUS AREA

4.1 Pre-Spanish Era

For more than two centuries the Whittier Narrows has been recognized as a point of major strategic, commercial and economic significance. As the outlet on the southwestern rim of the extensive San Gabriel Valley the Narrows not only accommodates the Valley's water run off but provides a key gap running north-south between the La Puente Hills on the east and the La Merced (Montebello) Hills on the west.

The original Indian inhabitants of what became a southern California were well aware of the importance of Whittier Narrows. The existence in the 18th century of several Indian villages in the vicinity of Whittier Narrows clearly testifies to this. Water supply was ample and reliable. The native flora provided food and cover for animals that were the object of Indian hunting. In the late 1700's at least three

Indian villages stood a few miles downstream from present Whittier Narrows Dam -- Isantcangna along present Rio Hondo not far from Whittier Boulevard, Chokishngna on Rio Hondo's west bank just south of present Telegraph Road, and a third on the east bank of present San Gabriel River just downstream from present Pio Pico house which the Spanish called by the general name "La Rancheria," also called Suvangra.¹ (See p. 11, E. Gary Stickel's report, "An Archaeological... Survey of... Whittier Narrows....," September 1976.)

4.2 Coming of the Spanish - Portolá Expedition 1769

The first white men in present-day California quickly observed the importance of the Whittier Narrows and made immediate use of it. In 1769 a Spanish expedition from Baja California established the first European settlement at modern San Diego. Within a few months its leader, Captain Gaspar de Portolá, led a small exploring party north from San Diego to the Santa Ana River. Turning inland to a point near modern Olive, they headed north and crossed a ridge of hills (today's La Puente Hills) descending the north flank through modern Turnbull Canyon.²

Accompanying the expedition, Franciscan Father Juan Crespi recorded in his diary on July 30, 1769: "... we ascended a pass (Turnbull Canyon today) and entered a valley of very large live oak trees and alders. We then descended to a broad and spacious plain of fine black earth with much grass After traveling for an hour through the valley we came to an arroyo of water, which flows among many green marshes, their banks covered with willows and grapes, blackberries, and innumerable Castilian rosebushes loaded with roses. In the verdure runs a good channel of water (modern San Jose Creek), which when measured was found to have a volume of three quarters of a square yard. It runs along the foot of the mountains (La Puente Hills), and can be easily used to irrigate the large area of good land that the valley has. The valley has a length from north to south of about three leagues (league = 3+ miles) ... surrounded by ranges of hills. The one to the north (San Gabriel Mountains) is very high... and has many corrugations and seems to run farther to the west. The others are not so high... The plain must be about six leagues long. We camped (in modern Bassett) near the arroyo of running water, whose...water cress we ate. This valley was named San Miguel Archangel (soon changed to San Gabriel) ... In the afternoon we felt another earthquake.

I observed the latitude, found it to be 33 degrees and 34 minutes. In order to cross the arroyo it was necessary to make a bridge of poles because it was so miry. (Spaniards thereafter called this place La Puente - the bridge -- a name that has come down to the present.)

"Monday, July 31. -- At seven we set out and went west-northwest. We traveled about two leagues through brush and low woods, which delayed us a long time, making it necessary to cut the bursh down at every step that was taken. We crossed a very miry arroyo of running water (today's San Gabriel River, just south of present El Monte), and halted a little farther on in a clear open space in the same valley (north end of present Whittier Narrows Flood Control Basin) ... At half past eight in the morning we felt another earthquake.

"Tuesday, August 1. -- This was one of rest, for the purpose of exploring, and especially to celebrate the jubilee of Our Lady of Los Angeles de Porciuncula.... said Mass and the men took communion.... At ten in the morning the earth trembled. The shock was repeated with violence at one in the afternoon, and one hour afterwards we experienced another. The soldiers went out this afternoon to hunt, and brought back an antelope, with which this country abounds; they are like goats (with larger horns) I tasted the roasted meat, and it was not bad. Today I observed the latitude and it came out as 34 degrees and 10 minutes north latitude." 3

It is clear from Crespi's account that Portola's party camped at the north edge of modern Whittier Narrows, game abounded in the area, water was plentiful and vegetation thick and green, even in mid-summer.

Months later, on returning from the north, Portola's expedition reversed its route of the previous summer. Again Crespi's account relates that on Wednesday, January 17, 1770: "We traveled three leagues farther, to the valley of San Miguel (today's San Gabriel) and there we halted in the same place where we had camped (the previous July)..." The next morning "we started out...through the gap (Whittier Narrows)...which is very full of trees. We traveled...to the southeast on the edge of a stream (modern Rio Hondo, then the San Gabriel River), which rising from a copious spring of water in the same gap (Whittier Narrows), merits now the name of river; its plain is covered with willows and some slender cottonwoods. We forded the river (probably just below modern Whittier Boulevard) and traveled over level land toward the southeast" to

the Santa Ana River, "which carries more water than the Porciuncula (today's Los Angeles River)."⁴

4.3 Spain and Whittier Narrows: San Gabriel Mission

For occupying California Spain launched a dual thrust. Military posts, called presidios, featured a fortified point occupied by a garrison of soldiers and encompassed a community of wives and children accompanying their husband-father soldiers. For the native Indian population missions would introduce Christianity and Spanish civilization. In California Franciscan padres were assigned the task of establishing missions to convert the natives, under the lead of Presidente Junipero Serra, assisted by Frs. Juan Crespi, Francisco Palou, Fermin Lasuen, Fernando Parron, Juan Vizcaino and many others.⁵

In the first two years of Spanish penetration of California presidios, with accompanying missions, were established at San Diego and at Monterey. In June 1771 Fr. Serra dispatched Frs. Angel Somera and Pedro Benito Cambon from Monterey on board the ship "San Antonio" with orders to erect a mission several days journey north from San Diego. Leaving that presidio on August 6, escorted by 14 soldiers and 4 muleteers driving the mule pack train loaded with provisions and supplies, the padres headed north. After examining the Santa Ana River valley and rejecting it, they crossed over to the Whittier Narrows. As Fr. Palou later recorded, "They went on to the valley of San Miguel (today's San Gabriel), and near the river of this name... they found a place that suited them better for the mission." There they located it "on a hill in the valley, at the foot of which run some good streams of water, with which the fertile land in that valley can be irrigated, in addition to the water of the river, which is only about a half a league distant." The area, Palou noted, had "a good growth of cottonwoods, willows, and other trees, thickets of blackberries, and innumerable wild grape vines; and ...nearby there is a large grove of live oaks, with many arroyos of running water (Whittier Narrows)"⁶

According to Palou, just as padres Somera and Cambon were debating the exact location of the mission, they were surrounded by "a great multitude" of swarming armed Indians, who "with frightful yells attempted to prevent the founding of the Mission. Fearing that a battle might ensue and that some

might be killed, one of the Fathers produced a canvas picture of Our Lady of Sorrows and put it in view of the savages" Immediately the Indians, "overcome by the sight of the beautiful image, threw down their bows and arrows. The two chiefs quickly" rushed forward to place at the feet of the Virgin "as tokens of their greatest esteem the beads they wore on their neck. By the same action" they indicated their wish, to be at peace. "They called upon all the neighboring rancherias (Indian villages) who in large numbers flocked together, men, women and children, and came to see the ...Virgin," bringing "seeds, which they left" at her feet, "imagining she would eat like the rest of us." On September 8, 1771, under a temporary shelter of branches the padres celebrated Mass and blessed the spot for the Mission.⁷

The following day construction began of a temporary chapel to serve as a church, together with work on quarters for the padres and the soldier-guards, "all made of poles, roofed with tules.....The greater part of the timber for the buildings was cut and dragged to the spot" by the Indians, "who assisted also in the construction" work. Of these early buildings at the original site of San Gabriel Mission in the Whittier Narrows we have a meticulous description, left by Fr. Palou. The first church, built of logs and tules, measured 45 feet by 18 feet. Nearby stood a two-room building 45 by 17 1/2 feet and a third structure some 36 feet by 15, used by the padres. A granary, 35 by 18 feet, two sizeable barracks buildings for the soldiers, plus ten small huts for neophyte Indians brought from Baja California completed the Mission compound. All were enclosed within a stockade 60 varas square (a vara = 2.8 feet) the gate of which was closed and guarded at night. Beyond the stockade, fenced corrals held dairy cattle, horses and other livestock.⁸

The local Indians appeared outwardly friendly at the outset, helping with the construction and "on the day that the Fathers moved into the Mission" the Indians not only carried in the padres sleeping cots but "decorated them with many wild flowers." But because the Indians of the region were so numerous, in the face of only 10 soldier guards at the Mission, Father Somera secured two more soldiers from San Diego. Unfortunately friction soon developed when one of the soldiers raped "an Indian woman of the neighboring rancheria (village), the chief wanted to take revenge for the outrage." As Palou reported, "With his whole band ..., he went to the Mission, and,

attacking the two soldiers who were guarding the horses," he shot an arrow at one soldier who deflected it with his shield. That soldier then fired "his gun at the chief who fell dead, whereupon all the others took flight. At the noise of the shot, the corporal came running with the rest of the soldiers. When he saw what had happened; he ordered the head of the chief" cut off and "raised on a long lance near the stockade, as a warning to all the Indians. For many months local Indians refused to come near the Mission. Only gradually later did they allow "themselves to be approached and converted."⁹

In December 1773 Fr. Palou reported to the Spanish Viceroy in Mexico: "Mission San Gabriel is distant about 44 leagues northwest of San Diego (league = 3 + miles) in 34 degrees and 10 minutes (north) latitude, having in front of it... a very extensive (plain) ...good soil, and an abundance of water that runs through the plain in ditches that form the river. " The padres had built facilities for diverting the water into irrigation ditches to water the crops they planted. Benefitting from the Whittier Narrows' good soil and plentiful water from the San Gabriel River, Mission farming did well. In 1773 the corn crop came to 150 fanegas (a fanega = 1.58 bushels), the bean crop 7 fanegas. The Mission also boasted 38 head of cattle, 40 sheep, 12 goats, 20 pigs, 6 horses and 16 mules, together with 6 plows, assorted farm and carpentry tools. But in the absence of a blacksmith no forge was operating to repair broken equipment. At length in 1774 a blacksmith was engaged and a shop built under the new padres in charge, Antonio Paterna and Antonio Cruzado.¹⁰

In October 1773 one Indian family fled from the Mission, heading east. The wife and child died in crossing the desert, but the man, Sebastian Tarabal, made it to the Colorado River. The following year he served as a guide for the overland expedition from the Colorado led by Captain Juan Bautista de Anza. This 34-man party, exhausted from crossing desert and mountains, dragged into San Gabriel Mission on March 22, 1774. As Anza recorded in his diary: "We continued our march and went 3 leagues northwest.... Then we traveled five more to the west-northwest... in order to free ourselves from many places miry with water.... we crossed the river (San Gabriel) that runs close to the Mission, where we arrived at sunset.... We found here four friars,... who could hardly believe that people could have come from Sonora (where Anza's expedition originated)."¹¹

One member of Anza's party, Fr. Juan Diaz, journeyed to San Diego and from the frigate in the harbor there, borrowed an astrolabe. After instruction from the ship's navigator, he returned to take a reading at San Gabriel, which he computed as being at 35 degrees and 52 minutes north latitude. Obviously either his instruction was poor or his sightings bad since that would have placed the Mission north of Altagracia. Palou's December 1773 reading of 34 degrees and 10 minutes is clearly more accurate.¹²

4.4 Spanish and Mexican Eras in Whittier Narrows, 1771-1846

Early in 1775 Fr. Serra reviewed the Mission's inventory of tools and equipment, "65 head of cattle..., 66 sheep, 34 goats, 18 pigs, 19 horses, and 16 mules." He also reported 148 Indians baptized, 19 Indian marriages consecrated, "19 new Christian Indian families", with 154 persons all living at the Mission in their little huts, plus 5 Baja California Indian families. Shortly after this report was filed, on Fr. Lasuen's urging, the Mission was moved about five miles northwest to the site it still occupies on Mission Road in San Gabriel today. The move was dictated by the periodic floods of the San Gabriel River which for four years had washed out many of the Mission's crops and destroyed buildings. So the Franciscan Fathers abandoned the Whittier Narrows site after four years and eight months, although crops continued to be grown there and the old site gave its name "Mission Vieja" to the area for many years.¹³

The new Mission San Gabriel was still primitive when Fr. Pedro Font, accompanying Anza's second expedition, observed it in early 1776: "The Mission has plenty of oak and other timber for building...and firewood." Some buildings "are of adobe; but most are of palisades and tules.... One very large building of palisades, all under one roof...serves as a habitation for the Fathers, for a granary and for everything else." A church of palisades, quarters for the 8 soldier-guards, and tule huts for Indian neophytes stood close by.¹⁴

For over half a century Mission San Gabriel operated as the central religious, economic, cultural institution of southern California, dominating not only the San Gabriel Valley but also the pueblo of Los Angeles, founded in 1781 by a party of Sonorans who had stayed briefly at the Mission, and reaching as far east as San Bernardino, where a Mission chapel

was built in 1810. For 20 years after 1806 the Father in charge of the Mission, Jose Maria Zaldivea energetically expanded the Mission's fields, orchards, vineyards and livestock herds grazing on the endless range lands of the Valley, and built the Molino Viejo (still standing at 1120 Old Mill Road in San Marino today). Mission workshops produced hides, leather, tallow for candles, soap, woolens, furniture, tools, utensils, wines, dried fruits and vegetables. At its peak over 20,000 head of cattle bore the Mission brand.¹⁵

After the Mexican revolution of 1821-22 ended Spanish rule, a drive to secularize (remove from Church control) the Missions gained support. In the 1830's secularization of San Gabriel Mission began with its lands being granted to private owners. A few Indians received grants, as at Rancho Potrero Grande in the Whittier Narrows for grazing livestock. Movable property and animals at the Mission were rapidly appropriated by grasping individuals. Mission operations deteriorated swiftly until the Franciscan padres gave up in 1852. Except for the church building the Mission center itself was granted in 1846 by Pio Pico, last Mexican governor, to newcomers Hugo Reid and William Workman, large rancho owners.¹⁶

More than a half century earlier Spanish authorities had begun (and later Mexican authorities continued) the practice of making land grants to military officers and soldiers upon retiring from active duty after 20-30 years of service. Several of these grants bear upon the Whittier Narrows area. Among the earliest was a 1784 grant of 300,000 acres to Corporal Jose Manuel Nieto that stretched from north of modern Whittier all the way to the ocean at modern Long Beach (soon reduced to 167,000 acres). Nieto's grant, like other early grants, carried only grazing rights; to acquire title a number of conditions like surveying and mapping had to be met. After Nieto's death the land was divided among his heirs. The northernmost part called Santa Gertrudis Rancho running from Whittier Narrows south to modern Downey passed to Nieto's son's widow, Dona Josefa Cota. In 1835 she approved transfer of part of that rancho, known as Rancho Paso de Bartolo (including the southern part of Whittier Narrows) to ex-soldier Juan Crispin Perez, who in 1843 sold a 700-acre parcel of it to Bernardino Guirado. The major portion, some 9,000 acres of Rancho Paso de Bartolo, passed from Perez to former Governor Pio Pico in 1850-52. This rancho stretched from just above today's Whittier Narrows Dam south and east through northern Pico Rivera and Whittier of today.¹⁷

Pico, owner of many ranchos in California, affectionately called this one "El Ranchito," and lived here building his impressive ranch house at a point where it still stands today just southeast of where Whittier Boulevard crosses the San Gabriel River. Tapping San Jose Creek a few miles north, his irrigation ditch brought water to his fields, vineyards, and livestock.

In the Whittier Narrows proper the 1840's brought significant developments. In November 1841 there arrived in southern California a party of 40 persons from Santa Fe-Taos area, led by William (Julian) Workman and John Rowland. A native of England, William Workman migrated to America at age 16, became a fur trader, then in partnership with John Rowland a whiskey distiller in Taos, New Mexico, and there in 1829 he married Nicolasa Uriarte. All moved to California in 1841 (later to be joined by Workman's brother David). Workman and Rowland, already naturalized Mexican citizens and converted Roman Catholics, had brought with them a supply of gold with which they purchased Rancho La Puente. Its 49,000 acres they divided, Workman taking the western half that stretched westward along San Jose and Walnut Creeks to Whittier Narrows. Workman prospered as he acquired in time 3,000 head of cattle, 600 horses, developed wheat growing, vineyards and fruit orchards, and erected a grist mill on the north bank of San Jose Creek at the eastern edge of Whittier Narrows.

By 1850 Workman had acquired 2,300-acre La Merced Rancho, covering much of today's Whittier Narrows and the hills to the west. This he divided between his son-in-law Francis Pliny Fiske Temple (who came from Massachusetts to California in 1841 and married Antonia Margarita Workman in 1845) and his ranch foreman Juan Matias Sanchez (who had worked for Workman in Taos and accompanied him west in 1841). Later Sanchez acquired Rancho Potrero Grande, which extends into the northwestern area of Whittier Narrows.¹⁸

4.5 American Takeover - Battle of San Gabriel River

During the 1830's and early 40's California, simmering with discontent as Mexico's most distant and neglected province, erupted in periodic armed uprisings, which ousted at least one Mexican-appointed governor. An internal power struggle between Mexican-appointed governors and aspiring California leaders resulted by 1845 in an uneasy arrangement whereby General Jose Castro served as the military commander in the north (Monterey) and Pio Pico as civil governor in the south

(Los Angeles). In 1846 this teetering balance was disrupted by a new factor when the United States and Mexico went to war. U.S. naval units under Commodore Robert F. Stockton quickly seized Monterey and San Francisco and moved south to occupy San Diego and Los Angeles -- only to be ousted from the latter place by local California resistance.

In late 1846 a small American military force, led overland by General Stephen W. Kearny, merged at San Diego with Stockton's marines and sailors and marched northward. Approaching Los Angeles from the southeast, these 600 troopers camped the night of January 7, 1847 on the east side of San Gabriel River in the vicinity of the present Pio Pico Mansion (not there at the time). On the River's west bluff General Jose Flores placed his small artillery pieces, supplied with crude gun powder made at nearby San Gabriel Mission, and his 600 men, mostly mounted but ill-armed with ancient muskets and lances, prepared to block the Yankee advance.¹⁹

What happened on January 8 at the Battle of San Gabriel River (Paso de Bartolo) was later reported by Commodore Stockton: "the enemy were in force... (on) Rio San Gabriel... to make a stand against us... Before moving that morning ... each officer and man was assigned his position... and reminded it was the 8th day of January (42nd anniversary of the U.S. victory at New Orleans)... We marched at nine o'clock. Immediately on reaching the plain (i.e., the river wash) we formed a square, our baggage packs, spare oxen and beef cattle in the center... The enemy appeared in sight upon the hills on the opposite side ... six hundred in number... (with) their right about two miles down the river. As we approached, our column... moved steadily toward the ford, when within a quarter of a mile... disposition was made to meet the enemy.

"A detachment of marines was sent to strengthen the left flank. A party of the enemy, 150 strong, had now crossed the river and made several ineffectual attempts to drive a band of wild mares upon the advance party. We now moved forward to the ford Capt. Hensley's (advance force dismounted and) ... deployed to the front and crossed the stream (which was about 50 yards in width) driving before them a party of the enemy... The enemy had now taken their position upon the heights (on River's west bank), distant about 600 yards from the river and about 50 feet above its level; their center... about 200 strong ... immediately in front of the ford, upon which they opened a fire from two pieces of artillery throwing round and grape shot without effect. Our column halted upon the edge of the stream... the guns were unlimbered. ... The two 9 pounders, dragged by officers and men and mules soon reached the opposite bank, where they were immediately placed

in battery. The column followed in order under a most galling fire from the enemy, and because warmly engaged on the opposite bank... our men marching steadily forward... The passage of the whole force was effected with only one man killed and one wounded, not withstanding the enemy kept up an incessant from the heights...

"During this time our artillery began to fall upon the enemy who continued their fire without interruption... Capt. Hensley's skirmishers now advanced and took the hill upon the right, the left wing of the enemy retreating before them... The right wing of the enemy made an unsuccessful attempt to charge our left, but finding so warm a reception from the musketeers..., they retired. (Under the American charge on the heights) the enemy broke in retreat...; We were now in possession of the heights... the band playing 'Hail Columbia' ...announced another glorious victory...We moved down the heights until they brought us near the river where we encamped.... At 9 o'clock (next day) our column commenced its march toward Ciudad Los Angeles.... We entered the City of the Angels (Jan. 10) our band playing as we marched up the principal street of the square." ²⁰

In early 1848, the Whittier Narrows along with California became officially part of the United States under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

4.6 19th Century Development

With the American takeover, life in the Whittier Narrows area remained much as before -- cattle ranching and farming with related activities. Landowners had to prove their titles to their land before the newly created U.S. Land Commission -- which Workman, Temple and Sanchez succeeded in doing.²¹ Having returned from a brief sojourn in Mexico City, Pio Pico returned, purchased Rancho Paso do Bartolo from Juan Crispin Perez (who had been mayordom of Mission San Gabriel during desecularization). In 1852 on that rancho Pico built his house on the east bank of the San Gabriel River, a site still occupied by the Pio Pico Mansion (built 1885 after the heavy floods of 1884), on south side of modern Whittier Blvd. ²²

A growing number of Americans moved into the San Gabriel valley in the vicinity of Whittier Narrows. In 1863 the James W. Cate family from Illinois bought 200 acres of Pico's land just below the present Whittier Narrows Dam and began farming.

Later he introduced English walnuts and helped organize the walnut growers association. His son James Cate established the Cate Ditch Company whose large pipes brought water from the San Gabriel River through the present Whittier Narrows down to Pico Rivera and Whittier (sold only in 1955 to the City of Whittier and Pico Water Co.).²³

The vicinity of present-day El Monte, western terminus of the Santa Fe Trail, attracted so many American newcomers especially from Texas and Kentucky that it was soon called Lexington (a name that still appears on one of the roads in the Whittier Narrows). By the 1860's the El Monte area, north of the Narrows, had more small farms than any other part of the county except Los Angeles itself. They ranged in size from a few acres to 160. A visitor in 1860 recorded seeing 150 farms growing wheat, corn, barley, some citrus, with water easy to reach by digging 6-10 feet and noted El Monte had a good hotel, a church, a distillery, and "miles of willow fences" along its roads.²⁴

By the closing years of the 19th century agricultural change was clear. The old livestock ranching, having given way to grain crops earlier, the latter now yielded to walnut groves, which yielded to vegetable crops of all sorts, especially celery and rhubarb growing. A small cluster of houses, a store and saloon had appeared under the name of "Temple Corners" west of modern Rosemead Blvd. toward the modern Rio Hondo channel. A particularly heavy flood in the winter of 1867-68 had changed the water flow through the Narrows. The old San Gabriel River cut itself a new course by absorbing San Jose Creek and carving its own present-day channel to enter the sea between modern Long Beach and Seal Beach. The former channel of the San Gabriel River was taken over by a new stream, the Rio Hondo, which absorbing the waters of the Alhambra Wash and others, flowed southwesterly to join the Los Angeles River, in modern South Gate.²⁵

As families settling in the Whittier Narrows became more numerous, a school building known as La Puente School was erected in the Narrows between the present San Gabriel and Rio Hondo channels. Shortly in 1863 the La Puente School District was organized. By 1868 it had 150 students, annual expenses of \$681.75 for salaries and supplies, with F. P. Temple, James W. Cate and George W. Durfee serving as school board trustees and supervising the school operating at 645 Durfee Road. In 1921 in response to a gift from Walter P. Temple, Sr., the district changed its name to become Temple

School District, and many persons of mature years living today attended Temple School over the years. In the 1930 s a new Temple School was built, which in time would be taken over by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as their base yard for flood control operations in the L.A. District. The original La Puente School District was one of the oldest and largest in the state of California, including within its borders modern Pico Rivera, Whittier, El Monte and most of the La Puente valley. After the Whittier Narrows Dam was built, the district was split -- the northern part becoming the present Valle Lindo District, southern part becoming Ranchito District.²⁶

After 1850 improved transportation began to open the Whittier Narrows area more fully. Wagon roads, including one that followed the old Spanish El Camino Real along the western side of the Narrows, came to be built, connecting the Narrows with San Gabriel and Los Angeles. By 1860 Freight and stage coach lines passed just north of the Narrows proper with a regular stop at El Monte. The Southern Pacific Railroad, completed in 1876, also skirted to the north. The Union Pacific's San Pedro-Salt Lake branch line would pass through the Narrows on the east side in the early 1900's. The automobile was still in the future.²⁷

The mid-1870's depression threw William Workman, F.P.F. Temple and Sanchez into bankruptcy. The outcome was their principal creditor of their Los Angeles bank, Elias J. ("Lucky") Baldwin, took over their ranchos with the exception of a few acres. Much of the land in the Narrows area passed into Baldwin's hands. Baldwin began running cattle, horses and sheep on the range lands under the supervision of his foreman Gaetano Castino, who built his ranch house on Workman Mill Road near San Jose Creek on the east edge of the Narrows and bought and operated the Workman Mill till it burned down in 1889. Baldwin sold off some land and advanced loans to various farmers, notably to Frank L. Pelissier, who introduced dairying and whose name is still attached to a street at the eastern edge of the Narrows. William Workman died in 1876, his long-time friend Pio Pico in 1894 -- both were buried in the Workman family cemetery some distance east of the Narrows in modern City of Industry.²⁸

4.7 20th Century Development

The first two decades of the twentieth century found the Whittier Narrows a region of loosely knit agricultural communi-

ties. Most of the land consisted of ranches, five acres and up. Some sections were devoted to the cultivation of various citrus crops; other spots yielded lettuce, cauliflower, and cabbage. Still other farm areas were devoted to growing flowers for seed. In a few places, where the soil was suitable, there were many walnut groves.²⁹

El Monte became a major center of walnut production in southern California. The town's walnut pioneer was James D. Durfee, who allocated a section of his 125 acres south of the town to the crop in the mid-1860's. His legacy is Durfee Road, a county highway, which runs from the southwest to the northeast through part of the Narrows basin. The mild climate and rich soil of the El Monte area made walnut growing very successful. Commercial production began with the operations of Prescott Cogswell and Ben Maxson. They became the largest growers in an area northeast of the town known as the Mountain View district. Cogswell and Maxson's sons organized one of the first walnut cooperatives in the state in 1896. Limited in membership to farmers in the El Monte region, the Mountain View Association operated a storage and packing shed near the Southern Pacific line and continually processed the walnuts for shipment to places throughout the country.³⁰

Equally important was the El Monte Walnut Growers Association. The cooperative became a member of the California Walnut Growers Association and opened its doors in 1914. The complete processing and widespread advertising carried out by the California Association served to greatly increase El Monte's domestic market for walnuts. Production in 1905, for example, was 54 car loads which put El Monte third in the state in walnut production. The crop size remained near this level until 1920 when 200 car loads were shipped out of the area by the two local cooperatives. A few years later severe drought and land subdivision for homesites combined to close down the Mountain View Association. The remaining growers then transferred to the El Monte Association.³¹

While commercial agriculture provided the economic basis of the Whittier Narrows area, new types of industry appeared in the region in the early twentieth century. The movie industry, requiring vast amounts of space and a varied landscape, often chose outlying rural settlements to film particular sequences.³² D. W. Griffith's classic Birth of a Nation was made in 1914. Several scenes from the film, as recalled by former motion picture director Raoul Walsh who played John Wilkes Booth in the movie, were photographed along the wash of the San Gabriel River in the Whittier Narrows basin.³³

Less dramatic but more significant was the discovery of oil in the Narrows. In 1912 nine-year-old Tommy Temple was trying to catch lizards in the hills of the Rancho La Merced across the road from his home property. He came upon a pool of water which was varicolored on the surface and had an unpleasant smell. Excited that he might have found oil, he quickly ran to get his father. With the pool bubbling, the father ignited a large bubble and concluded that it was only natural gas. Three years later the father described the pool to a close friend, who in turn persuaded the Standard Oil Company of California to sink a well. Oil soon gushed out. The well on the La Merced Rancho was owned by the daughter of Lucky Baldwin. Standard Oil proceeded to dig a second well on the Temple family's 60 acre tract, and black gold poured out there also in 1917. Within the next three years, nearly 100 wells were dug in the new Montebello Oil Field with several near the site of the later Whittier Narrows Dam.³⁴

Agricultural industry continued to dominate the economy of the Whittier Narrows. Particularly important was the expansion of dairy operations in the 1920's and 1930's. The dairies entered the region as they were moved out of communities closer to Los Angeles, with alfalfa grown in El Monte being a major drawing factor. By 1925 there were many small family operations in the Narrows area. The Depression and subsequent milk price war resulted in the consolidation of several dairies into larger operations. Ten El Monte dairies were producing 13,000 gallon of milk per day in 1936.³⁵

The 1930's, however, saw the decline of the walnut industry in the El Monte area. Much of this was due to intercrop competition and the rising costs of pest control. Moreover, the influx of people displaced from the "dustbowl states" into the San Gabriel Valley led to the demand for land subdivision for farms and homes.³⁶ Some of the better locations in the Whittier Narrows region had been subdivided into large and small lots between 1925 and 1930. The Garvey Acres tract, just west of the Rio Hondo River and south of Garvey Avenue, was one of these major subdivisions. During the next decade several hundred nearby acres were subdivided into small farm tracts and homesites. Low prices and very few building restrictions attracted many buyers from urban areas, particularly low-income families and unemployed groups. The purchasers erected small homes for their families with second-hand materials. Thereafter, the homes were improved by remodeling and various additions. By 1945 several hundred new

homes had been built in the Whittier Narrows district in accordance with Los Angeles County building regulations.³⁷

4.8 Floods and Flood Control

While the natural environment of the Los Angeles area provided variety and openness, it also presented significant hydrologic and topographic problems. Heavy rainstorms have periodically blown in from the Pacific Ocean and discharged vast amounts of precipitation on the San Gabriel mountains and coastal plain area. These downpours often occurred after the ground was already saturated with earlier winter rains. When such drenching happened, a deluge of water and debris rushed down from the mountain range and swept onto the coastal lowland. Flash floods and mud flows usually followed. Rivers soon became torrential streams whose destructive force was augmented by the debris carried along by the rampaging flood waters.³⁸

There were ten major floods in the Los Angeles area between 1850 and 1900. With no devices to confine the floodwaters, the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers sometimes carved out new channels and changed their courses. The "great flood" of 1861-62 caused the San Gabriel River to overflow its banks above El Monte and start a new channel to the west of the original channel. This course was referred to as the new river and later the Rio Hondo. The waters of the river shifted thereafter from one channel to the other, with periodic flows in both channels at once.³⁹ Low erodible banks made the channels of the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Rio Hondo Rivers very unstable. Severe flood discharge often flowed over the banks and filled the surrounding territory. All of this resulted in loss of life, extensive property damage, and interruption of transportation and business.⁴⁰

Prior to 1914, there had been no effort to develop an explicit flood-control program by public agencies in Los Angeles County. The damages left from a catastrophic flood of that year precipitated a demand by local property interests for regional flood protection. As a result of the severe flooding, several hundred people became temporary refugees, some lives were lost, numerous bridges were washed away, and much valuable property was destroyed.⁴¹ The amount of losses in ranch and horticulture property in the Whittier Narrows area totaled about \$2.6 million.⁴² By a special state act, the county was constituted a flood-control district with the

power to levy taxes and build protective facilities. The five-man county Board of Supervisors became the governing agency of the new district. Two large bond issues, one in 1917 for \$4,450,000 and another in 1924 for \$35,300,000, laid the foundation for a modern system of flood control and water conservation in greater Los Angeles.⁴³

Staffed with highly trained personnel, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District carried on experiments designed to determine the most efficient and effective ways to control and conserve flood waters. Material on rainfall, runoff, and debris was gathered by engineers in various district sites. The district formulated a general plan for the control and conservation of flood waters in the entire county. It proposed the construction of dams and basins in higher elevations to control storm runoff and debris from the mountains. It took into the account the need for small stream engineering, calling for bank protection of smaller streams together with spreading and storing their waters for useful purposes. The district also promoted projects in the San Gabriel Valley and coastal plain that included permanent channel improvement of the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Rio Hondo Rivers.⁴⁴ By 1930 several dams had been constructed in mountain canyons and various river channels had been extensively paved.⁴⁵

This flood-control work, however, could barely keep pace with increasing storm-water runoff. Rapid growth of cities in the Los Angeles region, with their vast areas of roofs and paved streets, led to more runoff from heavy rainfalls. In response, the Flood Control District developed a more comprehensive plan. The flood on January 1, 1934, in the La Crescenta-Montrose area gave added impetus to their program. Thirty-five lives were lost and property damage reached \$5 million. The district quickly began construction of debris basins and concrete channels in the area; it also applied to the national government for public works grant-in-aids to help speed completion of various protective facilities. Washington provided the funds with the stipulation that the work be done under the direction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.⁴⁶ More federal help came in 1936 with the Flood Control Act that authorized \$70 million for flood control projects in the Los Angeles and San Gabriel basins. The two jurisdictions, county and federal, now assumed joint responsibility for the major streams flowing through metropolitan Los Angeles.⁴⁷

4.9 Whittier Narrows Dam

The Flood Control District and its Board of Supervisors became the focal point of intralocal competition over federal planning. In 1937 the Army District Engineer, aided by the Flood Control District, outlined plans for an expenditure of \$300 million on various projects. One of the works was the Whittier Narrows Dam. A severe flood in March of 1938 lent added urgency to the plans. Twenty-three persons died and property damage totaled \$20.5 million in the Los Angeles and San Gabriel River Basins. The Board of Supervisors voted to include in a new comprehensive flood-control program plans for a dam and reservoir at the Whittier Narrows. Property owners immediately above the dam protested to the Board that it would flood several thousand acres and force abandonment of homes, farms, and dairies in the El Monte area. They recommended that as an alternative the channels of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers be widened and paved.⁴⁸

Supporting the project were many local water companies and the cities of Whittier and Long Beach. The water firms assured the Board of Supervisors and the Flood Control District that a reservoir at the Narrows would be an excellent remedy to conservation problems. Long Beach and Whittier anticipated benefits from both flood protection and conservation features of the dam. Public officials in these communities, backed by local civic organizations, persuaded the Army Engineers in 1940 to adopt the project as part of their drainage plan for the region. One year later Congress approved the Army's program.⁴⁹

El Monte's anti-dam movement continued, however. The congressman from their district, Jerry Voorhis, was the county member of the House flood-control committee. His support of the El Monte interests blocked appropriations for the dam in 1945 and 1946.⁵⁰ The flood-control committee asked the Army Engineers to restudy the project and propose a new plan. The Army District Engineer requested suggestions from local groups committed to the development of adequate flood control. Many different plans were submitted. Brief descriptions of some proposals were attached to a notice sent out to announce that a public hearing on the various plans would be held in December, 1946. "Plan A" described the proposal supported by the pro-dam groups; "Plan F" was the all channel plan recommended by El Monte. The pro-dam interests presented to the hearing depositions from water companies anxious to see

a reservoir built at the Narrows. County officials and Army Engineers⁵¹ gave their support to the evidence in favor of the project.

Out of the hearing came a plan that was similar to the old proposal. Groups from the El Monte area still advocated river widening and deepening as an alternative to the dam. In 1948 they were able to get a compromise agreement with other communities, locating the structure farther downstream.⁵² The Corps of Engineers began construction in 1950 and completed the dam in 1957. By this time, they had acquired numerous land tracts and relocated various utilities in the Narrows. The dam provided protection for large areas of highly developed residential, agricultural, and industrial property.⁵³ Subsequent work in the Whittier Narrows flood-control reservoir would be devoted to the development of recreation facilities.

5. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

5.1 Historical Resources of the Whittier Narrows

5.10 General. The Whittier Narrows Flood Control area encompasses numerous significant historical resources. These resources are not only significant but mark crucial milestones in the political, economic, social and cultural evolution of modern California. Without their having been discovered or established the course of California's history would have been vastly different, and clearly southern California would not be the region as we know it today.

It was at the Whittier Narrows that European civilization (from which American civilization derives) and Christianity were first introduced and established in the Los Angeles region with the building of the original Mission San Gabriel Arcangel. It was along the present Rio Hondo channel just below the present Whittier Narrows that the United States' acquisition of California was sealed in 1847 at the battle of the San Gabriel River. It was on the edge of and within the Whittier Narrows that the substantial oil strikes were made in 1917 that greatly increased supplies of energy available to Californians -- and other Americans. It was in the Whittier Narrows that some of the filming was done for director David W. Griffith's classic motion picture The Birth of A Nation in 1914 -- giving a powerful boost to movie making, shortly to become one of California's major industries. It is in the Whittier Narrows (in Legg Lake Park, to be exact) that there still operates a miniature railroad testifying to southern California's historic penchant for unique town building ("Venice of America") and amusement park operation (Disneyland). Finally, in the Whittier Narrows there still stands a school building, direct descendant of and surviving testimony of one of southern California's earliest and largest school districts -- evidence of Californians' historic concern and effort to provide quality free public education for their children.

5.11. San Gabriel Mission - Original Site

On the basis of the best available evidence the original site of the Franciscan Mission San Gabriel Arch-

angel appears to have been on a slight rise of ground west of the present Rio Hondo channel and east of present San Gabriel Boulevard. This puts it just south of the northern boundary line of Range 11W, Township 2S, Section 6, approximately 2,000 feet due east of that Section's northwest corner and approximately 1,200 feet northwest of where the bronze San Gabriel Mission marker stands just west of the intersection of San Gabriel Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.⁵⁴

The original Mission compound, as developed in 1771 and in the years immediately following, consisted of a number of buildings -- a 45' by 18' church, 2 two-room 45' by 17- $\frac{1}{2}$ ' building, a 35' by 18' granary, a 36' by 15' residence for the padres, two barracks for the military guard, plus small huts for neophyte Indian families brought from Baja California. Construction was extremely crude -- rough logs, poles and boughs of trees and shrubs, with tules laid on poles serving as roofing material. Not only was construction primitive, but the founding fathers thought of these buildings as temporary. As early as 1772, after the first winter floods they were considering moving to a new location. The original compound was enclosed by a wooden palisade 60 varas square (a vara = 2.8 feet). Just outside the compound fenced corrals enclosed the Mission's horses and livestock. Soon converted Indians began living nearby.

In extent the Mission compound and appurtenances must have occupied an area about equal to three modern football fields. Beyond the immediate compound livestock were often put out to graze on the hills, and the river bottom lands were planted in corn, wheat, beans and assorted vegetables.

After four years and eight months the Franciscan padres left this location and moved the Mission to its present location in modern San Gabriel. Still, the padres and Indian neophytes continued to return to Whittier Narrows to cultivate and harvest fields planted there and to tend cattle on adjacent hills.

Many years later -- in the late 19th and early 20th centuries -- local residents reported finding ruins of adobe walls in the area. Indeed, T. W. Temple, II's leaflet, The Founding of San Gabriel Mission, carries a picture of what purports to be "ruins of the original San Gabriel Mission." The picture is from an original photograph taken about 1900 by George Wharton James that is now in the Southwest Museum collection. In terms of historical authenticity and credibility both the photograph and reports of adobe finds present difficulties. The evidence is clear that the original Mission structures were made of wood and brush and that adobe was not generally used in Mission building in California until the 1780's -- at least 10 years after the original San Gabriel Mission's founding. It is possible that after the Mission's move in 1775 some storage buildings of adobe were erected in the Whittier Narrows, but to call them the original Mission strains historical accuracy.

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Many difficulties surround the pinpointing of the location of the Mission's original site. (1) The San Gabriel River and its 19th century offshoot the Rio Hondo have over the centuries changed course several times, and frequent damaging floods have altered the area's topography and have left alluvial deposits. (2) A great many human activities in the area have of course obscured whatever may have remained of human-made structures of two centuries ago. Originally livestock ranching and farming affected the area. Much traffic on foot and by animal passed through the vicinity along the original El Camino Real, and much later a wagon road following the same route passed close to the Mission's original site. (3) In the 20th century oil well drilling, and related activity, have substantially altered the original landscape. (4) More recently, recreational activity, especially horse corrals and horse trails have affected the area.

It is conceivable that archaeological excavation could turn up 200-year-old artifacts from the original Mission activity. Such archaeological searching could begin on what appears (from the best evidence now available) to be the probable original site of the Mission, as indicated above. If additional evidence should come to light in the future indicating a different location, such archaeological work could then be shifted to that location. Such excavating may well require securing permission from private property owners. If such archaeological work determines precisely the Mission's original location, it is our professional judgment that because of the Mission's great significance in introducing European civilization and Christianity to this part of southern California (as explained in parts 4.3, 4.4 and 5.10 above) the Mission site should be preserved and nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Indeed, we strongly recommend that serious consideration be given to constructing a replica of the original San Gabriel Mission on or as close to the original site as possible.

In the meantime the area of the Mission's site remains an extremely sensitive site, subject to possible adverse effects of future projects. We urge that any future developmental work in the vicinity be undertaken with extreme caution and the greatest care. This should be done with a view to saving any historic artifacts and remains as may be uncovered and to preserving the site for possible future development, as indicated in the paragraph immediately above.

5.12 Site of the Battle of San Gabriel River, January 8, 1847

From the best evidence available the battle of San Gabriel River (Paseo de Bartolo) took place on Montebello's eastern edge just east of, and on, the bluff on the Rio Hondo's west side near where the Union Pacific's tracks cross Bluff Road and cross the bridge over the Rio Hondo. Occupying the bluff, defending Californio forces under Genl. Jose **Fieros** had artillery guns in place for 400 yards. Attacking U.S. forces under Comm. Robert Stockton moved from near the present Pio Pico Mansion into the San Gabriel River wash. Fighting erupted as the Americans passed the River ford below the Californios' guns in the morning of Jan. 8, 1847. American victory here produced California's transfer from Mexico to the United States, as confirmed in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of February 1848.

The historical significance of this site is obvious from the above and from the explanation in 4.5 above.

For years afterward, according to written and oral evidence, round shot, cannon balls and grape shot were regularly turned up by farmers working their fields in the area of the battlefield. In recent years there have been no such reports, nor are there any physical evidence or artifacts still at the site, which is currently occupied by numerous horse barns and equestrian trails on the west side of the Rio Hondo and by a variety of works, including an extensive percolation basin, on the east side.

The impact on this battlefield site has already taken place, in that it is partially obscured by modern development and structures. Even though a California State Historical Landmark stands at a point almost 2 miles south of here, it is our professional judgment that because of the historic importance of the battle this exact site be nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and that it be properly recognized.

5.13. Oil Field Discovery

Rumors of oil in the Whittier Narrows and adjacent Montebello Hills had been circulating for years after 9-year-old Thomas W. Temple, II, had found bubbles of natural gas percolating up through a rain-filled puddle at the eastern end of the Montebello Hills. At 8 a.m. on February 28, 1917, the discovery well -- known as Baldwin No. 1 -- was completed by Standard Oil Company of California. This well was located on the northern slope near the crest of the Montebello Hills some 4,500 feet due west of the San Gabriel Blvd. - Lincoln Avenue intersection.

Within weeks a flurry of oil exploration followed. In less than a year, some 35 outfits -- from giant Standard Oil and Texaco to small, individual prospectors -- held oil leases on the Whittier Narrows area as well as the Montebello Hills. Drilling moved ahead feverishly. In the Whittier Narrows itself on the Walter Temple lease Standard Oil Well No. 5 was completed on January 2, 1918 at a point 375 feet due west of the point where San Gabriel Boulevard bridge spans the Rio Hondo channel and 150 feet due east of Lincoln Avenue. Some 370 feet southwest of that well, McGinley Oil Company completed a well in January 1918. By April 30, 1920 over 40 wells were pumping oil in the Whittier Narrows area, as part of the much larger Montebello Oil Field.

Many of these wells still continue to produce today -- almost 70 years later. The Montebello Field, while far from the largest in southern California, was nonetheless a sizeable one -- yielding over the years some 184 million barrels of oil.

Since oil well operations are carried on under private leases, there appear to be no appreciable impacts affecting them on the part of the Whittier Narrows project, or are any irretrievable or irreversible losses of historical data or sites anticipated.

However, because of the size and historic significance of the Montebello Field in the development of California's economy, it is our professional judgement that a California State historic landmark would be most appropriate. As to the marker's location, logically it should be at the point of the discovery well. But since that point is virtually inaccessible to the public because it lies deep within fenced land owned by Standard Oil, a marker located close to the San Gabriel Blvd. - Lincoln Avenue intersection would be appropriate, visible and accessible to the public. The marker could well indicate that that point marked the eastern portion of the large oil discovery of 1917-1918.

5.14 Historic Motion Picture in Whittier Narrows

Motion picture making in the United States began in the 1890's after the technological breakthroughs in cameras, lenses, film, developing and projecting had been achieved. Virtually all early films were made in New York and vicinity. By 1908-1909 California -- with its advantages of frequent sunshine, varied scenery and freedom from lawsuits that plagued the industry in New York -- began attracting some movie makers. Most early motion pictures were 1 - reels (running 10-12 minutes), put together as cheaply as possible to screen in the nickel-odeons spreading rapidly across the nation. Among early film makers, director David W. Griffith became an outstanding pioneer developing many innovations of technique that improved the story telling and generated dramatic suspense. In 1915 in southern California Griffith directed what today would be labeled a "blockbuster" -- "The Birth of a Nation" -- employing a cast of thousands, sparing no expense to achieve dramatic realism. When completed, this epic -- a path marker in motion picture production -- ran for almost three hours, spellbound entranced audiences with its emotional impact, and grossed more

revenue at the box office than any other film (until overtaken by "Gone with the Wind" a quarter century later). It was truly an epoch-marking film.

In the making of "The Birth of A Nation" Whittier Narrows played a part by providing some of the outdoor natural scenery. Director Griffith chose to shoot some of the outdoor sequences in the wash of the San Gabriel River. The exact Points of filming are difficult to determine, but they appear to have been in the present Equestrian and Nature areas on the southeast section of the Whittier Narrows basin. (The above statement rests upon the information supplied in a letter of 9-3-76 to the principal investigators from Raoul Walsh, an actor who played in "The Birth of a Nation" and who later became a renowned director. He is still living, currently in Simi, California.)

5.15 Miniature Railway, Legg Lake Park

This railroad operates on a 1-mile long track in the Legg Lake Park area of Whittier Narrows under a concession from the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department. Its long, colorful history dates back almost 3/4 of a century, to 1904 when the railroad was built at the John J. Coit Machine shop in Los Angeles. At that same time imaginative real estate promoter Abbot Kinney was developing on a site south of Santa Monica a seaside community he called "Venice of America." Modelled on Venice of Italy, the new town boasted canals, gondolas, arching bridges, boat houses for garages and all the trimmings. But somehow the scheme failed to work as planned. Because of technical difficulties the sea water supplying the canals often became so stagnant and fetid that local residents avoided boating on the canals.

To meet the need for local transportation and incidentally to please his two young sons, Kinney found a small train operating in what was then Eastlake Park (now Lincoln Park) and got builder John J. Coit to design a 3-mile loop circling Venice's canal-residential section, with the main station at the canal lagoon on Windward Avenue. The railway served two functions -- an entertainment feature for weekend visitors and a municipal transportation system. Kinney installed his sons as the line's president and vice president. Altogether the line had 10 open seat coaches, 2 tank cars and 2 engines -- Engine No. 1 having cost \$15,000 to refurbish at the Johnson Foundry and Machine works.

In the 1920's after Kinney's grandiose plans had flopped and the Pacific Electric R.R. supplied good transportation to Venice, the miniature railroad was removed, Engine No. 1 winding up in a Los Angeles junk yard. Rescued in 1928, it was put back in shape in the late 1930's by former locomotive engineer Al Smith and Montebello teacher Leon Broock. Over the years it operated at many different places -- El Monte, Rosemead, San Gabriel -- and from the mid-1940's on at a 1/2-mile track in Streamland Park in Pico Rivera just below Whittier Narrows Dam.

After Los Angeles County opened Legg Lake Park in the 1960's a small railroad operated there for a time on a 15-inch gauge track. In 1967 three railroad buffs, John Bentley, Donald McCoy and Jim Brockus bought the old Venice Engine No. 1 which McCoy had been operating as engineer at Streamland Park. Investing two years of labor, considerable money and much tender loving care, the three partners restored it. In 1971 they took over the concession-operation at Legg Lake Park, changed the track to 12-pound rails with 18-inch gauge, with 2 gondola cars and 2 street cars (to replace the unsafe old Venice cars. Since 1971 they have operated it at Legg Lake.

The above information is based on oral interviews with John Bentley, co-owner and restorer of the railroad; Tom Folsom, Sr. Concession Analyst of L.A. County Department of Parks and Recreation; Lynn C. Cunnirgham's Ph.D. dissertation (UCLA) on "Venice California: From City to Suburb" (1976); Wallace Wiggins' article, "Remember the Miniature Railway?" Westways, May, 1949, pp. 6-7.

On this historic resource there will be no impact either adverse or beneficial, no irreversible or irretrievable loss, from the proposed project, since the railroad operates in an already developed recreational area under a 10-year concession contract with the County.

The historical significance of the railroad is that it provides today for visitors to Legg Lake Park (on weekends) a living, operating example of rail transportation, which 1/2 century ago provided the bulk of transportation for Americans. Since the railroad is privately owned, however, it can be subject to removal at expiration of 10-year concession.

5.16 Temple School

This school building, which serves as the operational base-yard for the United States Army Corps of Engineers operations

in the Los Angeles District, dates from the 1930's.

Although the building is not yet 50 years old and although it has a sturdy architecture with only slight aesthetic appeal, it stands as a historic resource. Its historical significance rests on the fact that it is the lineal descendant of the original school in one of southern California's oldest and largest school districts -- La Puente District, organized within 15 years of the American takeover in California, and today well over a century old. See Sec. 4.6 above for historical details.

No impact is expected on this resources so long as the U.S. Corps of Engineers retains it as field headquarters. While it appears not to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it may well be seriously considered for a California State Historic Landmark marker.

5.17 Miscellaneous

A variety of other structures, installations, works and land uses exist in the Whittier Narrows basin. None of them appear to be of sufficient historic importance to warrant extended description or comment.

Some land has been leased to private operators for agricultural use -- such as the land lying just west of Legg Lake Park on the north side of Durfee Road, where the Kruze Brothers Milling Company of South El Monte has in recent years been raising rhubarb. Just west of that, also on the north side of Durfee Road, the Texaco Company operates a plant in conjunction with its oil operations in the Montebello Oil Field. Other oil companies operating under oil leases in the Whittier Narrows include -- Atlantic Richfield, Gulf, Shell, Getty, Berezn, Republic, Montebello Land, Five Star, Century Oil Management, Pacific Crude, Davis Investment, California Star, Sierra, Rothschild, Sun, Church and Minor, Harry Hillman, I.B. Nutt, B.D. Whiteside, Allied, Whittier Narrows, Exxon, W.A. Bartholomae, East Standard, plus others on the periphery. Most of these have oil wells that are still producing.

Various governmental agencies maintain installations within the Narrows -- including, a military installation in the northeast quadrant used by the U.S. Army Reserve and the National Guard and a pistol practice range used by the Alhambra City police force. The County of Los Angeles under lease

operates extensive park and recreational facilities; the City of Pico Rivera maintains a smaller recreational area at the Narrows' south end; and the City of Whittier and Whittier Water Company operate water works within the Narrows. Finally, Pacific Broadcasting Company maintains its radio broadcasting transmission installation inside the Narrows just south of the Pomona Freeway.

Within the Narrows' Nature Area, on the south side of Durfee Road almost opposite the USACE's baseyard are a number of foundations for what appear to have been houses and outbuildings that stood in that area previously.

None of the above appear to be of sufficient historic interest or significance to require any specific action for their preservation. Most will continue to operate under legal leases, and hence will not be subject to any further impact from additional development of the Narrows area.

5.2 HISTORIC RESOURCES IN CONTIGUOUS AREAS

5.21 Pio Pico Mansion

Pio Pico was a major figure in California's transition from Mexican to American rule. In 1829 Pico received the 8,900 acre Rancho Jamul as his first land tract, the beginning of his southern California empire. Nine years later he led an unsuccessful revolt against Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado. This period in the state's history saw much north-south polarization and rivalry. Pico led a resistance movement against Governor Manuel Micheltorena in 1845. The revolt was successful, and Pico assumed the governorship in 1846. His term of office was cut short by the American military invasion. The Mexican government failed to give him the help he needed to fight the Americans, paving the way for the takeover of all of California by the United States.

Pico continued to play an important role in California affairs. In 1850 he purchased the 9,000 acre Paso de Bartolo and named it "El Ranchito." Two years later he built a mansion on the property. Pico used his position and wealth for the development of banking, education, and townsites in southern California. A flood in 1883 undermined part of his adobe's foundations and caused the walls to collapse. Temporarily short of funds, he had to put up all of his property as security to borrow \$62,000 for rebuilding the mansion.

Subsequent foreclosure on the loan resulted in the loss of all his holdings by 1892. Pico had sold part of the ranch to C. L. Strong, who paved the patio and installed a well.

The mansion deteriorated and its bricks were used for fill during the repaving of Whittier Boulevard. Mrs Strong worked in 1907 to save and restore the Pico house. The renovated adobe was given to the state of California in 1917. It again deteriorated until 1946 when the state restored the place. Located on the southwest corner of Pioneer Street and Whittier Boulevard, the thirteen-room Pio Pico Mansion is a U" shaped structure with a court open to the east between the wings. Pico's private rooms were on the north side of the lower floor. A covered porch with stairs to the second floor is on the inside of the mansion, and the well occupies the center courtyard. The mansion serves as a link to that period when Mexican society in California gave way to American civilization.

5.22 Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe

Below the Montebello oil fields stands the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe. Rich in history and well restored, the adobe's origins go back to the settling of the Rancho La Merced. In 1844 Dona Casilda Soto de Lobo obtained the first grant to the La Merced Rancho. She, with the help of her three sons, built an adobe in 1845. By 1850 Dona Casilda was having financial problems. She mortgaged her land to William Workman with the option that he could purchase the rancho for \$2,500 if she failed to pay back the original loan. Unable to repay the loan at the specified time, Workman paid the balance and received title to the property in 1851. The following year he deeded the land to his son-in-law, F.P.F. Temple, and to Juan Matias Sanchez. Sanchez had worked as a majordomo (overseer) in Workman's household.

Joint ownership of the Rancho La Merced enabled Sanchez to purchase the 4,400 acre grant of the Potrero Grande adjacent to the La Merced property. In 1854 he built a new north wing on the adobe. By 1870 Sanchez had become a very successful rancher along with his friends Temple and Workman. The panic of 1875, however, ended his fortune. Temple and Workman found that their Los Angeles bank was short of funds. They applied to Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin for a loan to keep the bank open, and Baldwin agreed providing Sanchez mortgaged his lands along with their own. Sanchez reluctantly signed the loan papers. Workman and Temple could not realize on their securities and finally

had to close the bank. Baldwin later foreclosed on the La Merced Rancho and Potrero Grande.

All that remained for the Sanchez family was the adobe and 200 acres of land. E. J. Baldwin filed an action in 1892 and received the property from the Sanchez children. Upon Baldwin's death, his estate sold the adobe and land to a group of men connected with the oil industry. When the property was divided among them, W.B. Scott chose the adobe site and obtained title in 1915. By this time the home had begun to deteriorate. Scott had a considerable amount of work done in enlarging and preserving the adobe; dormer windows were installed and the roof was raised. The property eventually passed to his children, William Scott and Josephine Scott Crocker. In 1957 the acreage adjacent to the adobe was subdivided, but Mrs. Crocker retained ownership of the home as an historical landmark. She hired an architect to restore the adobe to its original form as it existed under the Sanchez family. The City of Montebello was given title to the restored adobe in 1971. It stands above Lincoln Road overlooking the Whittier Narrows Dam at the west end.

5.23 Workman Mill Site

William Workman came into possession of the Rancho La Puente in 1842. Three years later, he built a grist mill on his property. The mill operated for many years at a site on the North bank of the San Jose Creek close to Workman Mill Road at the east edge of the Narrows. After the bank crash of 1875, the mill passed to E.J. Baldwin when he foreclosed on the Rancho La Puente. Baldwin took over all but a few acres retained by Temple's widow and grazed sheep and cattle. He later sold some of the land and the mill to his ranch forman Gaetano Castino, who lived at 1940 Workman Mill Road. The mill burned down in 1889. Today the mill site is a link with a significant period in the development of the Whittier Narrows region.

6. Tabular Inventory of Historic Resources in Whittier Narrows
and along Rio Hondo

<u>Historic Resource</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>State of Preservation</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
San Gabriel Mission original site of 1771	Approx. 1,200 feet n.w. of San Gabriel Blvd.- Lincoln Ave. intersection	Site	Physical site only, no visible remains	If remains can be located, should be nominated for National Register of Historic Places. Should have Calif. State Historic Landmark
Site, Battle of San Gabriel River, Jan. 8, 1847	In Montebello along Rio Hondo where U.P. RR crosses Bluff Rd.	Site	Physical site only, many artifacts removed years ago	State Historic Landmark should be here at site, not 1 1/2 miles south
Oil Field Discovery	West side of Whittier Narrows and in Montebello Hills to west	Site	Many of early wells are still pumping in October 1976	Nominate for State Historic Landmark
Site of filming "Birth of a Nation's" outdoor sequences	Southeast section of Whittier Narrows Flood Control basin	Site	Physical site still in natural state in Nature and Equestrian areas	Nominate for State Historic Landmark
Venice Miniature Railroad	Legg Lake Park	Actual railway	Well preserved, still operating	Nominate for State Historic Landmark
Temple School building	In bas yard of USACE on Durfee Road	Actual school building	Well preserved, still in use by USACE	Nominate for State Historic Landmark

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION: Serious consideration should be given to creating a Whittier Narrows State Historical Park, encompassing the above historic resources.

7. Number of Man Hours Spent

The principal investigators spent the following number of man-hours divided among the following labors: -

(a) Field investigation --	48
(b) Literature search --	112
(c) Oral interviews --	40
(d) Preparation of report	<u>112</u>
Total --	312

Graduate student assistant spent the following number of man-hours divided among the following labors:-

(a) Field investigation -	36
(b) Literature search	<u>20</u>
Total --	56

Typist spent the following number of hours in the preparation of the report -- 36

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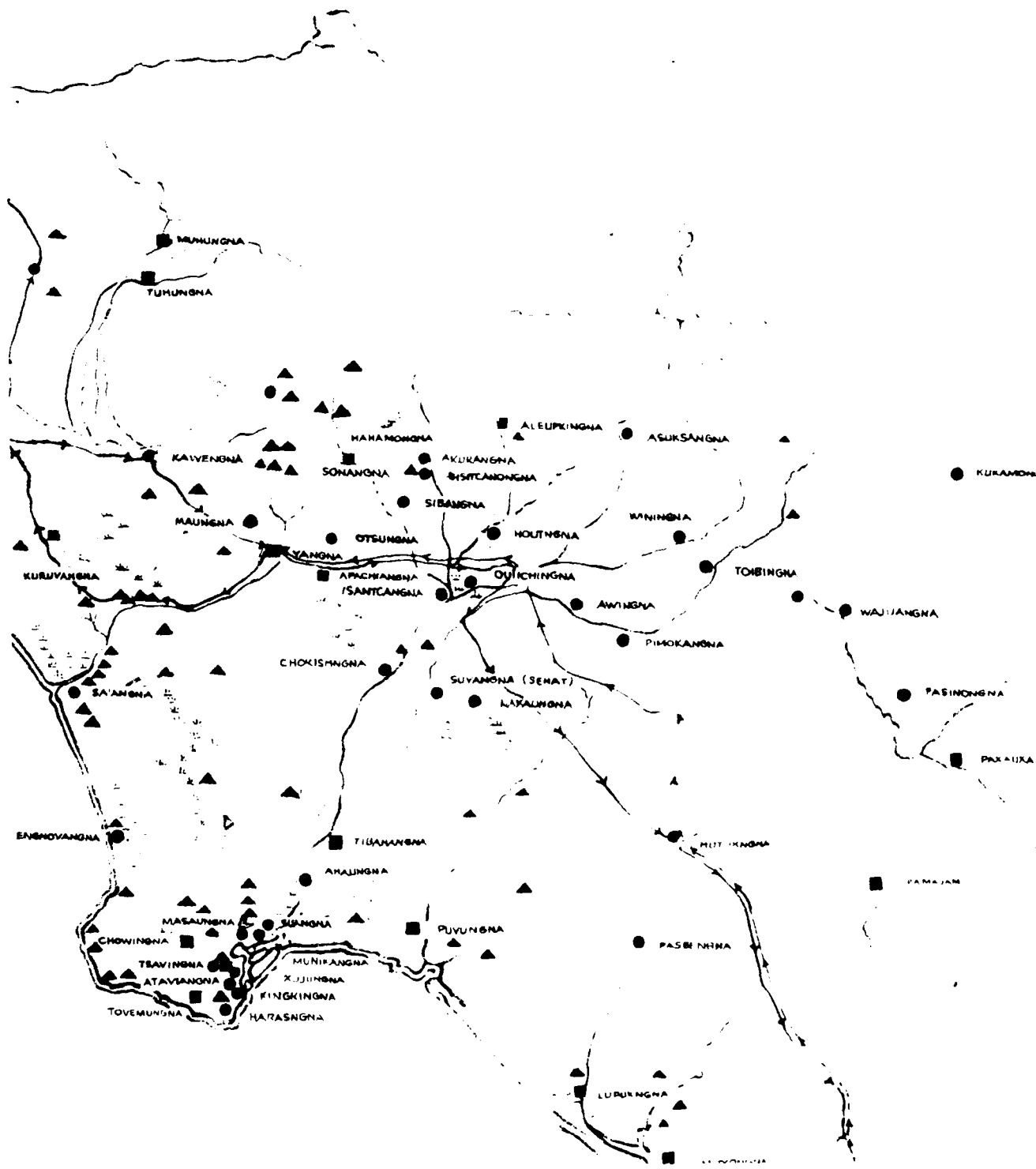
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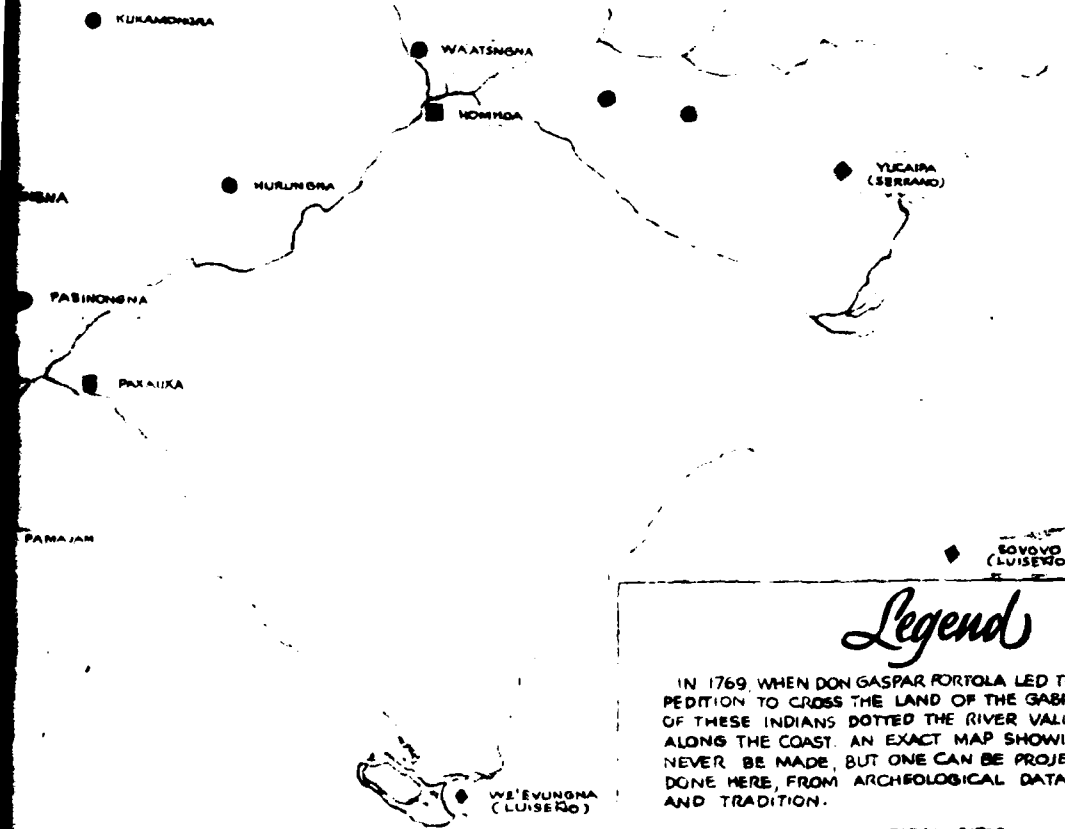
View of the Rio Hondo River southwest of El Monte after the crest of the 1914 flood. The La Puente Hills are seen in the background. (El Monte Historical Museum)



The GABRIELINO INDIANS



AT THE TIME OF THE PORTOLA EXPEDITION

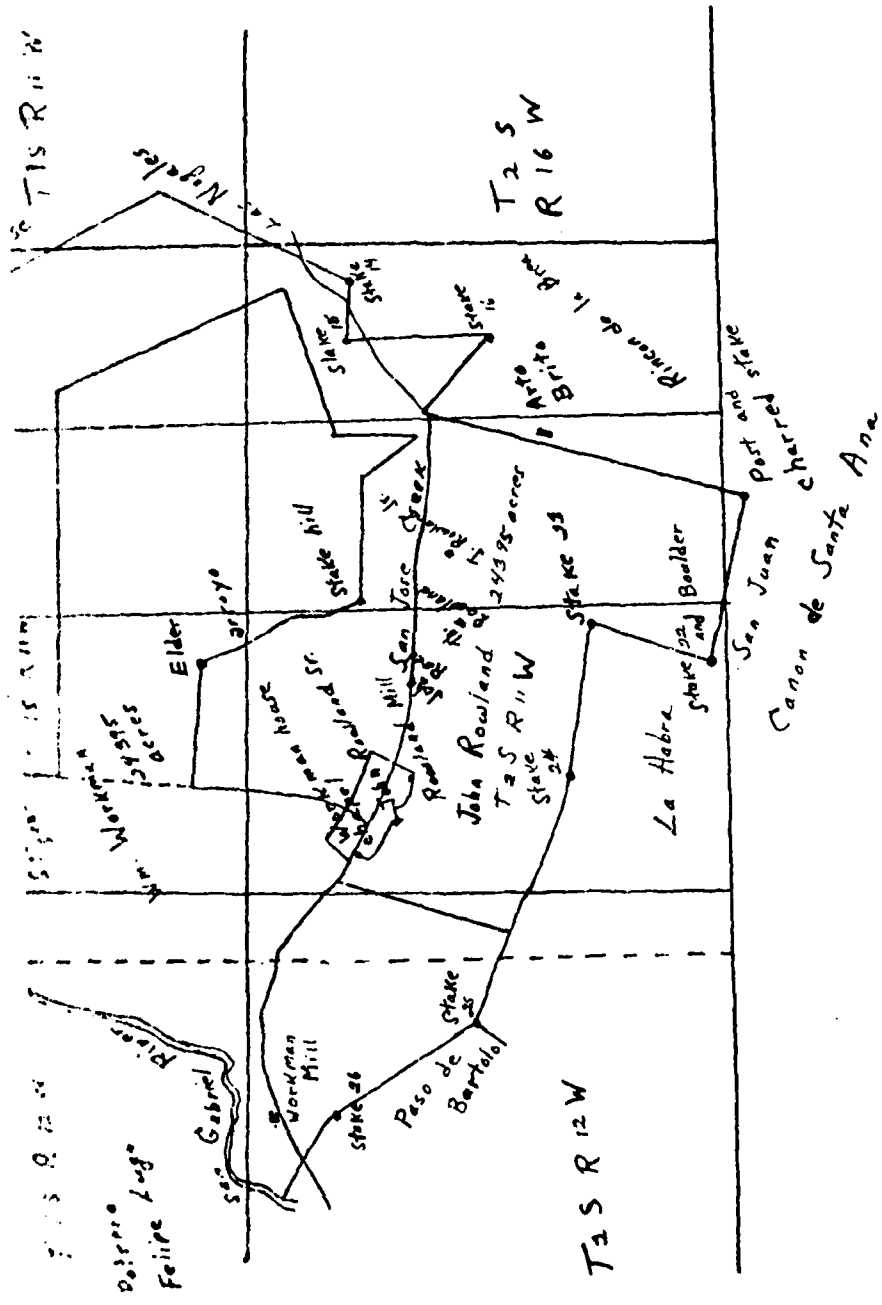


Legend

IN 1769, WHEN DON GASPAR PORTOLA LED THE FIRST SPANISH EXPEDITION TO CROSS THE LAND OF THE GABRIELINOS THE VILLAGES OF THESE INDIANS DOTTED THE RIVER VALLEYS AND CLUSTERED ALONG THE COAST. AN EXACT MAP SHOWING THESE SITES CAN NEVER BE MADE, BUT ONE CAN BE PROJECTED, AS HAS BEEN DONE HERE, FROM ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA, HISTORICAL RECORDS AND TRADITION.

- ▲ KNOWN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES
- APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF HISTORICAL SITES
- SITES FOR WHICH TRADITION AND ARCHEOLOGICAL INFOR-

MAP I. Gabrieleno Indians at Time of Portola Expedition, 1769 (Southwest Museum)

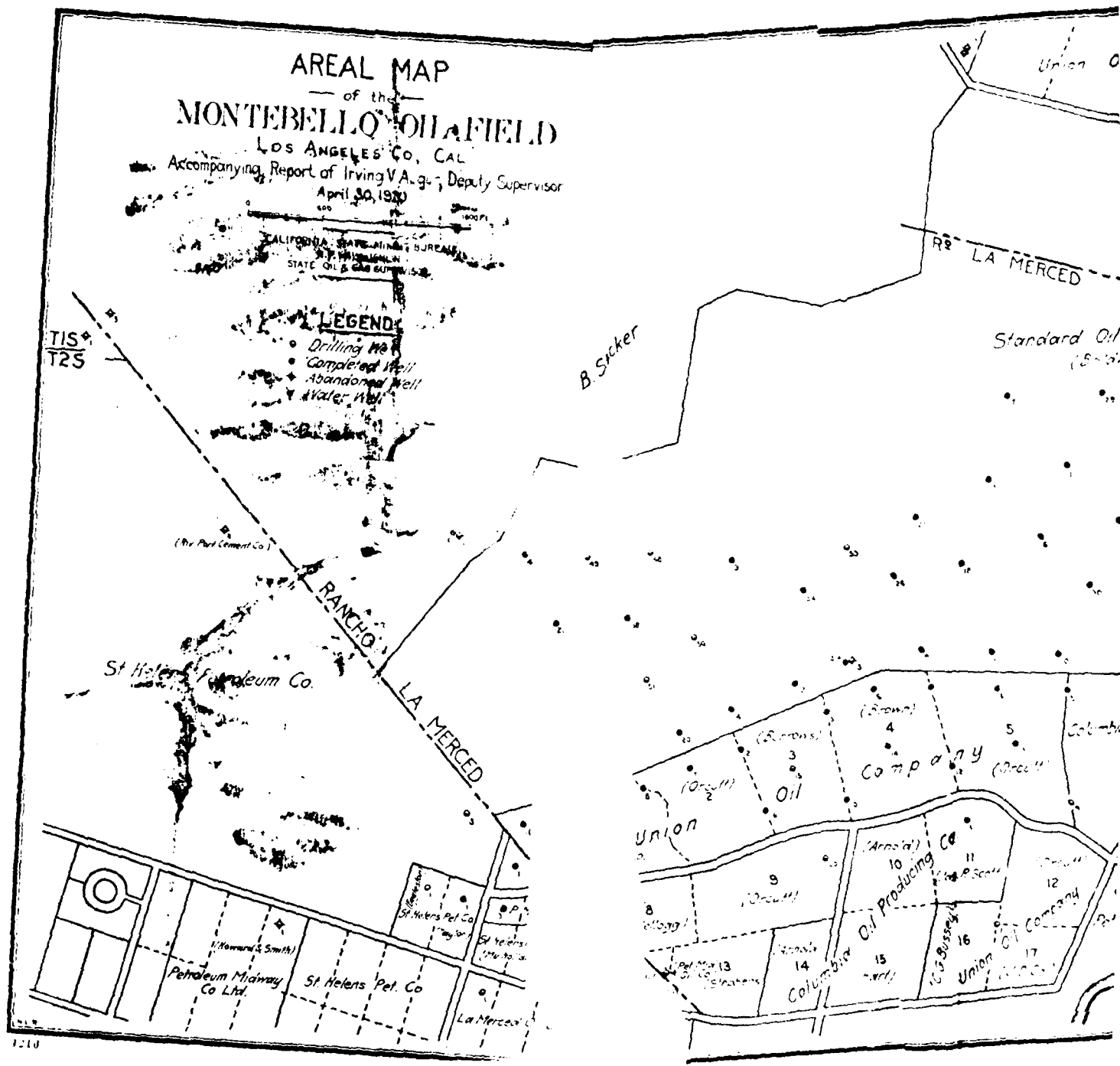


Partition of La Puente Rancho. Los Angeles County Book of Deeds—Book 10, page 48.

MAP 2. La Puente Rancho of William Workman and John Rowland, ca. 1851 (Los Angeles County)



17



AREAL MAP
of the
MONTEBELLO OIL FIELD

LOS ANGELES CO., CAL.
Accompanying Report of Irving V. A. G., Deputy Supervisor
April 30, 1930

CALIFORNIA STATE MINING BUREAU
STATE OIL & GAS SUPERVISOR

LEGEND

- Drilling Well
- Completed Well
- Abandoned Well
- Water Well

TIS
T25

LA MERCED

Standard Oil
(5-10)

B. Sicker

RANCHO

LA MERCED

St. Helens Petroleum Co.

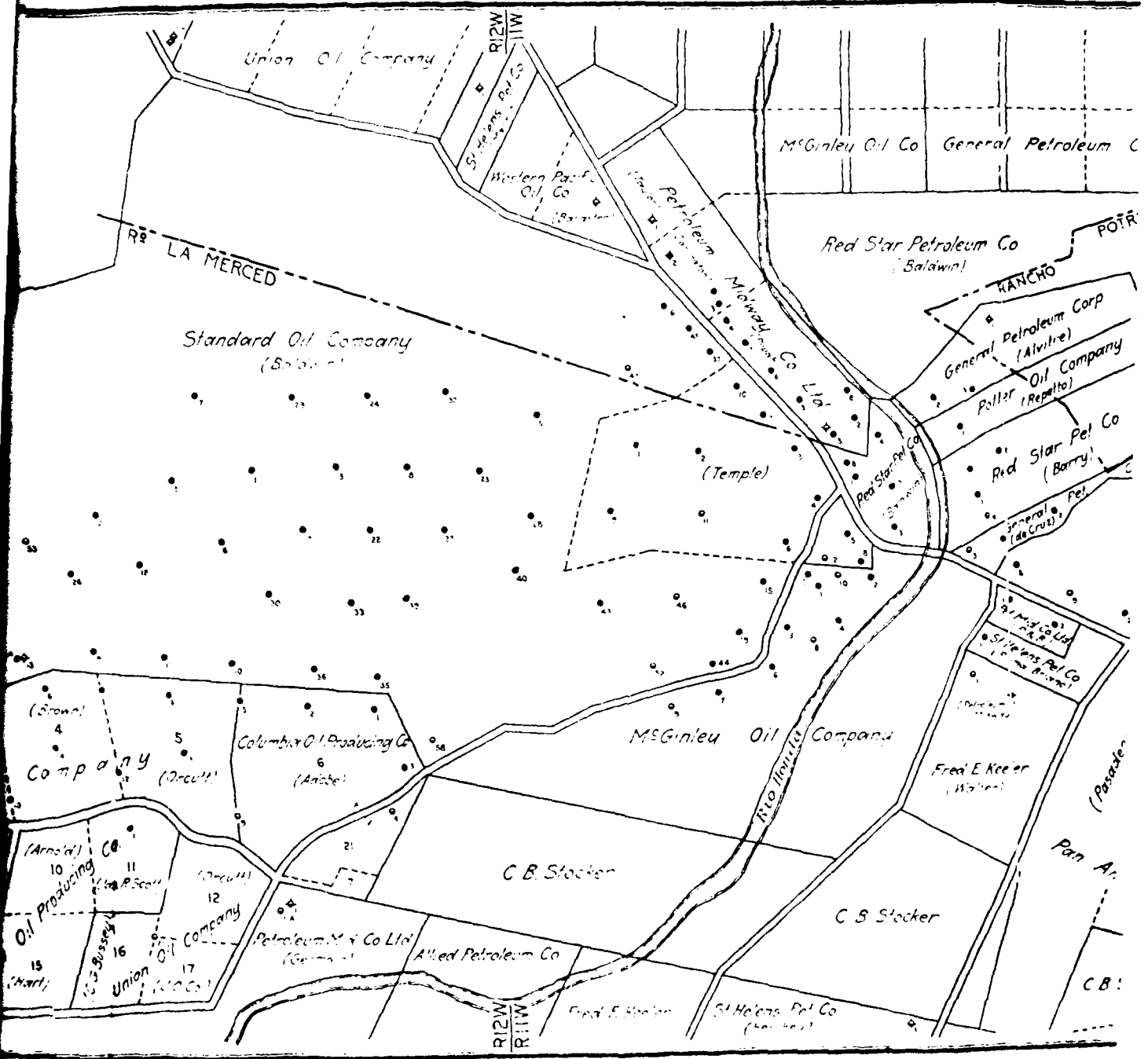
Union Oil Company
Columbia Oil Company
Annals Oil Producing Co.
Union Oil Company
Columbia Oil Company
Union Oil Company

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

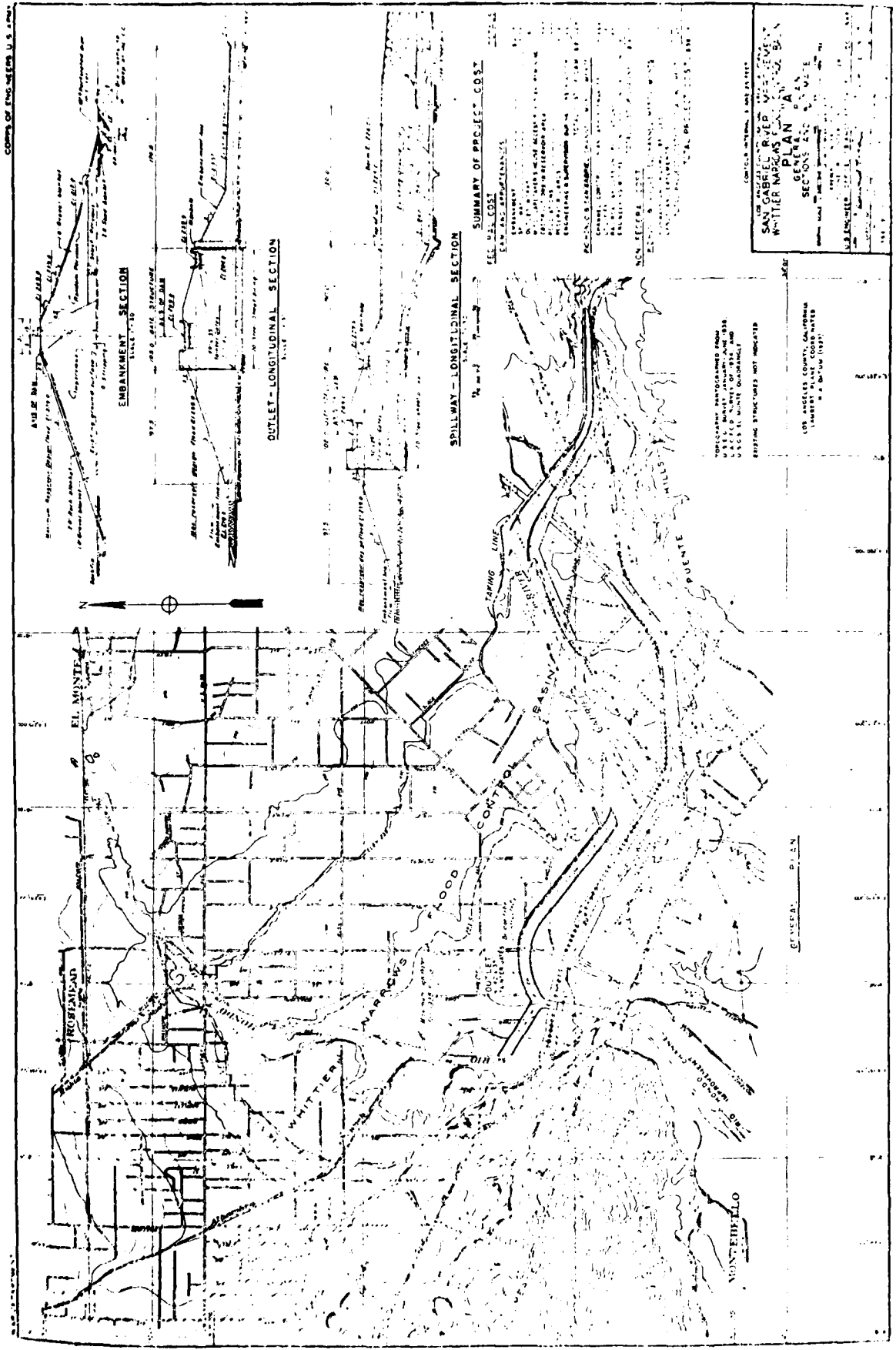
Petroleum Midway
Co. Ltd.

St. Helens Pet. Co.

La Merced



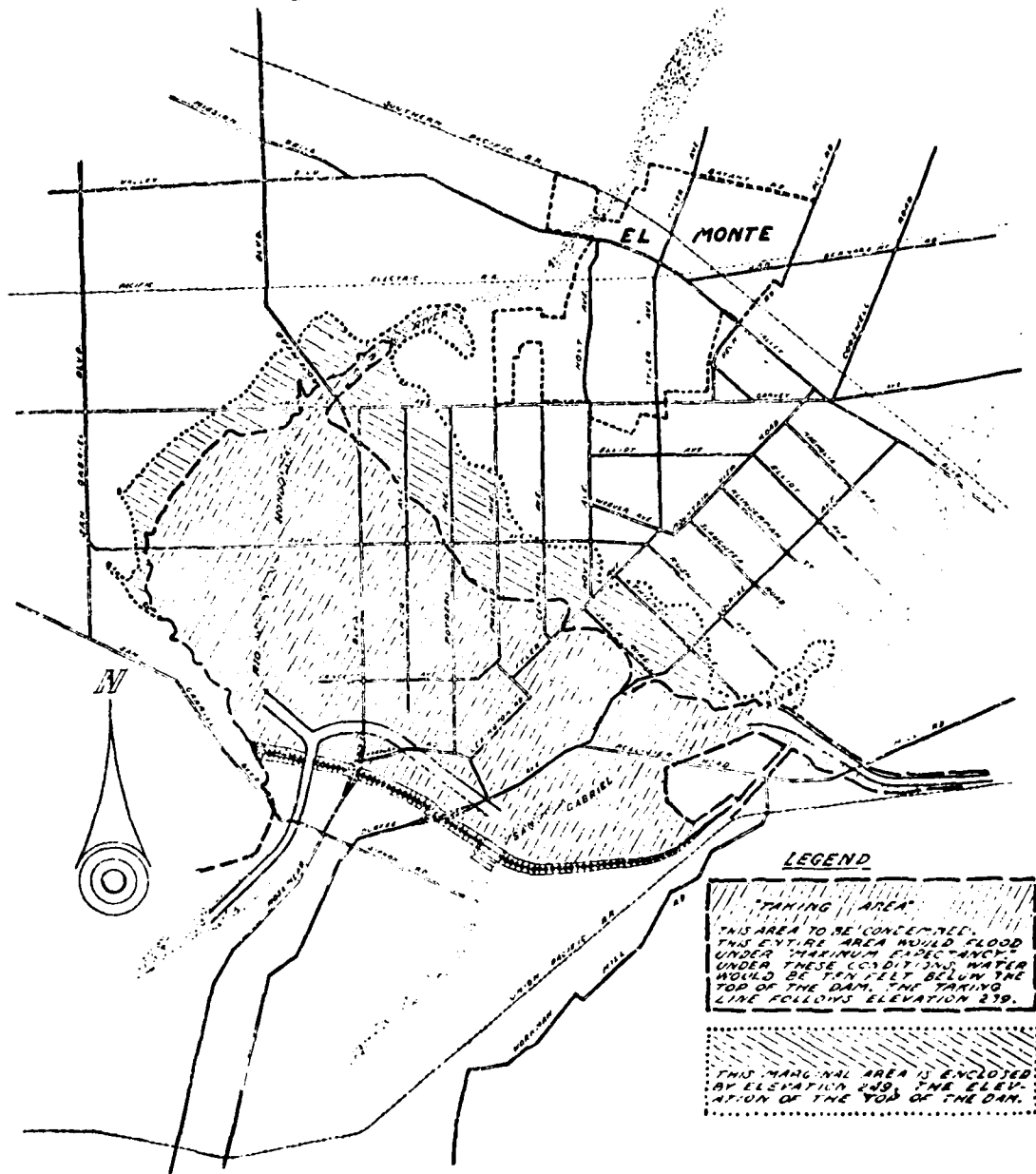
MAP 4. Montebello Oil Field, including Whittier Narrows ca. 1920 (California State Mining Bureau)



MAP 5. Whittier Narrows Flood Control, Plan A, 1946 (Corps of Engineers)

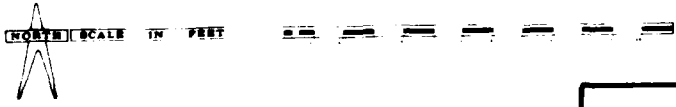
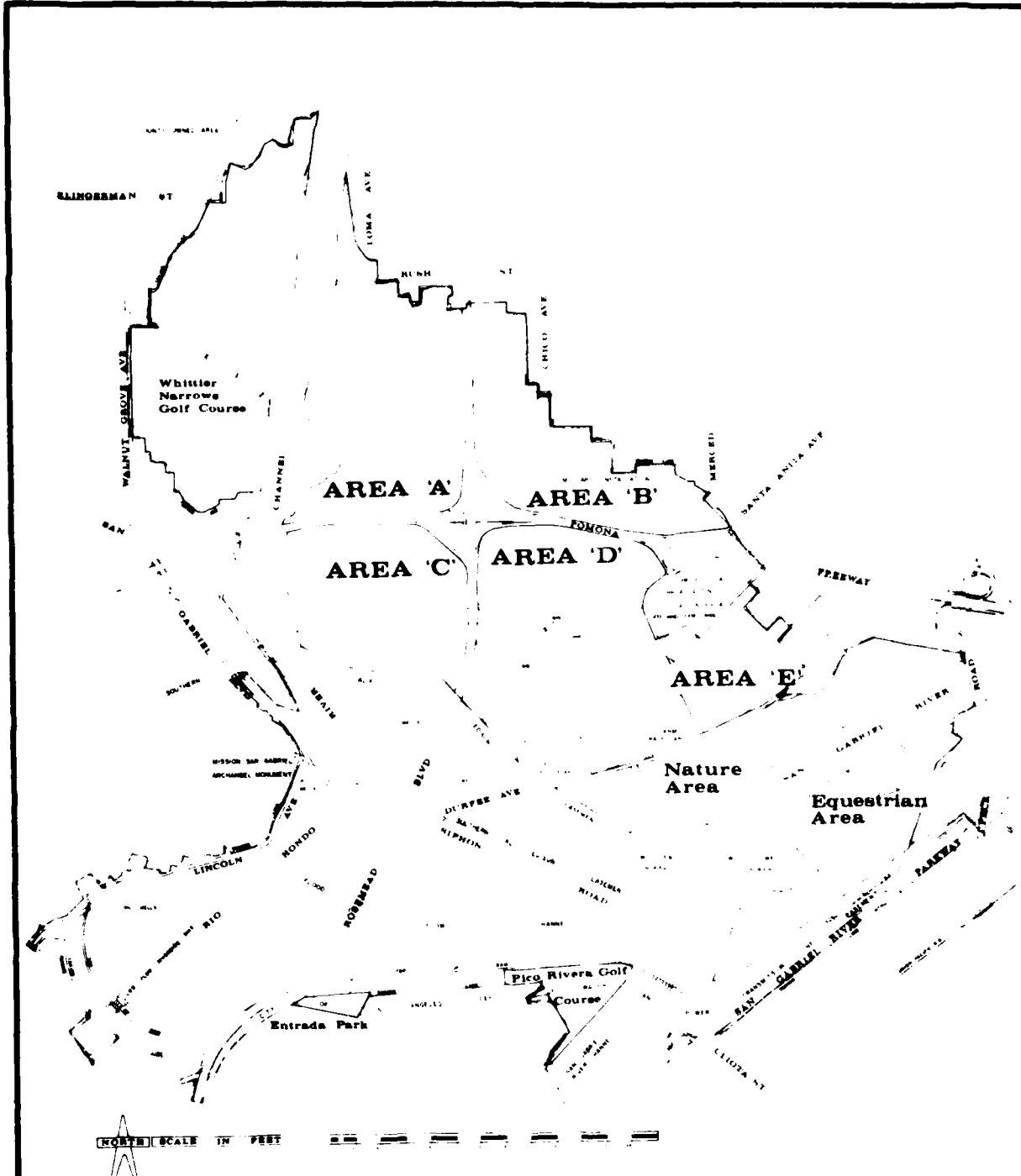
Source: Thomas Ford Hault, "The Whittier Narrows Dam: A Study in Community Competition and Conflict," M.A. thesis, Whittier College, 1948.

Map Shows Area That Would Be Condemned For Proposed Whittier Narrows Dam



THE PROPOSED WHITTIER NARROWS DAM
THIS MAP WAS PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY
EL MONTE BLUEPRINT

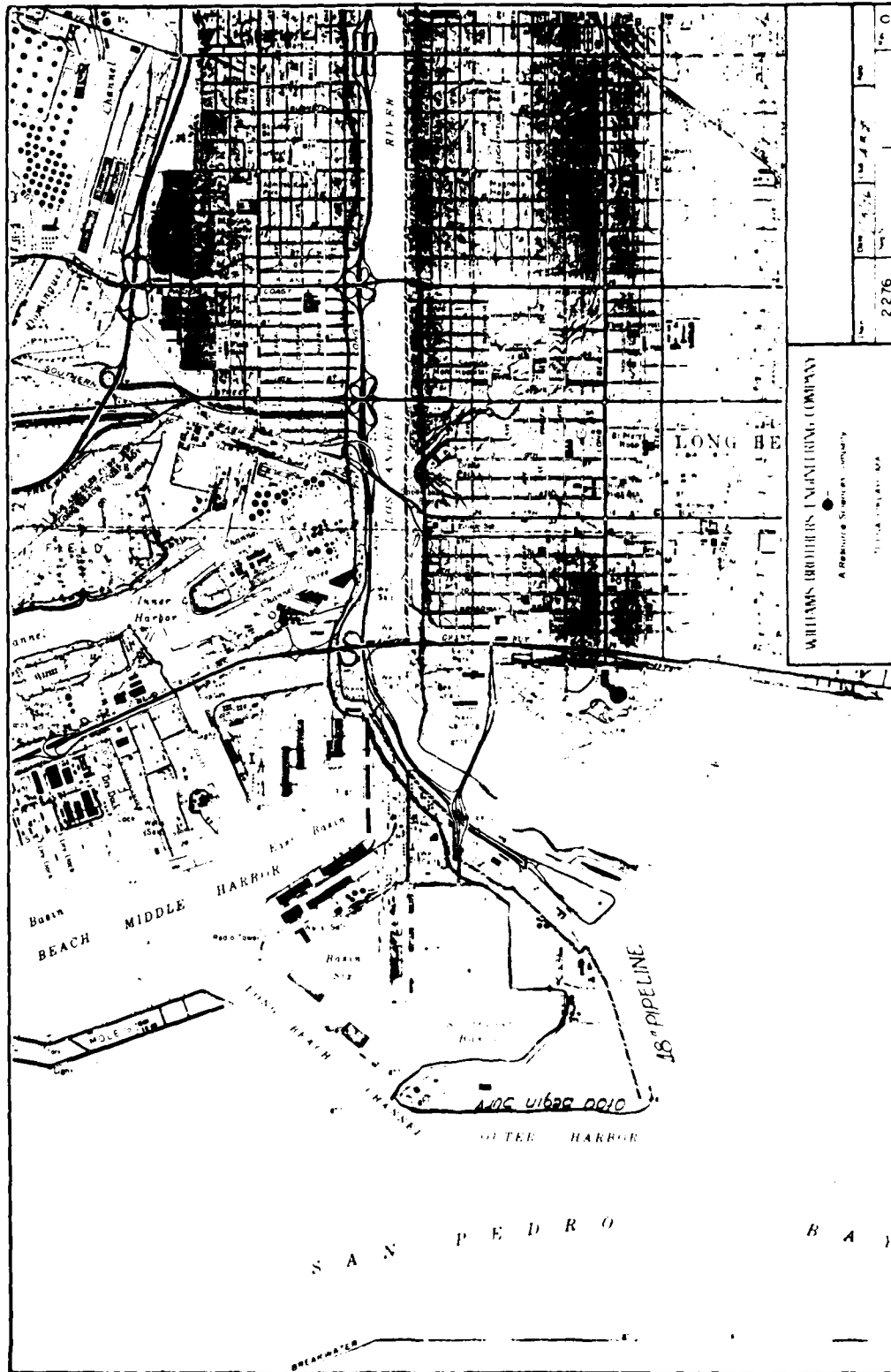
MAP 7. Area to be condemned for proposed Whittier Narrows Dam, 1946 (Anti-Whittier Narrows Dam Association)



1. Site of San Gabriel Mission, 1771
2. Site of filming "Birth of a Nation," 1915
3. Early oil discovery, 1917-18
4. Venice Miniature Railway, 1907
5. Temple School building
6. Site of Battle of San Gabriel Av
(see Map Dwg. No. 1, 1-11-76)

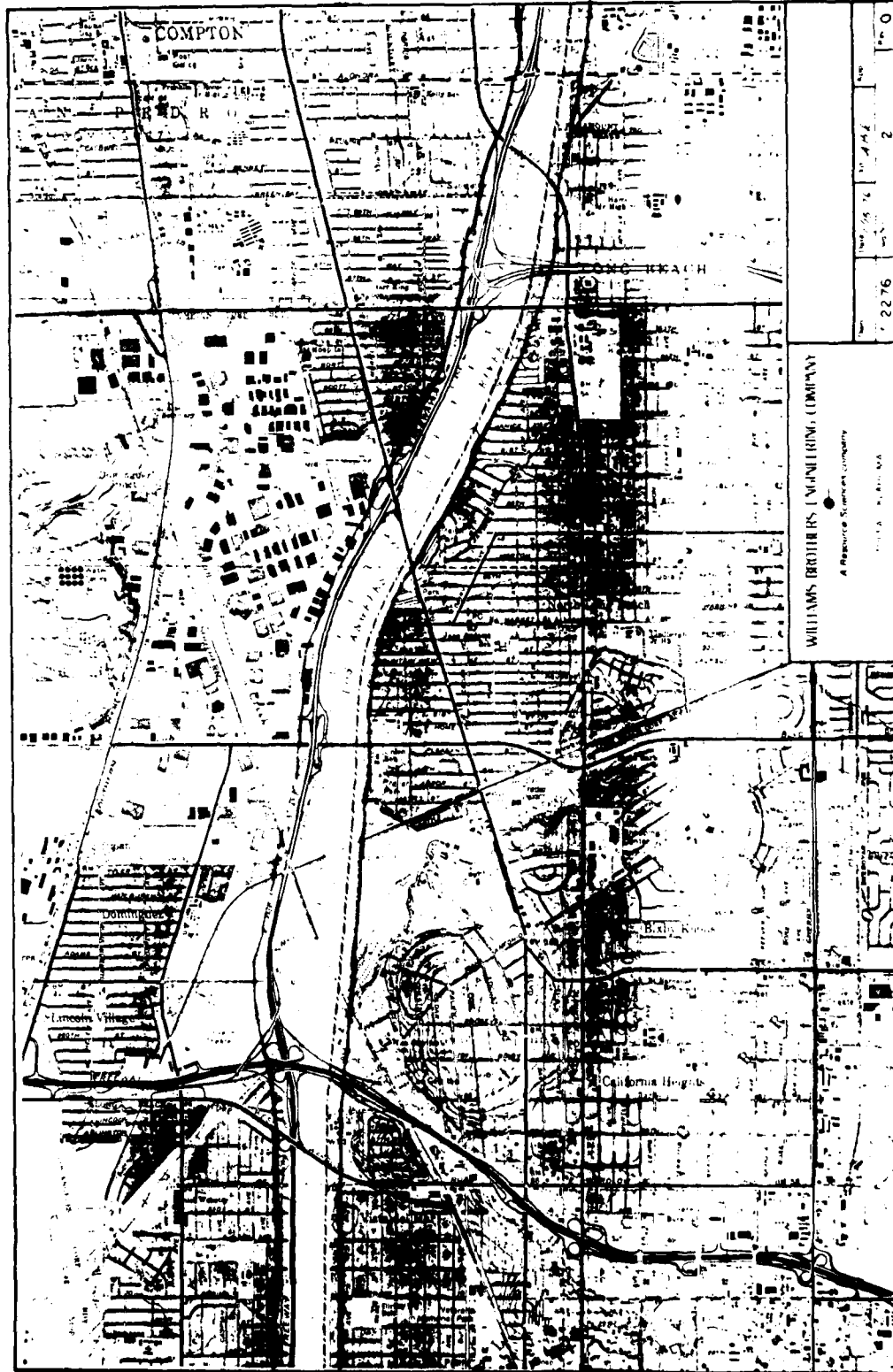
Whittier Narrows
Flood Control Reservoir
MAP 8
**GENERAL DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

**U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT
LOS ANGELES, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
TO ACCOMPANY REPORT DATED: Nov. 1974**



WILLIAMS BROTHERS ENGINEERING COMPANY
 A Republic Steamship Company
 111 N. W. 1st St., Miami, Fla.
 2276

S A N P E D R O H A R B O R





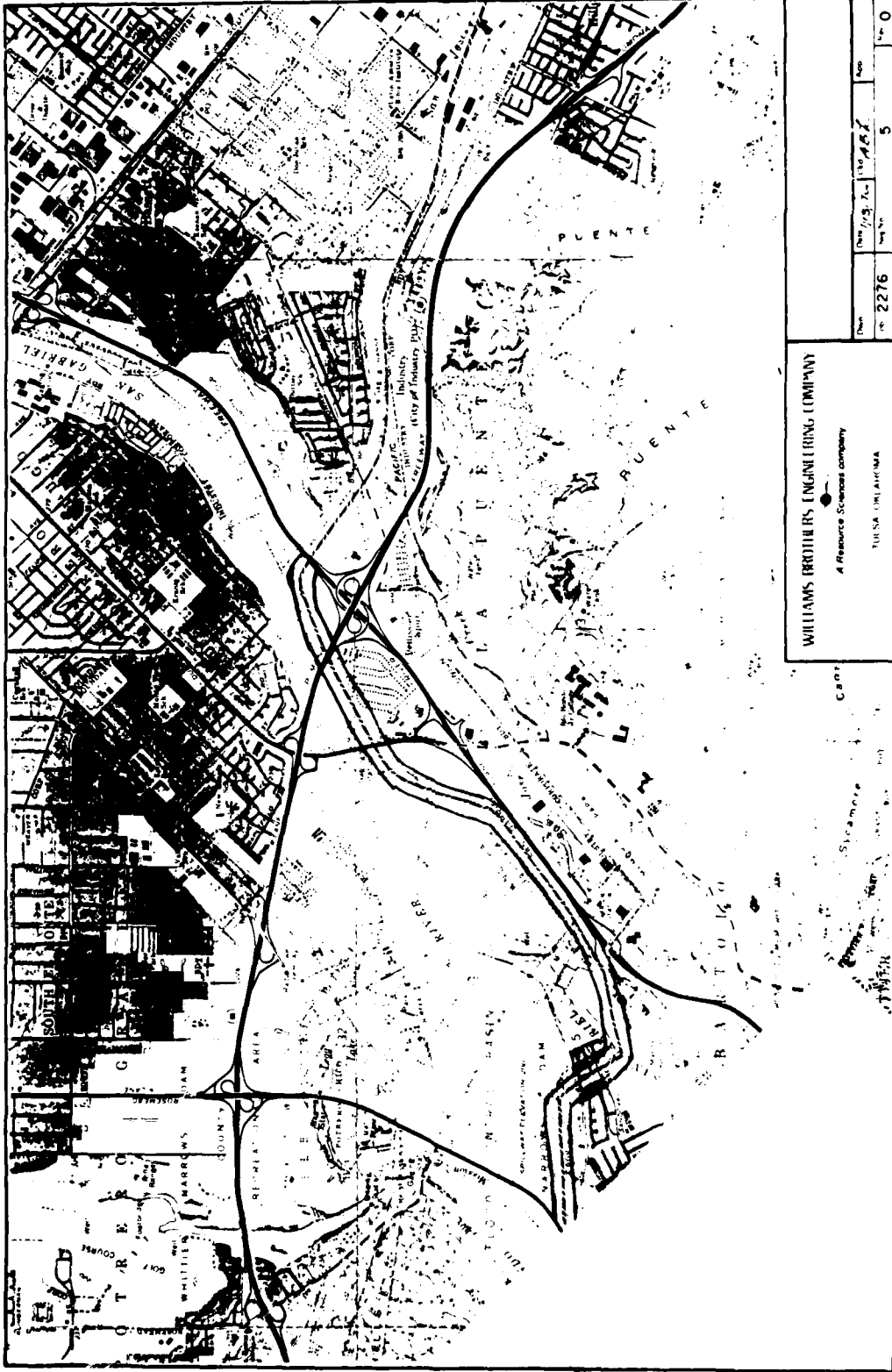
WILLIAMS BROTHERS ENGINEERING COMPANY
A Practice Sciences company
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2276

0

6. Site of the Battle of San Gabriel River





WILLIAMS BROTHERS ENGINEERING COMPANY
 A Resource Sciences company
 TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Draw No.	2276	Rev.	5	Scale	1" = 10'
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