

**La Mesa Historic Landmark
Nomination Form**

Wentz-Park House

1910

February 6, 2001



HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

8130 Allison Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91941 (619) 667-1177

1. NAME

Historic: Wentz-Park House
and/or common:

2. LOCATION

Address: 4603 Date Avenue
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

3. CLASSIFICATION

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>PRESENT USE</u>	
☐ District	☐ Public	☐ Occupied	☐ Agricultural	☐ Museum
☒ Building(s)	☒ Private	☐ Unoccupied	☐ Commercial	☐ Park
☐ Structure	☐ Both	☐ Work in progress	☐ Educational	☒ Private residence
☐ Site			☐ Entertainment	☐ Religious
☐ Object	<u>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</u>		☐ Government	☐ Scientific
	☐ In progress		☐ Industrial	☐ Transportation
	☐ Being Considered		☐ Military	☐ Other:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Michael and Shirrell Bailey
Address: 4603 Date Avenue
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.: County Assessor/Recorder
Address: 1600 Pacific Highway
City: San Diego State: CA Zip:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title: La Mesa Historic Resources Inventory
Date: June 1984
Depository for Survey Records: City Clerk, City of La Mesa
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91941

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Deteriorated

☐ Ruins

☐ Unexposed

CHECK ONE

☐ Unaltered

☒ Altered

CHECK ONE

☒ Original site

☐ Moved

Date Jan 2001

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

Legal Description: Lot 13 in Block 5 of Grable's Addition to La Mesa Springs, in the City of La Mesa, County of San Diego, State of California, according to map thereof No. 994, filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, June 5, 1906.

This charming, 1 1/2 story, wood framed bungalow features a hipped roof with exposed and carved rafter ends. There is a hipped dormer on the front and one on each side of the house. A recessed open porch, which extends across the entire front, has four tapered column supports. The house siding rises to the rail level. The dormer windows are leaded and multi-paned, while the street facing windows on the first floor have a narrow, multiple pane section above a larger square pane. The wooden front door features a large multiple pane window inset. A large enclosed porch with a dropped shed roof extends across the rear of the house. The house is located on a lot that slopes away from Date Avenue, and the garage is under the house with the entrance from Finley Avenue. The original siding has been replaced with asbestos shingles and the garage door is a replacement.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ Prehistoric	☐ Archeology-prehistoric	☐ Conservation	☐ Landscape architecture	☐ Religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ Archeology-historic	☐ Economics	☐ Law	☐ Science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ Agricultural	☐ Education	☐ Literature	☐ Sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ Architecture	☐ Engineering	☐ Military	☐ Social /
☐ 1700-1799	☐ Art	☒ Exploration /	☐ Music	☐ Humanitarian
☐ 1800-1899	☐ Commerce	☐ Settlement	☐ Philosophy	☐ Theater
☒ 1900-	☐ Communications	☐ Industry	☐ Politics/Government	☐ Transportation
	☐ Community planning	☐ Invention		☐ Other (specify)

SPECIFIC DATES: 1910 BUILDER/ARCHITECT: John B. Davis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wentz-Park House is significant as one of the few remaining hip-roofed bungalows constructed in the central part of La Mesa in the 1906-1911 period. Only a small number of bungalows were built with hip roofs as compared to the more common gabled homes. Although the original siding of this house was replaced by asbestos shingles as early as the 1950s, this well maintained home is a good example of the style. There is also a replacement garage door. The house has important significance from the first owners, Christopher and Olivia Wentz, La Mesa pioneers, as well as from Charles Clarence Park, who married Olivia Wentz, Christopher's widow in 1923. Charles C. Park, a prominent La Mesa developer and businessman, is often referred to as one of the founders of La Mesa. The Wentz-Park House lies within the Date Avenue Historic District as adopted by the La Mesa City Council in 1996 as part of the amended Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan.

La Mesa first developed in the late 1880s as an agricultural area with scattered five and ten acre lemon ranches. Its transformation to a residential community began in 1906 when Sherman C. Grable purchased 100 acres through which Date Avenue now runs. Grable and his partner, Charles C. Park, would in the next few years develop 200 acres in and around central La Mesa creating 1000 "town" lots. The Grable's Addition map, filed May 7, 1906, covered the area from Acacia Avenue to Nebo Drive and from La Mesa Boulevard to several lots south of Finley Avenue. Both Grable and Park built homes for themselves here, and other construction rapidly followed. By 1912, the population had grown to over 700, and residents voted to incorporate as the City of La Mesa.

In 1984, the La Mesa Historic Preservation Element identified Grable's Addition and the streets immediately south of it as a potential historic district due to the high concentration of historic structures found there. Most of the residences were built between 1907 and 1930 and represent the architectural styles typical of the period: Craftsman bungalows, transitional cottages with classical details, and the Mission and Spanish Revival houses of the 1920's. The Date Avenue

Historic District was included in the amended Historic Preservation Element adopted as part of the new General Plan by the La Mesa City Council in 1996. It presently contains three designated landmarks: the Sherman Grable House (c. 1910), the Reynolds-Lingren House (1911), and the Orr-Lapum House (1924). In addition there are 51 Historic Resource Inventory sites in the district. Another landmark, the La Mesa Depot (1894), is immediately to the east of district boundaries.

Christopher Wentz, one of the early residents of Grable's Addition, was brought to America in 1846 by his German parents. The family was poor and Christopher had to go to work by the time he was ten years old. At first he stripped tobacco in a New York cellar, then drove mules on the Pennsylvania Canal. Later, a Trenton merchant hired him to work in a wholesale grocery business. In a few years, Christopher was able to purchase the business. With profits from the grocery business, he began erecting substantial brick buildings, one of which he rented to the first Woolworth store in the country.

After his retirement from business, Christopher Wentz and his second wife, Olivia, came to California. On June 24, 1910, they purchased Lot 13 in Block 5 of Grable's Addition in La Mesa from Sherman and Lillian Grable. Thirteen days later, Christopher hired John B. Davis, a La Mesa building contractor, to erect this house at a cost of \$2050. About this same time, John Davis was constructing some cottages on Grossmont. Mr. and Mrs. Wentz lived in this house until his death on Feb. 4, 1921. Olivia continued to reside here and on April 23, 1923 married Charles Clarence Park, a widower, who lived across the street.

Charles Park was born and raised in Pleasanton, Kansas, and was in the hardware and implement business when he decided in 1892 to move his family to Nestor, California. He built up a five acre farm and later opened a lumberyard and general store there. In 1902, he sold out and moved to San Diego, where he worked for the Russ Lumber Company for two years. He then entered the real estate business with Sherman C. Grable in San Diego. In 1906, Charles Park and Sherman Grable formed a partnership and founded the Park-Grable Investment Company.

The Park-Grable Investment Company subdivided 200 acres of land in the Date Avenue area into town lots and stimulated the development of La Mesa. Among many firsts, Park & Grable had the town's first sewer system laid out and had the Canary Island date palms planted along Date Avenue. The partners had the vision and know-how to change La Mesa from a sleepy agricultural area into a charming residential community with a healthy and varied business district.

In 1907, Charles Park, his wife, Fannie, and their sons, Earl, Harry and Frank, moved into their house at 4604 Date Avenue. That same year, Charles Park organized and opened the Park Lumber Company in La Mesa and remained its president until his death in 1941. With Sherman Grable, Park also organized the Bank of La Mesa and was its president and one of its principal stockholders until it was sold to the Bank of Italy in 1927.

Charles Park passed away on January 24, 1946. Shortly thereafter, Olivia's niece, Bessie Martel, moved into the residence with her. On June 23, 1949, Olivia passed away, leaving the house to Bessie and her husband, Walter.

On March 6, 1964, the house was sold to Anora Lerner. Anora was a receptionist for a dentist, Donald G. Johnson. Anora immediately sold the property to Charles and Martha Creamer. Martha was raised on the Missouri River in South Dakota. In 1923, she married Charles Creamer and moved to La Mesa. Their first home was located on 4th street in La Mesa. Charles was the father of Florence Marie, Ethel May, Charles Edson, and Roy Wayne Creamer. Charles Creamer owned the Bostonia Garage, located on Broadway, in Bostonia, California, but he lost the garage during the Great Depression. Then he worked as an auto mechanic in El Cajon until he retired. Martha was a devoted and loved member of the First Christian Church in El Cajon for over 40 years. Charles passed away on June 2, 1976, and Martha continued to live in the house until her death on October 3, 1994.

On January 11, 1995, the home was sold to Carol Mary Neal. Carol lived there until the house was sold to Michael and Christine Collier on February 28, 1997. Carol returned to Date Avenue three years after selling the home and purchased a house on the corner of Date Avenue and Pasadena Avenue.

Michael and Christine Collier owned the home until October 27, 1998. Michael is a long time La Mesa resident and is employed in the computer industry. His parents also live in the Mt. Helix area of La Mesa. Christine is an environmental biologist.

On October 27, 1998, Michael and Shirrell Bailey purchased the house. Michael has lived in La Mesa for 25 years and grew up three blocks from the home he now owns. He is employed as a supervisor in the Special Investigation Unit for a large California based insurance carrier. Michael's wife, Shirrell, was born and raised in Lemon Grove and is currently a professional housewife. Michael and Shirrell have two sons, Cole and Spencer.

The Wentz-Park House is an important remnant of La Mesa's past. One of the few remaining hip-roofed bungalows, it was the home of Christopher and Olivia Wentz, early residents of Date Avenue. Charles Clarence Park also lived here. He was one of the developers of La Mesa and is often called one of the founders of the city.

9. SOURCES

La Mesa Historic Preservation Survey, 1984

San Diego County Recorder

San Diego County Assessor

San Diego City and County Directories

La Mesa Scout : 3/16/1908; 2nd Anniv Ed. 1909; 4/5/1912; 3/10/1916; 2/11/21; 3/11/1921;
3/24/21; 4/1/1921; 5/6/1921; 2/10/1922; 4/27/23; 2/6/1925; 2/4/1927; 9/25/1031

San Diego Union 1/25/46; 6/25/49

San Diego Union-Tribune: Record Display (Oct 5, 1994)

Orr-Lapum Historic Landmark Report

Biographical File for Charles C. Park (La Mesa Historical Society)

Interviews with Date Avenue residents

Gilbert, Anna, La Mesa Yesterday and Today

McGrew, Clarence Alan, City of San Diego and San Diego County (1922)

Map of Date Avenue Historic District

Map of Grable's Addition

Sanborn Fire Maps - La Mesa 1911 & 1929

Photos of Wentz-Park House, Courtesy La Mesa Historical Society

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Lot Sq. Ft. 6969

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Michael Bailey

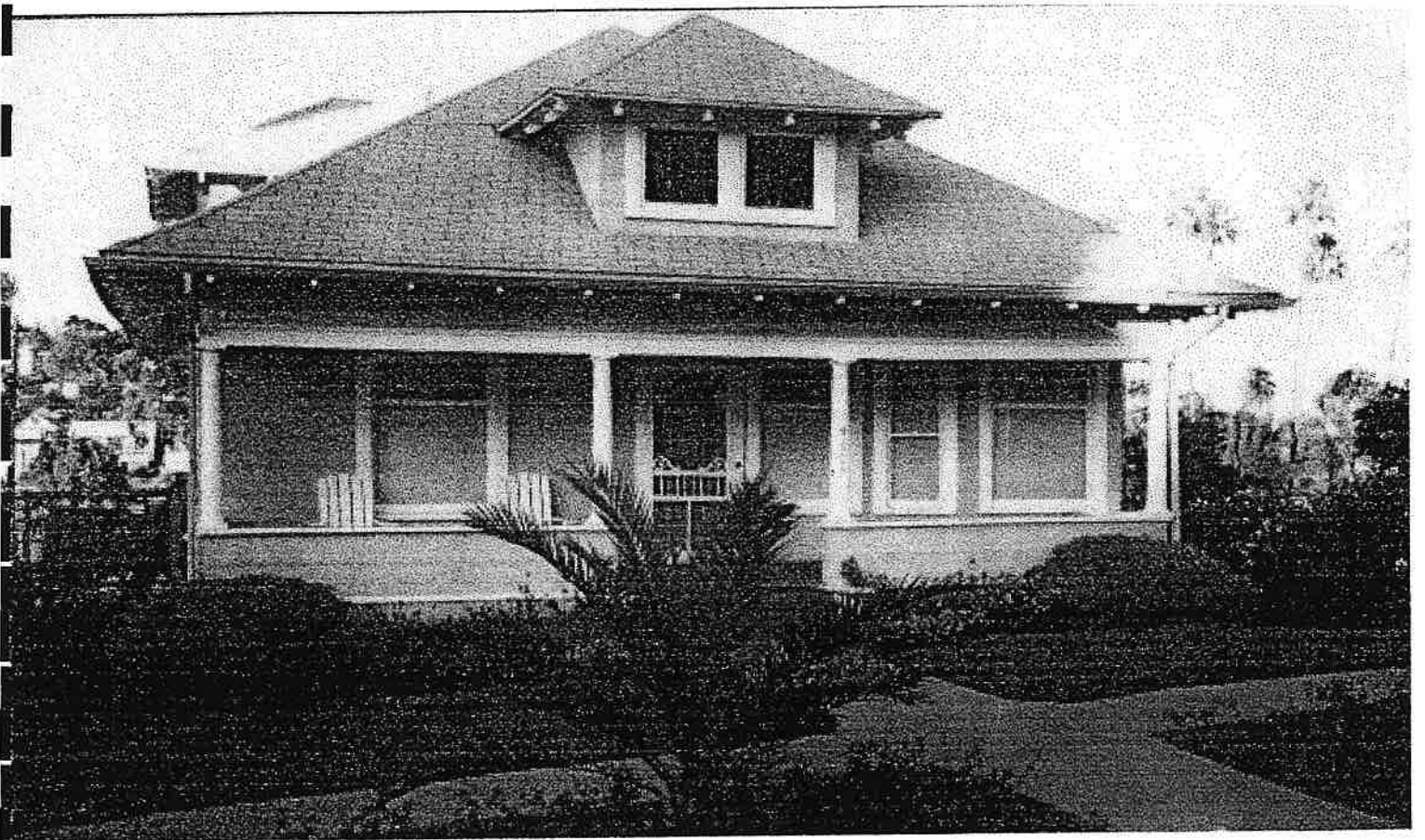
Donna Regan

Karna Webster

Date of Application: Feb. 6, 2001

Chain of Title
4603 Date Avenue, La Mesa

- 1910** - S. Grable and Lillian Grable deed to Christopher Wentz June 24, 1910
Deed Book 486, p. 485
- 1947** - Olivia F. Park (widow of Christopher Wentz) deed to
Mrs. Walter J.E. Martel (Bessie) Oct 23, 1947
Official Records Book 2522 p. 310
- 1964** - Walter J. E. Martel deed to Anora Lerner March 6, 1964
Official Records Document 42454
- 1964** - Anora Lerner deed to Charles and Martha Creamer March 6, 1964
Official Records Document 42455
- 1974** - Martha Creamer deed to Martha Creamer (Trust) Official Records
Reel 9443, page 1, image 1974, Doc. 137324
- Martha Cyndie Creamer deed to Roy Wayne Creamer, Official Records
Reel 15597, page 3, image 1677, Doc. 12291
- 1995** - Roy Wayne Creamer TR. & Martha Cyndie Creamer Tr deed to Carol Mary Neal
Jan 11, 1995, Official Records Reel 15567 page 1 Image 1680 Doc. 12292
- 1997** - Carol Mary Neal deed to Michael and Christine Collier Feb 28, 1997
Official Records Reel 17709 page 1 image 143 Doc. 91402
- 1998** - Michael and Christine Collier deed to Michael and Shirrell Bailey Oct 27, 1998
Official Records Reel 20022 page 1 image 23 Doc. 697014



WENTZ-PARK HOUSE 4603 Date Avenue

L. B. Grable
to
Christopher Wentz

L. B. Grable and William
M. Grable, his wife

For and in consideration of the sum of Ten + Dollars
Do hereby Grant to Christopher Wentz

All that Real Property Situated in the
State of California, bounded and described as follows:

County of San Diego

Lot Thirteen (3) of Block Two (2) of Grable's Addition to La Mesa Springs, San Diego County, California, according to map thereof No. 9748 filed in the Office of the Recorder of San Diego County, California, June 5th, 1906

To Have and to hold the above granted and described premises, unto the said Grantee his heirs and assigns forever.

Witness our hand and seal of this
Signed and executed in presence of

twenty-fourth day of June, 1910.
L. B. Grable
William M. Grable

[Seal]

[Seal]

[Seal]

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

County of San Diego

On this 28th day of June, A. D. Nineteen Hundred and 10

before me, B. K. Haines,

duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared L. B. Grable and William M. Grable, his wife,

known to me to be

the person or

whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and

acknowledged to me that they

executed the same.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my

seal at my office in San Diego, County of San Diego,

State of California, the day and year in this certificate first above written.

B. K. Haines

Notary Public in and for the County of San Diego, State of California

Recorded at request of Mr. Haines

July 5, 1910, at 50 min past 1 o'clock, at P. M.

JOHN H. FERRY, County Recorder

Fee, \$ 10

COMPARED
Water Forward

By Walter Forward, Deputy Recorder

* DEED TO WALTERS 4/14/24
#47055 994/314 OD9
INCLUDED 6" X 22' STRIP
DEED WALTERS TO SIEDEL
9/10/43 #57089
DOES NOT INCLUDE 6" X 22' STRIP

FAIRVIEW AVE

LEMON

AVE

ACACIA

FINLEY

AVE

AVE

DATE _____

NEBO

AVE

MAP 994 - GRABLES ADD

WENTZ-PARK HOUSE
4603 Date Ave.

SHT 2

SAN DIEGO COUNTY
ASSESSOR'S MAP
BOOK 470 PAGE 61

1-23-77 JLN

CHANGES

BULK OLD NEWTRACUST

611	794-380	1-24
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6/2	united	1-24	77	UNO9
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DIRECTORY LISTINGS FOR 4603 DATE AVE., LA MESA

- 1912 - Wentz, Christopher - La Mesa (no street address shown)
Wentz, Dick
- 1916 - Wentz, Christopher (Olivia) - La Mesa (no street address shown)
- 1920 - Wentz, Christopher (Olivia) gard. - La Mesa (no street address shown)
- 1921 - Wentz, Olivia (wid Christopher) - La Mesa (no street address shown)
- 1923 - Wentz, Olivia (wid Christopher) - La Mesa (no street address shown)
- 1924 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) La Mesa Lumber Co., Pres. Bank of La Mesa h 309 E. 3d
- 1925 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) Pres. Bank of La Mesa h 391 S. Date Ave.
- 1927 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) chrm. Adv. Board Bank of Italy h 391 S. Date Ave
- 1929 - Park, Chas. C. (Olivia F.) h 391 S. Date Ave.
- 1930 - Park, Chas. C. (Olivia F.) h 391 S. Date Ave.
- 1932 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) h 4603 Date Ave.
- 1934 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) pres. Park Lumber & Inv. Co. h 4603 Date Ave.
- 1935 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) pres. Park Lumber & Inv. Co. h 4603 Date Ave.
- 1936 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) pres. Park Lumber & Inv. Co. h 4603 Date Ave
- 1938 - Park, C. Clarence (Olivia F.) pres. Park Lumber & Inv. Co. h 4603 Date Ave
- 1941 - Park, Chas. C. (Olivia F.) pres. Park Lbr & Inv. Co. 4603 Date Ave
- 1944-45 - Park, Chas. C. (Olivia F.) 4603 Date Ave.
- 1947-48 - Park, Olivia F. (wid C.C.) h 4603 Date Ave.
- Martel, Walter J. (Louise D.) h 4603 Date Ave.
- 1952 - Martel, Walter J. (Louisa D.) h 4603 Date Ave.
- 1958 - Martel, Walter J. E. (o) 4603 Date Ave.

1960 - Martel, Walter J. E. (o) 4603 Date Ave.

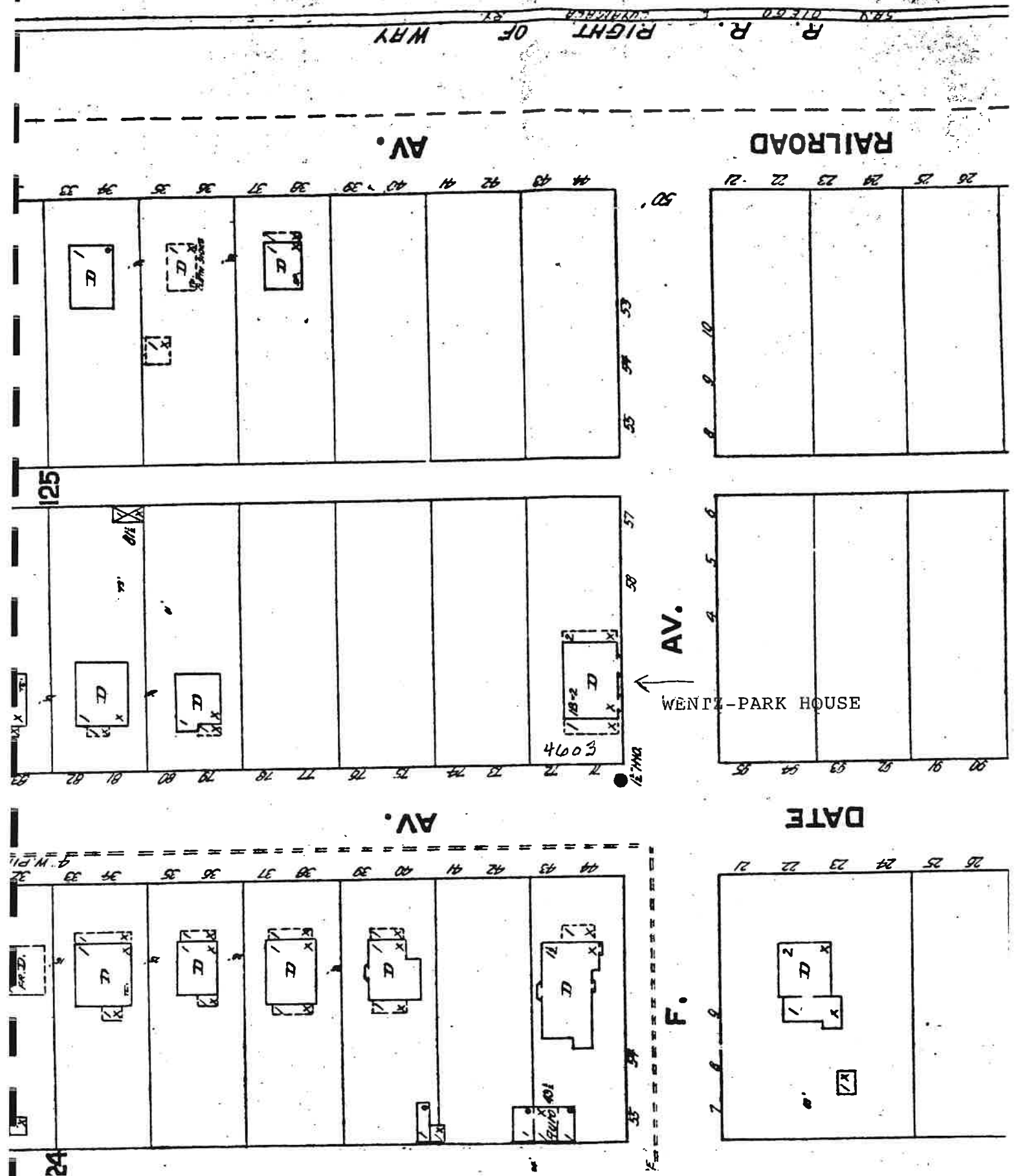
1961-1962 - Martel, Walter J. E. (o) 4603 Date Ave.

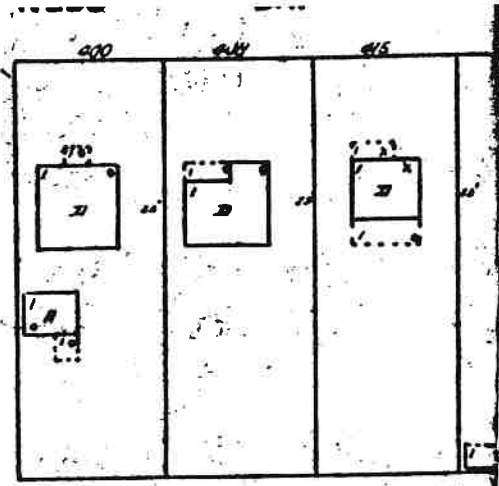
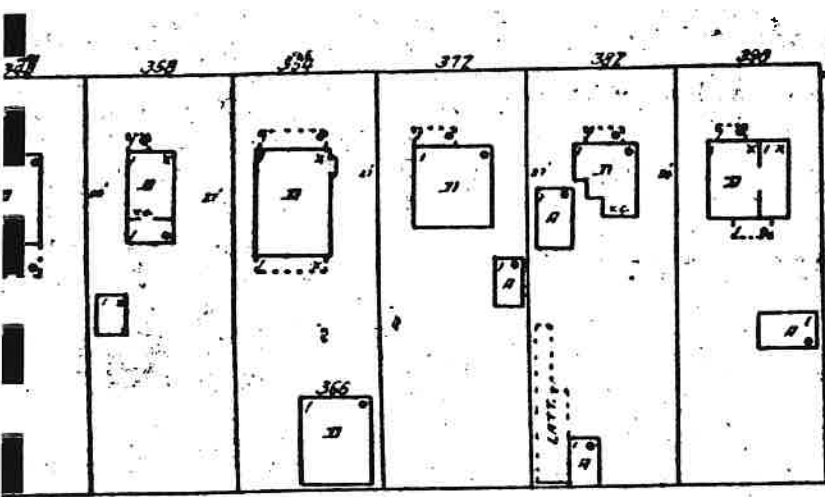
1963- vacant 4603 Date Ave

1964 - Lerner, Arnora D. 4603 Date Ave.

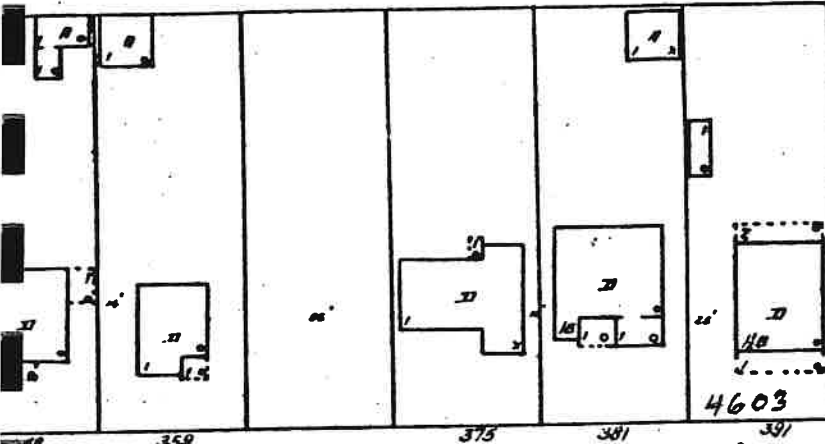
1965 - Creamer, Chas W. - 4603 Date Ave.

1971 - Creamer, Charles W. (Martha C.) retd. h 4603 Date Ave.

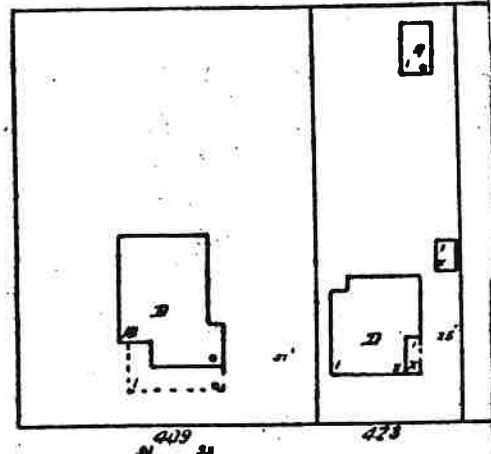




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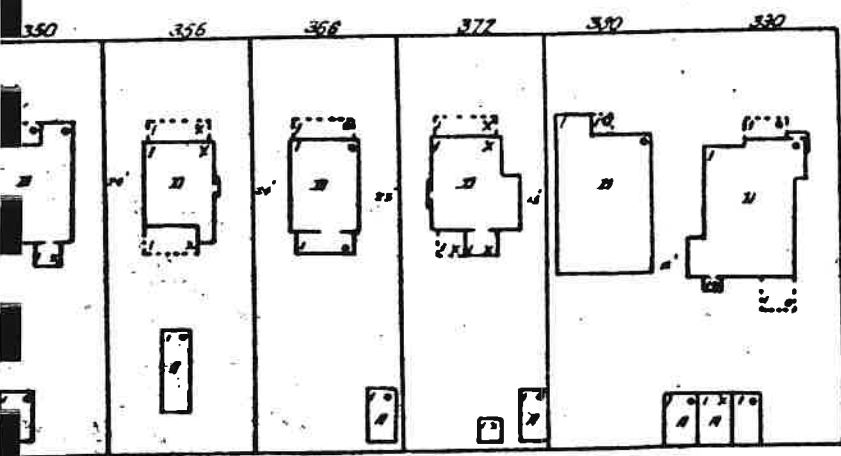


W. FINLEY AV.
(WEST R. AV.)

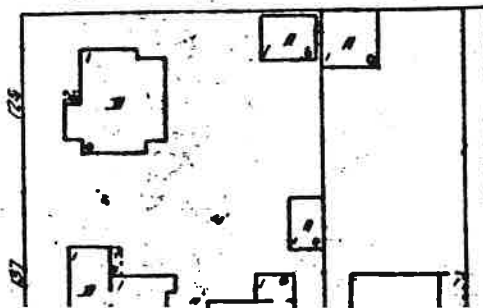
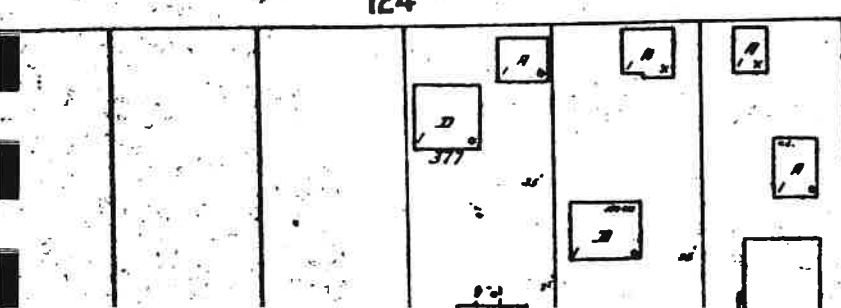
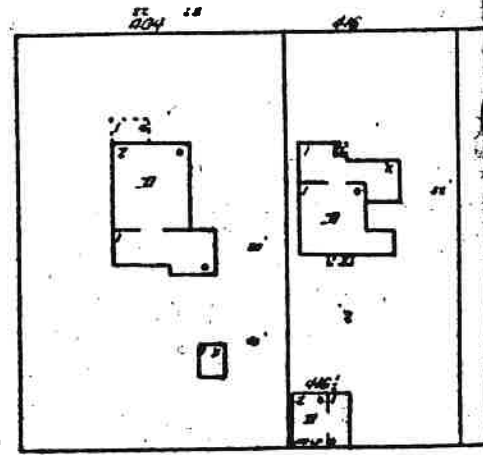


WENTZ-PARK HOUSE

S. DATE AV.



124



MAP OF GRABLE'S ADDITION

TO
LA MESA SPRINGS

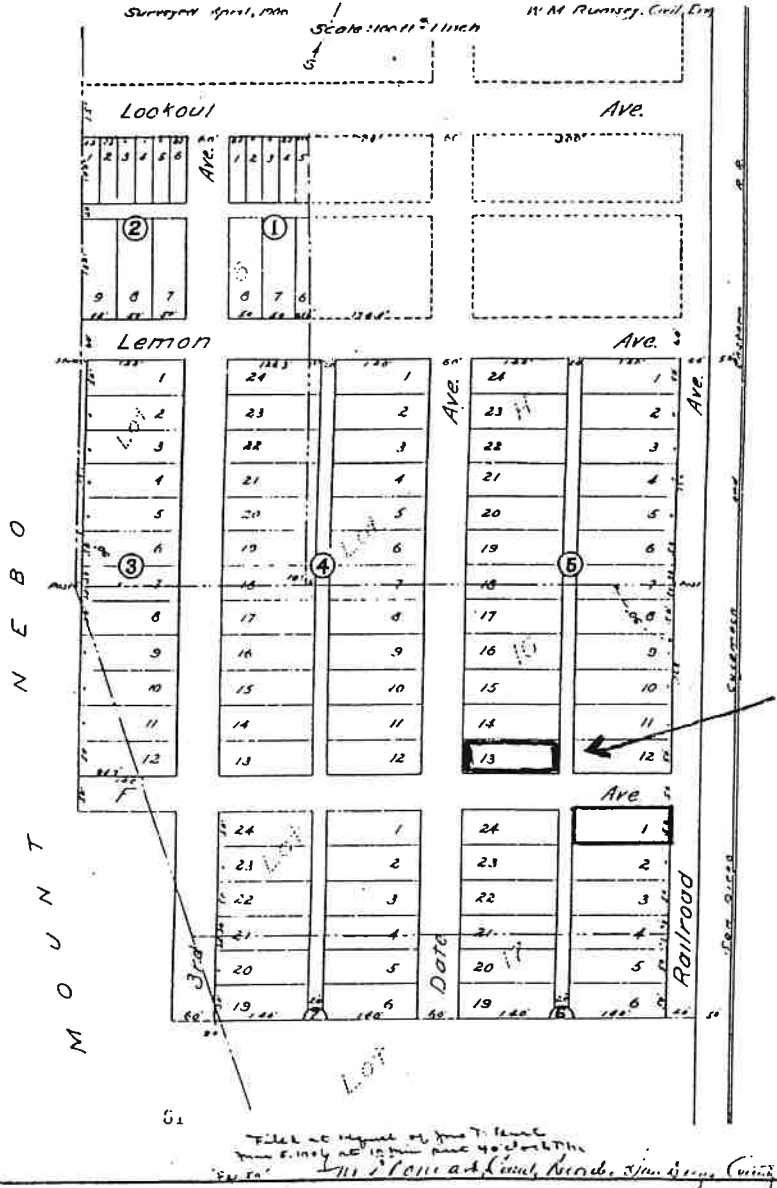
Being a subdivision of Lot No. 10, of Sub-division No. 4, and a portion of Mount Nebo, all in Tract 12 in the Ex-Mission Rancho

SAN DIEGO CO. CAL.

Surveyed April, 1906

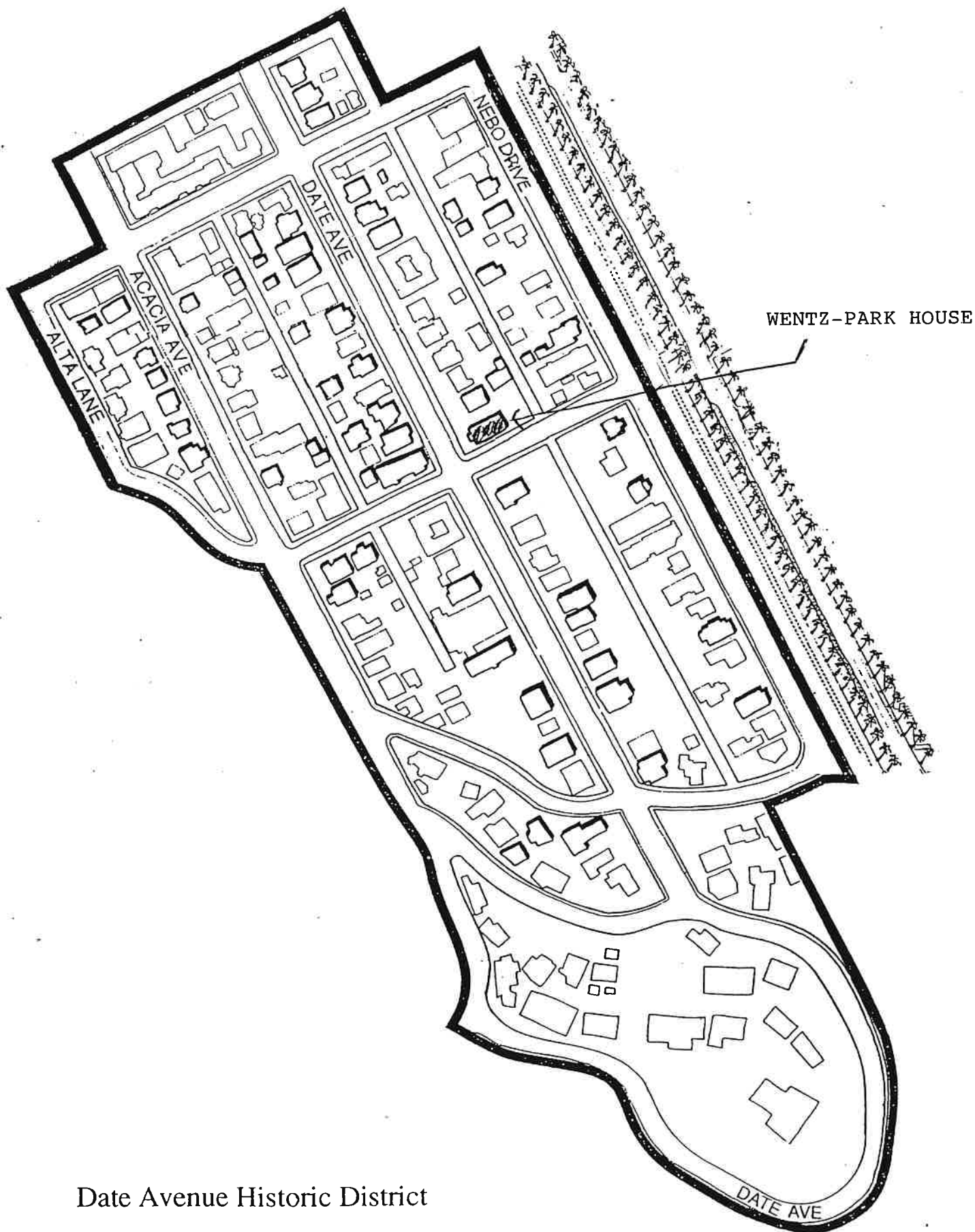
Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet

W. M. Ramsey, Civil Eng.



Grable's Addition Subdivision Map, filed May 7, 1906

Lookout Avenue was the original name of La Mesa Boulevard;
Railroad Avenue later became Nebo Drive.



Date Avenue Historic District

Thus he lived for eighty-five years, the last twelve of which were in La Mesa. Three years ago (he) wrote to the Trenton Advertiser: "I am living in the best all-year climate in the world, and if a man has made enough to live comfortably, he and his family would be wise to move to this climate and prolong their lives."

Mr. Wentz, after spending twenty years in California, had completed his eighty-fifth year, and enjoyed good health until the past few months.

Philip S. Thatcher

CLARENCE PARK, EARLY LA MESA SETTLER, DIES

A San Diego and La Mesa resident 54 years, Charles Clarence Park, 85, president of Park Lumber & Investment Co., died yesterday in his home, 4603 Date st., La Mesa. Final rites, under auspices of La Mesa Lodge 407, F.&A.M., will be conducted at 2 p.m. Saturday in Erickson-Anderson mortuary by the Rev. W. A. Schurr. Burial will be in Greenwood Memorial park.

Mr. Park, one of La Mesa's first residents, was born in Pleasanton, Kan., and came to California in 1892, locating in Nestor. In 1906 he moved to San Diego and, with a partner, organized the Park-Grable Investment Co. The firm was one of the first to subdivide and develop land in La Mesa.

At one time he was president of the old Bank of La Mesa, later sold to a large banking institution. The Park Lumber and Investment Co. was established by Mr. Park soon after he became associated in the development of La Mesa.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Olivia Park; a son, D. Frank Park, and two grandchildren, Julia E. and Earl K. Park, all of La Mesa.

S.D. Union 6/25/49

PARK—Olivia F. Aunt Mrs. Beale L. Martel, Mrs. C. A. Brises of Washington, D. C., and Mr. Charles B. Hebbard of Washington, D. C. Private services at Greenwood Memorial Chapel Wed. 2 p.m. Please omit flowers. Dr. Roy Campbell officiating. Cremation Greenwood Mortuary.

La Mesa Scout 4/27/1923 p.1

PARK-WENTZ

A wedding of local interest was that of Mrs. C. Wentz and C. C. Park, which was solemnized in San Diego Monday noon.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Park are very well known in persons Mrs. Park having been a resident here for the past fifteen years, while Mr. Park has made this his home since 1906.

Mr. and Mrs. Park left Tuesday morning over the S. D. & A. for Kansas City, planning to return about July 1st to make their permanent home in La Mesa.