



Figure 1: South façade of the Barn at Utter Ranch. Photo by Lyn Hooper, 2020.

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General Property Information:



Figure 2: Aerial view of the Utter Ranch. Image by Google Earth, 2020.

Property Historic Name: Utter Ranch

Property Alternate Names: Silt Wine Company, Wilson Vineyards

Structure Name: The Barn at Utter Ranch

Year Constructed: c. 1910

Period of Significance: 1937-1950, duration of George H. Wilson's ownership

Yolo County Assessor's Parcel Number: 044-040-033

Designer: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Architectural Style: Utilitarian

Number of Stories: One

Structure Area: Approximately 6,500 square feet

Structure Construction Materials: Timber and wood framed, fluted galvanized steel roofing and siding

Structure / Property Owner: Wilson Vineyard Properties, 50400 Gaffney Road, Clarksburg, CA 95612

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References:

Reclamation District No. 999. n.d. <http://rd999.org/history/> (accessed November 28, 2020).

The Sacramento Bee. *Isabelle Mack Wilson Obituary (2004)*. March 28-30, 2004.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sacbee/obituary.aspx?n=isabelle-mack-wilson&pid=2070717>
(accessed November 28, 2020).

Visit CA Delta. *Legacy Communities: Clarksburg*. 2017. <https://visitcadelta.com/stories/delta-narratives/legacy-communities/clarksburg/> (accessed November 29, 2020).

Wilson, George H. *Farmer to Farmer Around the World*. Stockton, CA: University of the Pacific, 1987.

Features Characteristic of the Utilitarian Style Utilized on the Property:

- Engineered Water Distribution Systems
- Lack of Ornamentation
- Continuous Concrete Floor Slabs
- Standardized lengths of galvanized corrugated sheet steel

History of Reclamation District Number 999 and the Holland Land Company:

The following history is reprinted from <http://rd999.org/history/> through <http://rd999.org/history/6/>:

An Overview by Richard E. Marshall June 17th, 1992

As early as 1500, the area along Elk Slough, also known as Elkhorn Slough, was inhabited by the Ylamne, a Miwok indian tribelet. A Miwok speaking people, they were related by marriage and military alliances to other Miwokan tribelets nearby as well as several along the Consumnes River, near the city of Elk Grove. Inhabiting the area until 1836, the group was severely impacted by the outbreak of malaria which caused widespread death throughout the Delta Region.

Shortly after California became a state the federal government, by the passage of the "Arkansas Act" in 1850, granted by patent to each state for the purpose of reclamation, all unsold swamp and overflowed lands within the latter's boundaries. The fees collected from the sale of the land was to be applied to the reclamation of the lands.

In 1855, California passed an act providing for the sale of these lands at \$1.00 per acre with payments over five years, a 320 acre limit, and, when paid over time, at least one-half of the land had to be reclaimed within the said period or otherwise forfeited. Only a few thousand acres were sold under this act. The act of 1855 was repealed and another act was passed in 1858 which abolished the credit system and the obligation to reclaim one-half of the land. The \$1.00 per acre payments were placed in a swamp land fund with no provision for reclamation. In 1859 the acreage limitation was increased from 320 acres to 640 acres. In addition, terms of 20% down and five years to pay were allowed on the balance.

Due to the regional impact of the sitting of the rivers from the hydraulic mining practices and the impacts of more severe flooding on the valley lowlands, 1861 saw California assume direct responsibility for reclamation of the swamp lands by an act creating a board of five swamp land commissioners, each with an annual salary of \$1,200 and appropriating

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\$200,000 from the Swamp Land Fund. This authorized the appointment of an engineer to coordinate and assure that basic standards were met in the reclamation plans of the various districts. The owners of one-third of the district lands could petition the state to help in reclaiming their properties. The state would expend \$1.00 per acre on the construction of their land reclamation project providing the land owners subscribed for the balance of the cost. Twenty-eight districts applied under this act including American Basin as No. 1, Sacramento Basin as No. 2 and Grand Island as No. 3. The first known reclamation construction project within Reclamation District #999 was completed in 1863. At that time, the Yolo Basin was Reclamation District 18 (now disbanded) and that District dug Tule Canal, one of our major water distribution/drainage waterways.

An 1866 Reclamation Act amended the 1861 act by abolishing the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners, and transferring their powers, duties and funds to the County Boards of Supervisors, with county surveyors acting as district engineers. The Reclamation Act of 1868 further defined the procedures of reclamation and its laws and, following this period, allowed the state to transfer through sales most of its swamp land holdings, as originally planned in 1850.

In 1878 the Sacramento River Drainage District was formed which included all swamp and overflow land in Sacramento, Solano and Yolo counties. The drainage district's plan to deal with the surplus flood waters failed because there was no large comprehensive flood control scheme that included all districts of the Sacramento Valley and lowlands, which would have controlled all flood relief and reclamation work, including the damaging effects of the ongoing hydraulic mining siltation problem. It is of great significance that in 1878 the side draft clam shell dredge was re-invented (originally a Persian concept that lacked steam power — where was Robert Fulton when he was needed?) and allowed, for the first time, the missing link to reclamation—the ability to move great volumes of material a short distance at minimal expense.

The following years lacked activity due to ongoing legal disputes over the organization and the authority of various powers formed under the previous acts. However, in 1893, to deal with problems of high river flows, the US Congress, under the Caminetti Act, formed the California Debris Commission for the purpose of controlling (and prohibiting where necessary) hydraulic mining, and of restoring navigation, as nearly as practicable, to the conditions existing prior to 1860. The same legislature created the office of Commissioner of Public Works (a predecessor of the Bureau of Reclamation) to investigate damage caused by flooding and to prepare plans and estimates for flood control under the direction of the government. Their report of 1894 showed \$18,000,000 had been spent in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys on reclamation but that flood control was a failure due to the absence of any comprehensive flood control, drainage or protective system for the two valleys.

Of greatest significance was the recommendation of the construction of a by-pass system at a cost of over \$9,000,000. Unfortunately, no action was taken on this recommendation. However, in 1911, the Sacramento Drainage District was abolished, and on June 27th, the Secretary of War (now the US Army Corps of Engineers) recommended a complete by-pass system, with weirs and river levees, at an estimated cost of \$33,000,000 with the suggestion that the federal government, the state and the landowners (through their local districts) each bear one-third of the cost.

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1913 saw the Reclamation Board Act amended which enlarged the membership of the Board to seven members, created the Sacramento and San Joaquin Drainage District and placed it under the control and management of the Reclamation Board, giving the Board the power to acquire lands and rights of way and to construct flood control works.

One of the early discoveries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Drainage District was that the maximum floods of the Sacramento River are the greatest in the United States, except for those of the Mississippi, Ohio and Columbia rivers. When analyzed in proportion to the territory drained, they are from four to fifteen times as great as those of the above named rivers.

The volume of water in an extreme flood of the Sacramento River is from four to eight times greater than the capacity of its channel in different sections. This incapacity has been increased by the debris deposits and sediments from hydraulic mining. This problem is still with us today and the Boards' ability to respond to the problem with appropriate solutions is frustrated by varied interests in the River and Delta. One hundred years ago, it was apparent that the rainfall in the Sacramento Valley and its related runoff posed a major obstacle to population growth and development of agriculture in this bountiful area.

One of the major purchasers of swampland in the mid 1800s was the Tide Land Reclamation Company. The founder of the company was George D. Roberts, for whom Roberts Island is named, who had purchased 250,000 acres in the delta at \$0.50 to \$3.00 per acre. Splitting off 120,000 acres to form the Tide Land Reclamation Company, development of a drainage program to drain the swamp was initiated. The joint venture included backers from as far away as Kentucky.

Among the early Californians involved were two men Thomas H. Williams and his fellow attorney and business partner David Bixler. Referred to as "General" Williams, not because of any military rank but due to his former position as Attorney General of the State of California, Williams & Bixler were major investors in the San Francisco Bridge Company which was their financial base. With a \$600,000 investment in the Tide Lands Reclamation Company, about 1870 the Company was experiencing financial difficulties. For this reason, Williams & Bixler wanted to divest and took payment in kind and exchanged their interests of \$600,000 for 65,000 acres of land extending from Clarksburg on the north to Victoria Island on the southern end of the Delta. The property included 20,000 acres in the Yolo Basin, 11,000 acres in Grand Island and 34,000 acres between Middle and Old Rivers which became Victoria, Woodward and Union Islands. This transaction proved instrumental in the formation of Reclamation District No. 999 and accounts for the size it is today, one of the larger reclamation districts in the Delta encompassing 26,000 acres.

Under the organizational eye and financial leadership of Isaac Parsons, President of the Bank of Hayward, the Netherlands Farming Company was formed and bought the 20,000 acres held by Williams and Bixler that is within the Reclamation District No. 999 area. After experiencing financial difficulties in the early 1900s, the Netherlands Farming Company was reorganized and became the Holland Land Company with the purpose of improving and selling off the acreage. Under the Holland Land Co., the land was sold and the higher lands of the District were farmed with great success. However, flooding proved to be most severe during many winters.

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To develop the land, protective levees were needed and therefore, it was decided to form a reclamation district under the Reclamation Act of 1868. August 10, 1913, Reclamation District #999 was formed, which included lands of Reclamation District #18 formed about 1863, Reclamation District #146 formed in 1872 and Reclamation District #472 formed in 1885. Due to these types of incorporation, the number of districts decreased from over 2000 to only 155 districts currently in the state. Twenty-three are run similarly to Reclamation District #999 with full time staff and management. Others, like in the bypass, might be inactive and contain a very small area, or like Staten Island near Walnut Grove, it may involve only one farm but contain a large area.

Early engineering was done by Gus Olson, Sr., Guy Fraser and Irving Smith. Guy Fraser came to the district first from the Panama Canal project since he worked for Haviland, Dozier & Tibbetts, an engineering firm from San Francisco which engineered the canal. Evidently Guy liked the area and the project and called for the others to follow in this interesting work

This district was built with funds from district assessments, \$2,900,000 to date, over \$2,000,000 of which was spent in the 1920's. Since the closing of the west levee in 1921 the District has achieved its designed goal of land reclamation and flood protection. Reclamation District #999 has never been flooded. The current staff hopes to continue with this fine tradition. (Reclamation District No. 999 n.d.)

History of George H. Wilson:

The following history was provided by George H. Wilson's granddaughter, Kirsti (Wilson) Fong:

This is the story of George H. Wilson from Clarksburg, California and his contributions to agriculture and farming in Clarksburg, the nation and the world.

His father, George W. Wilson, the youngest of twelve, born in Ireland and orphaned at 13, followed his brothers to New York and later moved to Illinois. His mother, Mary Elma Boggs, born in Ohio, moved with her family to Illinois in a covered wagon during the Civil War. A determined beginning for the parents of George, who married in 1875 and lived in Illinois when he was born in 1892. George's father worked in ministry and later moved the family to Imperial, California in 1906 to work as a Chaplain at the Soldier's Home. George wanted to be a farmer like his Grandfather on his Mother's side and to do this he knew he needed experience and an education. Graduating a Valedictorian from Santa Monica High School in 1910 and planning to attend U.C. Berkeley, George spent the summers learning how to farm. Working for Mr. Carter in Lompoc near the Santa Ynez River, he learned to feed and prepare the horses for plowing with a single moldboard walking plow and a steel seat riding plow to work the ground and plant potatoes, beans, mustard seed, and hay. George was introduced to driving a four-horse team and a trail wagon. Working on 13,500 acres for Bill Cooper at the Old Santa Rosa Ranch, George was introduced to growing and harvesting barley and sugar beets, earning him \$2.00 per day. Bill Cooper was a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and took an interest in George and encouraged him to complete two years of engineering as good education and preparation for farming and George followed his advice.

While enrolled in the college of Agriculture at U.C. Berkeley, George was inspired by the new Director of the Agricultural Extension Service, B.H. Crocheron. Mr. Crocheron organized, built, and directed an agricultural high school in Maryland as a new experiment in rural education to serve students, farm homes, and the community and hoping to instill in

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the students a love of rural life and dedication to its welfare. From then on, George worked afternoons and evenings in the basement office of the Agricultural building doing anything to help establish the Agricultural Extension.

The first decision of Mr. Crocheron was to have a Farm Advisor organize a County Farm Bureau, made up of 10 percent of the farmers of the county, with a minimum of 50 farmers, before entering the county. The counties were then divided into centers, approximately 8-16 centers per county, similar to school districts, with meetings held in a school, local store or church. The Farm Advisor was the extension of education, the teacher in the countryside that would disseminate the research from colleges and accumulated experience of other farmers. Congress later appropriated funds to the colleges for the agriculture extensions.

After college graduation, George became an Assistant Farm Advisor for \$83.33 per month and was given a motorcycle to get around and was directed to San Diego to work with Farm Advisor, Henry A. Weinland to organize a Winter Vegetable Union to sell the vegetables for the current members and help sign up new members. Soon George was given a Model T and set right out on farm calls of his own on the narrow dirt roads. If you arrived at a ranch after 2:30 p.m. the owner would do everything possible to see that you stayed all night as a show of hospitality.

Then George went to Humboldt County to introduce alfalfa growing to the cattlemen and dairies in the Humboldt hills. Humboldt County was the first California County to have a Farm Bureau and Extension.

George's college roommate, George Paulin, asked him to come to Imperial Valley to start his first real farming job and manage a farm and in 1916, he started as manager of an 80 acre farm; 40 acres in alfalfa, 40 acres of milo for feed, 200 sows, and lots of pigs. Mr. Crocheron suggested George go to Imperial County to additionally represent him and the Extension Service in helping organize the Imperial County Farm Bureau beginning with organizing farm centers in the county and visiting high schools to form Agricultural Clubs. The \$125 per month was not as exciting to George as farm work, good crops and lots of good hogs, but it was important work just the same.

Along with many other male students, George had completed cadet military training in his first two years of college and was drafted in 1917 to serve our country during World War I. He was trained to serve on the front lines and was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant Field Artillery (FA) and assigned with Company F, 316 Engineers, 91st Division and later appointed liaison officer to maintain all communication between infantry, battalion and regimental headquarters. In 1919, he went from Lieutenant FA in France to job hunter in California.

George soon received a wire communication from Professor Thompson of U.C. Davis, offering an appointment to U.C. Davis as an instructor to set up a Range Cattle Experiment Station and operate it on the condition he understood that George wanted to be a farmer. George was to locate, lease, and operate the Range Cattle Experiment Station which he did on 3,500 acres at the Barrett ranch in Shingle Springs with 555 head of cows, calves and bulls. This opportunity included driving cattle through downtown Placerville to the summit near Wright's Lake, documenting the identity of each head of cattle to include age, color, markings, weight, pregnancy determination, calving dates and most importantly the weight before they left to graze on the summer mountain range compared to their weight after the trip back to the ranch. This information was the only one of its kind in the country and provided useful data to the U.S. Forest Service and the Cattlemen's Association and was

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very helpful in moderating the proposed Forest Service grazing fees. While in Shingle Springs, George organized the French Creek Farm Center and was elected Secretary to get back in the swing of working with Farm Bureau again, he got married and introduced his new wife to living at the Range Cattle Experiment Station, and he and his friend, Harold Wadsworth, an instructor of irrigation at U.C. Davis, went together on the purchase of their first parcel of farmland from the Holland Land Company in Clarksburg, CA, 106 acres in barley. George was on his way to becoming a farmer.

George gained experience and the respect of fellow cattlemen through his work at the Range Cattle Experiment Station. At the annual meeting of the El Dorado-Amador Cattlemen's Association in Placerville, George was nominated for president. It was an honor to be accepted by the group, but George declined because his plan was to move him and his wife to Clarksburg and begin farming. They set out on their trip to Clarksburg in 1922, driving a team of horses and wagon through K Street to stay the night at the Cebrian Ranch in West Sacramento then traveled to the new property the next morning.

The Reclamation District 999 (Holland Land) was created in 1913 and was high quality land sold at a reasonable price of \$25 acre once it was engineered with levees, tree lined roads, drainage and irrigation ditches and pumping plant. The bypass was built as principle protection from flooding Sacramento and the Delta.

In 1922, George and his wife Isabelle moved into a house on the 106-acre parcel, invested in a team of horses and equipment and began to work the ground in preparation for the first crop of pink beans. Later in the year, the Clarksburg Farm Center met at Clarksburg Elementary, "the old wooden grammar school," elections were held and George was back in the Farm Bureau as Chairman. The Extension and the Farm Centers worked together to organize projects to stimulate farm production, use of better seeds, accuracy of planting, irrigation, and weed control through suggestions and encouragement. In the Spring of 1923, George planted his first sugar beets for Alameda Sugar Company, which led to a broad expansion of acreage and finally the sugar factory in Clarksburg.



Figure 3: Sugar beets planted at the Clarksburg home place, circa 1959. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

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Clarksburg was one of the early steamboat stops on the Sacramento River, the shipping and market center for Merritt Island and Lisbon districts. 26,000 new acres were reclaimed from the river and bypass flood waters and many young families with little capital but a willingness to work to build a good community for their families, moved in with full support from Gus Olson, company manager for the Holland Land Company.

Bob Yelland, a college friend was working as the manager of the C.C. Moore Ranch near Anderson in Shasta County, when he came to a farm meeting in Davis that year and met up with George as he explained that the Anderson Cottonwood area was not doing well and George insisted Bob come home with him and see Clarksburg. It wasn't long and they met up with Gus Olson and Bob purchased land to farm and raise his family in Clarksburg and become involved in the community activities and the local farm bureau.

By 1926, Farm Bureau was growing rapidly in influence and power in the state and George became President of the Yolo County Farm Bureau and attended several state director's meetings. At this time George was also attending local and regional Farm Bureau meetings and in 1927 he purchased the 47-acre Spanggord Ranch to begin expanding his acreage in sugar beets.

President Hoover proposed the farm board of five men and a \$500 million budget to stabilize farm prices. A farm board representative helped George and Lester Holmes organize the Central California Beet Growers Association. Both George and Lester were elected as directors, and later Lester was elected president, and were able to meet with other state groups. The Association gave a good deal of encouragement and help to beet growers in the Clarksburg area.

Local farmers were not happy with a good deal of state legislation and the cities control of the legislature, in response, the Farm Bureau appointed a committee to create a fair plan to represent the farmers that was drawn up as a constitution amendment to be placed on the ballot November 1926. At the California Farm Bureau meeting that George attended, he learned the importance of the support and voice that the Farm Bureau gave the farmer and wanted to help any way he could and started by working with Ralph Taylor, the manager of the agricultural legislative committee. George read all the bills which might affect agriculture or rural living and analyzed them so the Farm Bureau board of directors and members could determine what action, if any, they should take. George presented the weekly news of the Farm Bureau during a radio broadcast every Friday night from the Department of Agriculture Building in Sacramento. These experiences were later found to be helpful in dealing with other farm organizations and the legislative bodies in Sacramento and Washington D.C.

In 1929 George had started growing asparagus and he and many growers in the area were doing well and decided to form the Holland District Asparagus Growers Association as a cooperative with William Lambert of Lambert Packing Company and George became Secretary. Soon George worked to prepare a federal marketing agreement and presentation to the U.S. Department of Agriculture followed by the State of California agreement that included grades and other conditions for canning.

The new Farm Credit Act had passed in 1933, which set up a new Farm Credit Administration and included the Federal Land Bank, Intermediate Credit Bank, Production Credit, and the Bank for Cooperatives. George was requested to help set up the Woodland Production Credit Association under the new Farm Credit Act and was elected president of the Association, which has since served the farmers well. While attending the Western Regional Farm Bureau meeting, presidents of other production credit associations, had

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nominated George to be the new director on the Farm Credit District Board that included California, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada.

The Sugar Act of 1933 was separate from the General Farm Adjustment Act and the committee called a meeting in Chicago, George and Lester Holmes represented the California sugar beet growers and learned they would be needed in Washington D.C. to assist in preparing a contract between the Secretary of Agriculture and each individual beet grower in the nation. The contract was very effective in ensuring that each grower received a fair contract with the sugar company and that workers were properly paid.

During this time, the Amalgamated Sugar Company of Utah wanted to build a plant in Clarksburg and George attended many meetings with President Benning. Canneries had also wanted to come into Clarksburg, but Gus Olson wouldn't sell them any land because of his commitment to keep it rural residential and George agreed. The Amalgamated Sugar Company agreed to barge the pulp from the area and building began. The factory was a big asset to the growers and was one of the most profitable plants in the U.S. and began receiving beets in 1935 with Lester Holmes as the plant manager.

George was known as a farmer who wanted to stay a farmer and not become a government official. He had a very definite policy which was to represent farmers before other groups, never other groups to farmers. While attending a sugar beet meeting in Washington D.C. in 1936, George's reputation as a farmer was exactly the reason the chairman of the farm programs for the Western region, selected him to be the chairman of the California committee to administer the new Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. The farm programs really wanted to know what California farmers wanted and George was told that it wouldn't work unless he accepted, and he did.

George was now actively involved with the Clarksburg Farm Center, Farm Credit Board, Clarksburg Community Church Council, Agriculture Adjustment Committee, Asparagus Control Board, Sugar Beet Control Committee, the Beet Growers Association, the National Beet Association, Yolo County and California Farm Bureau.

George would attend the California Farm Bureau meeting in Modesto and was nominated by California as the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Director which meant regional meetings, commodity department meetings, senate and congressional hearings, invitations to speak at state annual meetings and executive committee meetings. George found he didn't need any more meetings but the opportunity to meet with many people prominent in American life meant representing the interests of the farmers where decisions were being made that directly affected the family farm. George devoted as much time from his own family to preserve this interest. George would serve as Director for the next 20 years.

In 1937 George purchased the 292-acre Utter Ranch and the 368-acre Pierson Ranch and leased additional acres to continue growing his prime crop of sugar beets along with alfalfa, beans, asparagus, corn, tomatoes and other crops. Having 1000 acres in sugar beets produced 24,000 tons and an excellent yield in 1939. There were partnerships and corporations which produced more, but George was the largest individual sugar beet grower in the U.S. that year.

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Figure 4: View of corn irrigation at the Pierson Ranch, circa 1963. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.



Figure 5: David Wilson farming sugar beets, circa 1952. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

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The Utter Ranch was a former dairy, but George used the dairy barn to house sows and their young in farrowing pens. For the first few years, George grew alfalfa, barley, wheat and raised over 3,000 pigs until the pigs contracted cholera. Then George planted sugar beets and continued growing alfalfa until he passed the property on to his children. Alfalfa, yellow corn and tomatoes became more viable over the years as George's sons David and Dick continued the farm. Dick would gain high yields in tomatoes until he finished farming for his Dad in 1969 and David began planting grapes on the Utter Ranch in 1971.



Figure 6: Richard Wilson's Tomato harvest on the Utter Ranch, 1963. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

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Figure 7: Grapes growing on the Utter Ranch, 1972. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

In 1941 George was asked to be a trustee of the College of the Pacific, the oldest chartered college in California. The college was small with 1,300 students and struggling along with most private schools at the time. George became a regent and the student enrollment continued to grow as he devoted his service to the university and the establishment of the School of International Studies, which was later named George Wilson Hall in honor of his dedicated service and generous support.

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Figure 8: George Wilson, Director, American Farm Bureau Federation and his wife Isabelle, circa 1952. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

In 1949 George was having lunch with his wife at home when the phone rang and it was George Denney of the most popular radio program at the time, "Town Hall of the Air." Mr. Denney's request was a surprise and he wanted George to travel with a group of about 30 on a world trip. George asked for a couple days to think about it since his first thought was that he was too busy and couldn't stay away that long but remembered the statement of

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Henry Ford that “All a person gets out of life is experience” and he thought maybe he should get this one. After a phone call with Allan Kline, President of the AFBF who said to go on the trip and represent Farm Bureau, George agreed to go. Many people travel around the world on ships, but it was an exciting idea to go all the way around the world by air. George learned after the trip that he was the 96th person to fly around the world on any commercial flight of any airline. The idea of the “Town Hall” trip was to increase knowledge, understanding, and friendliness among the people of the world on a person-to-person basis. The flying seminar represented organizations whose combined membership represented 30 million Americans. The seminar stops included London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Turkey, Tel Aviv, Cairo, Beirut, Karachi Pakistan, Delhi, Manila, and Tokyo.



Figure 9: National broadcast, Town Hall of the Air World Tour, 1949. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

In each country, the group was received at a formal reception by the Prime Minister and several of his cabinet, a U.S. Ambassador and his staff, or by the military government. The large town hall of the air meetings would include two local and two American speakers on each side of a current issue in the country visited and several seminars with appropriately selected persons interested in the issue discussed. Several of the group would tape a broadcast for America from each Capital visited. There were no plans to visit farms on the trip, but George made it his priority to somehow see farms in each country.

George was able to visit many well operated farms that were making a major contribution to a free world but found no schools for farm youth. Education in the countries had been for culture, not production. Progress demands some education and capital investment for production. George felt that America could contribute to a free world by practicing all the ideals of democracy and by aiding other countries in agricultural research and extension services, including work among the youth.

The following year, George received a phone call from the Pakistani Consulate in San Francisco to let him know that the Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, would like to visit some

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California farms and selected George as the man for the job. On his arrival, the Prime Minister, the Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. and George, set out to do just that, visiting many farms and ranches in the area including a dairy farm to look at the milk production techniques and inspect the cows, a visit to a crop of tomatoes to watch the crop dusting and fertilizer application, lunch and demonstrations with the 4-H Club boys and girls, and a helicopter demonstration that ended with the Prime Minister purchasing the three helicopters to put into immediate use in Karachi. The Prime Minister said that by far this was the best day he had experienced in the U.S. Mutual understanding and common ground are found on the farms and can continue to expand the mutual interests of each country.

The next five years for George were filled with a tremendous amount of talks, presentations and conferences given to service clubs, Farm Bureau, churches, and other groups about information gathered, experiences, and knowledge gained during the trip around the world in an effort to encourage peaceful solutions to international problems.

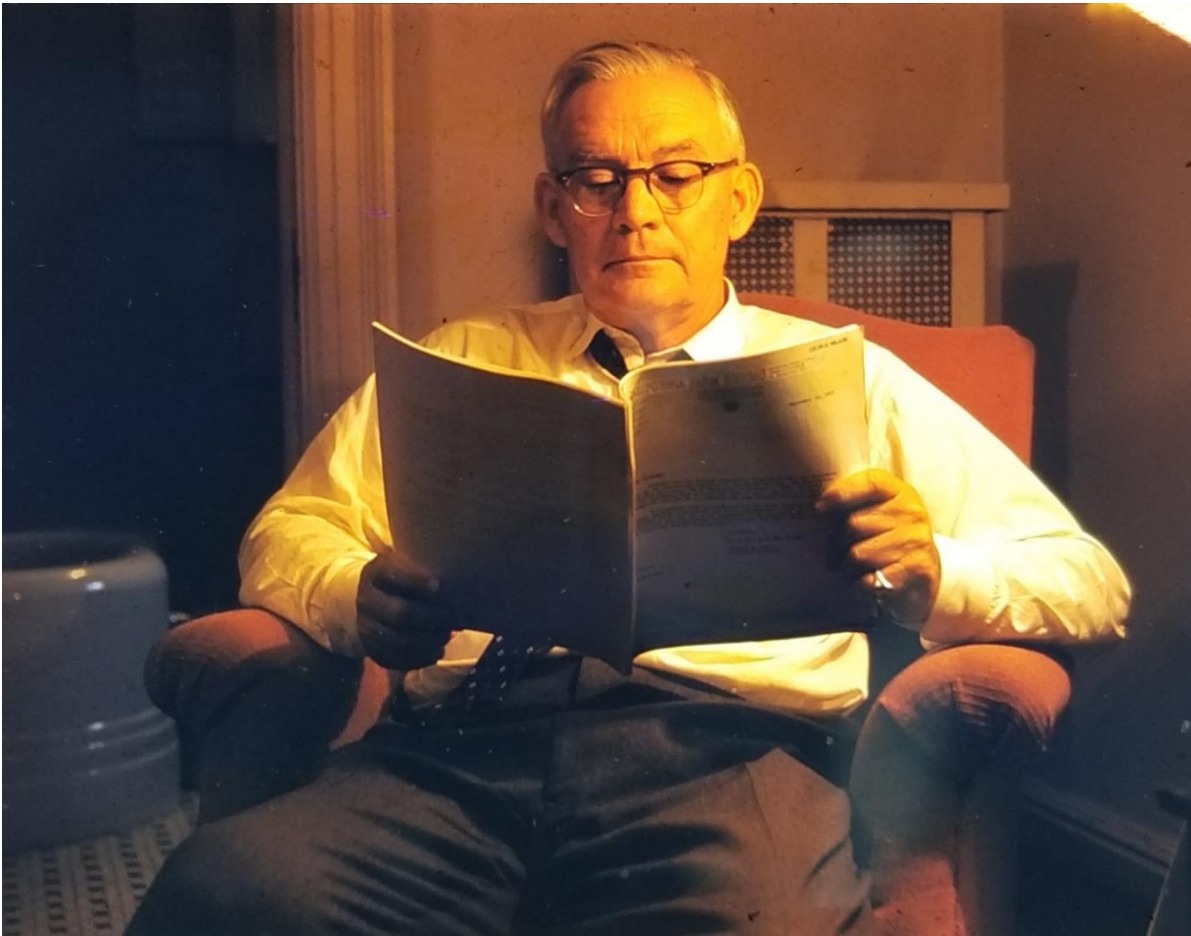


Figure 10: George Wilson studying the California Farm Bureau Federation news, circa 1950. Photo provided by Richard Wilson.

In 1952, after attending the AFBF Soil and Water Committee as Chairman, followed by the board meeting, George stayed to attend the Republican Convention where General Douglas McArthur, General Eisenhower and Nixon spoke. General Eisenhower had later invited farmers and livestock men to meet with him for a day and George was elected spokesman and Chairman for the farm group. George sat at the head of the table with Eisenhower on one side and his Chief of Staff, Sherman Adams on the other to give an update on the state of agriculture, farm life, ranching, conditions and constraints of the farming production in the U.S.

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Figure 11: American Farm Bureau Federation board in Oval Office with President Eisenhower, 1952. Photo published in *Farmer to Farmer* book by George H. Wilson, 1987.

Soon General Eisenhower became President and asked to meet with George and Allan Kline with the American Farm Bureau board, for a relaxed meeting in the oval office of questions back and forth followed by meetings with the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of State and the Secretary of Agriculture. George returned to his hotel, thinking he had a very productive day for a country boy when he saw a note for him from Vice President Nixon saying he heard George was in town and to come see him. The next morning, George met with Vice President Nixon on quite a discussion of water and cotton. He urged George to drop in often to keep him informed on water, as it was a problem the President was personally interested in.

In President Eisenhower's message to Congress, he proposed that several trade missions be sent over the world to explore the immediate possibilities of expanding international trade in food and fiber so the Agricultural Trade Missions were set up to go to Southern and Northern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. George was appointed to the Asia Mission where he and other appointees would study marketing and trade practices, removal of roadblocks to U.S. export, currency problems, ways of increasing consumer preferences and improving quality of packaging and handling of U.S. agricultural products. President Eisenhower wanted to work towards increasing international trade under conditions that would favorably affect the prosperity of the buyer and seller and develop plans for mutually beneficial trade.

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Figure 12: U.S. Congressmen Clifford Hope, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson and members of the Cotton Advisory Group with George Wilson, President, California Farm Bureau Federation, 1953. Photo provided by Kansas Historical Society.

In 1956 George traveled to India to study the farm industry because of the importance with foreign agricultural sales and the interest in the welfare of their farm people. While in India, George visited numerous villages, farms, and schools and was given many demonstrations of agricultural operations, irrigation systems, livestock, poultry and dairy processes. George met with Prime Ministers, Directors and Ministers of Agriculture, the Vice President of the Farm Union, church leaders, farming families, school faculty and students, and many others. George realized their problems were old problems for American farmers and he could provide answers to their questions, they knew where they stood but not why and providing the why seemed very helpful to the farmers.

Then onto South America where he visited many universities, having discussions on foreign trade and was given tours of the farms producing each essential commodity. In each country visited, George and the group would have dinner at the U.S. Embassy and receive a briefing from the Agricultural attaché. They would visit with the President or Chief Executive officer and in most cases, would discuss with the President about setting up an Inter-American Farm Organization, the reactions were favorable because they believed a farm organization was their best defense against Communism. George returned to share the information learned with presentations given to the Farm Bureaus, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Schools and Universities, Churches, Chamber of Commerce, World Affairs Councils, and the League of Women Voters.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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In 1959, George met with the president of the Mexican farm organization, who encouraged George to participate in a project to develop farmland in the Vizcaino Desert, in the center of Baja, about 550 miles south of the U.S. border. George had a sincere appreciation for the work of Gus Olson to help George start his life as a farmer in Clarksburg. George had always hoped that he too, could do something to help develop an area somewhere to help young farmers who didn't have much to get started. George determined he could develop the water distribution and study the methods of irrigation and the crops that could be grown, the time of year that was best to grow in, and stay there to help the young farmers make sure their operation was successful. With the approval from the Mexican Foreign Secretary, George set out on the general plan to purchase 125,000 acres of desert land from the government then sell the active farmland to young Mexican farmers at a reasonable price. George worked on preparing and leveling the ground to plant; drilling for water; building a small house to live in; preparing an airstrip, gathering supplies, seeds, equipment in order to plant melons, cantaloupes, cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, corn, alfalfa, wheat, cotton; and raising pigs and bees. George and his wife traveled back and forth between farming near Baja, farming in Clarksburg, and meetings all over the world.

At 75 years old, George was elected president of the Trans World Agricultural Development and worked with a research and development group, retained by the Shah of Iran, to provide consulting to develop the Khuzestan desert area of Iran, which included building a dam, preparing a distribution system and roads in order to produce sugar from cane.

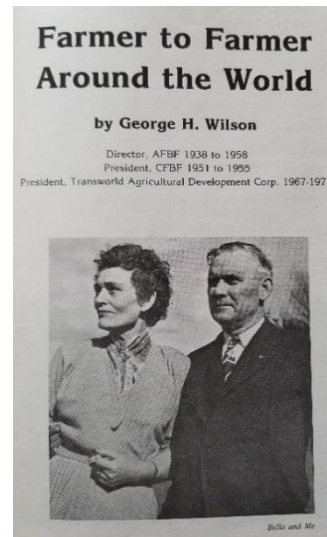
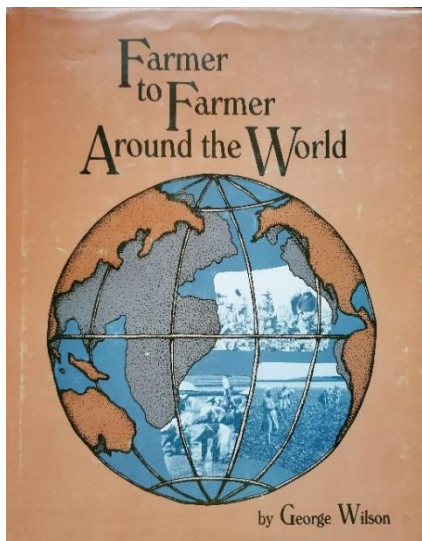


Figure 13: *Farmer to Farmer Around the World* book cover and insert.

George worked with Agricultural Extension and Farm Bureaus for 42 years and held offices from Farm Center Secretary to President of the California Farm Bureau. He was a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation and its Executive Committee for 39 years, holding the position of Director for 20 years. He was a member of the House of Delegates, a goodwill ambassador in farming, and a champion for farmers around the world. These events and many more were compiled and published in his book, Farmer to Farmer around the World, which he wrote over the course of two decades. George simply wanted to be a farmer but through his passion, he dedicated his life to helping all farmers. His teachings encouraged and influence global agricultural education and his passion for understanding the needs of the common farmer helped to formulate agricultural policy and development within California, the U.S. and around the world. (Wilson 1987)

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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George H. Wilson Letters:

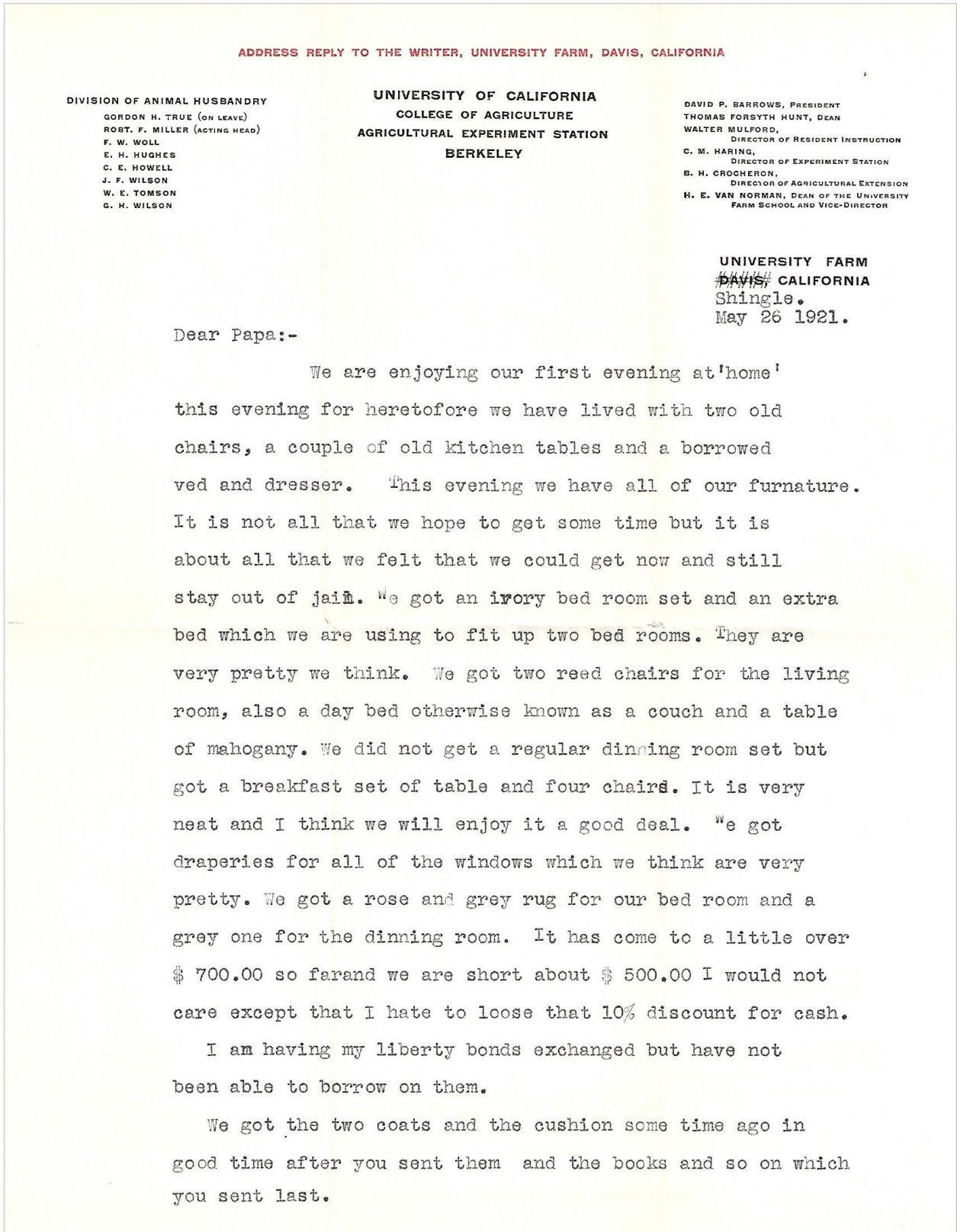


Figure 14: Letter from George H. Wilson to his Father, page 1, 1921. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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ADDRESS REPLY TO THE WRITER, UNIVERSITY FARM, DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

DIVISION OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

GORDON H. TRUE (ON LEAVE)
ROBT. F. MILLER (ACTING HEAD)
F. W. WOLL
E. H. HUGHES
C. E. HOWELL
J. F. WILSON
W. E. TOMSON
G. H. WILSON

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
BERKELEY

DAVID P. BARROWS, PRESIDENT
THOMAS FORSYTH HUNT, DEAN
WALTER MULFORD,
DIRECTOR OF RESIDENT INSTRUCTION
C. M. HARING,
DIRECTOR OF EXPERIMENT STATION
B. H. CROCHERON,
DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
H. E. VAN NORMAN, DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY
FARM SCHOOL AND VICE-DIRECTOR

UNIVERSITY FARM
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

You were surely fortunate to go thru another accident without injury. It is lucky though that you had it insured so it will cost you nothing for repair. We will be glad to see any of you people at any time. I expect that we will set out for the Mts. with the cattle on June 6. but will be back on the eighth so that need not interfere with your plans at all. In fact you might enjoy taking a trip up there yourselves.

The clock came thru O.K. and is running fine. It looks well too. The rug also came and fits into our house fine.

I hope that Aunt Sarah is feeling better by now.

We are expecting a visit from Pres. Barrows, Dean Mulford, Dr. Haring and possibly one or two others on next Tues. We have a pretty busy time mapped out until we get all of the cattle into the Mts.

Bella says that she is going to add a letter also. She has had quite a time catching up with her 'thank you' notes. She is quite tickled with the place and thoroughly enjoys having company. We have been on the go a good deal of the time so things have not dragged at all so far.

With Love to all

Bella + Geo.

Figure 15: Letter from George H. Wilson to his Father, page 2, 1921. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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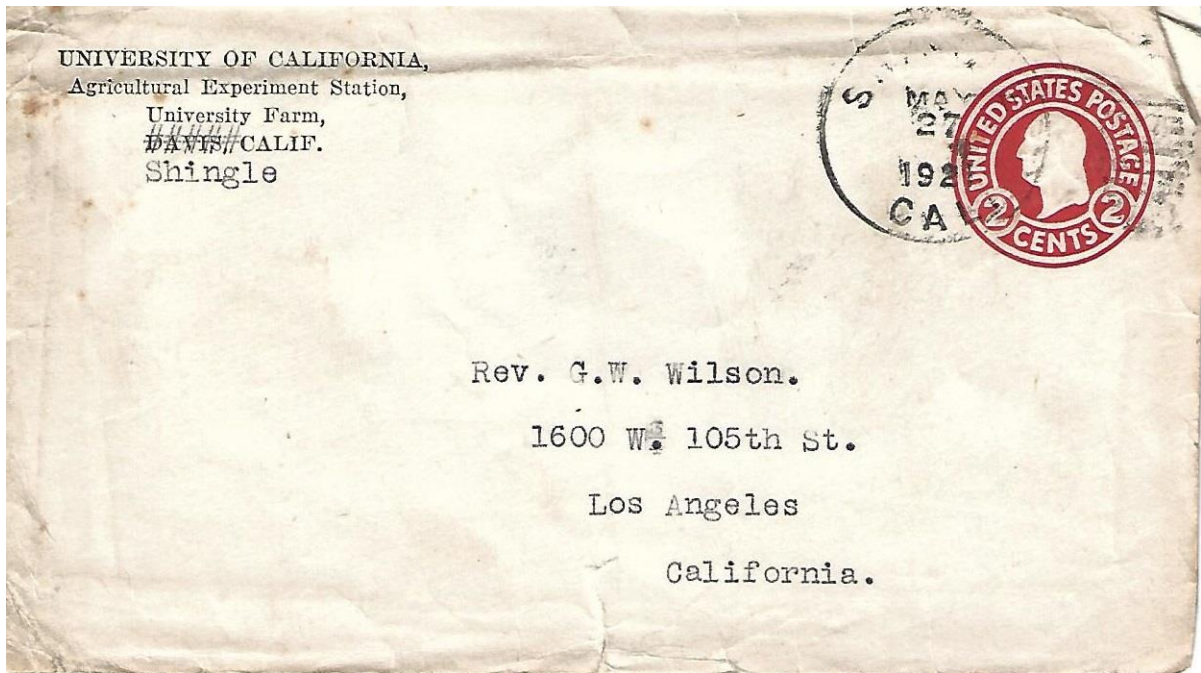
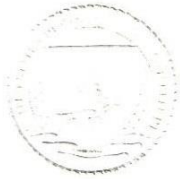


Figure 16: Envelope from George H. Wilson letter to his Father, 1921. Envelope provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

Resource Historic Significance Documentation



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON

May 6, 1936.

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The fresh asparagus you sent from California was much appreciated. It was delicious and I wish to express the thanks of the Wallace family for this remembrance.

Sincerely yours,

H A Wallace

Secretary.

Mr. George Wilson,
Clarksburg, California.

Figure 17: Letter from Henry A. Wallace, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, 1936. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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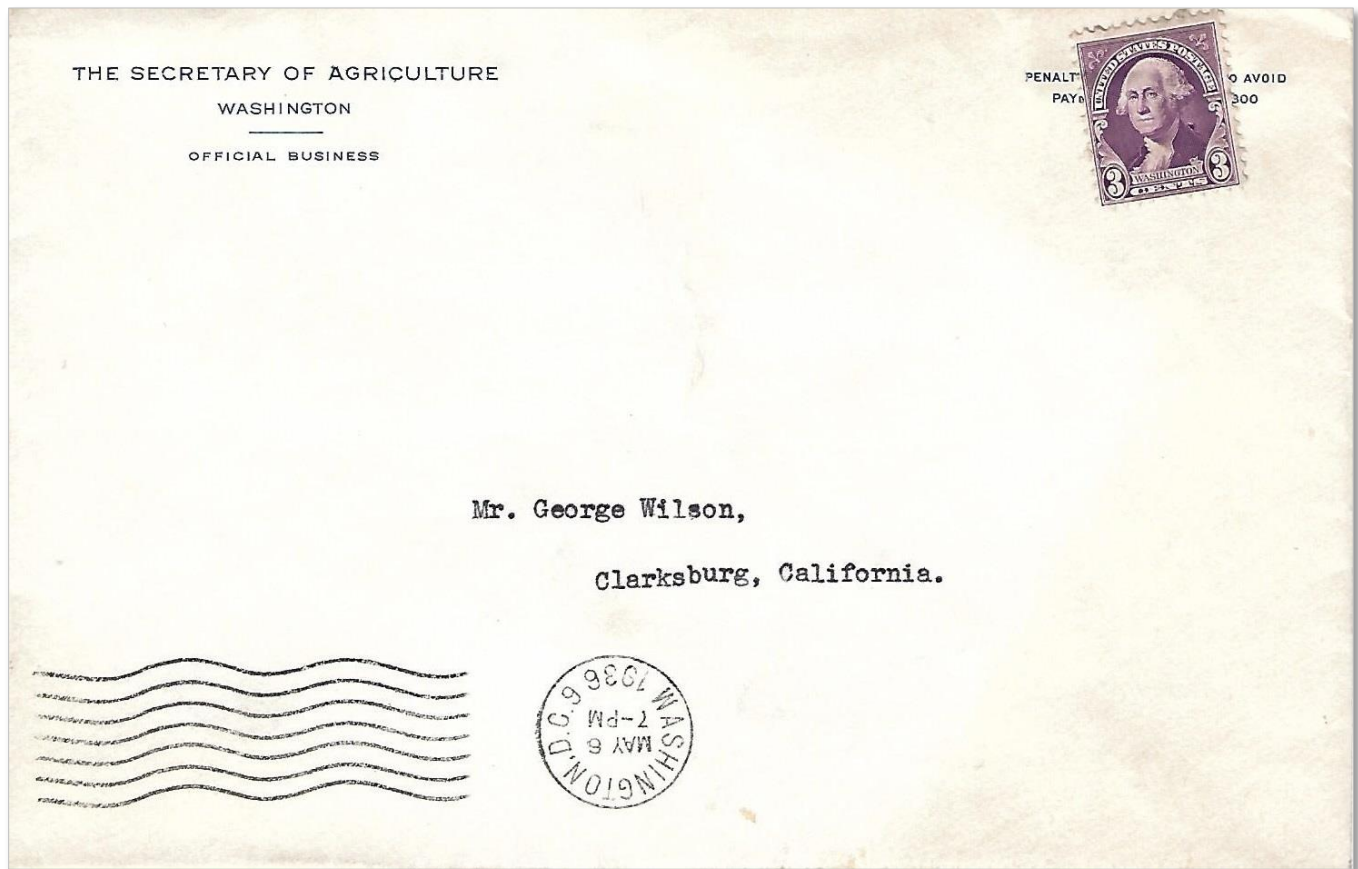


Figure 18: Envelope from Henry A. Wallace letter, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, 1936. Envelope provided by Richard Wilson.



Figure 19: Admittance card to attend the 82nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1952. Card provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

November 4, 1955

Mr. George H. Wilson
President
California Farm Bureau Federation
2223 Fulton Street
Berkeley 4, California

Dear George:

I am most appreciative of the time and trouble you took not only to talk with Bob King, but also to write me as you did concerning the farm problem.

Your thoughts and the material you sent have been very helpful. I am sure you know that a number of good people are bending their best efforts to find some answers. As we both know, it is not going to be easy. I am also appreciative of your other communications about the San Luis Reservoir.

A check is being made with The Justice Department and I hope that Mr. Rankin can be encouraged to come out and talk with you about this very basic question of Federal versus State water rights.

It was good to hear from you, George, and again I greatly appreciate your interest and words of encouragement.

Best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Richard Nixon', written over a printed name.

Richard Nixon

Figure 20: Letter from Richard Nixon, U.S. Vice President, 1955. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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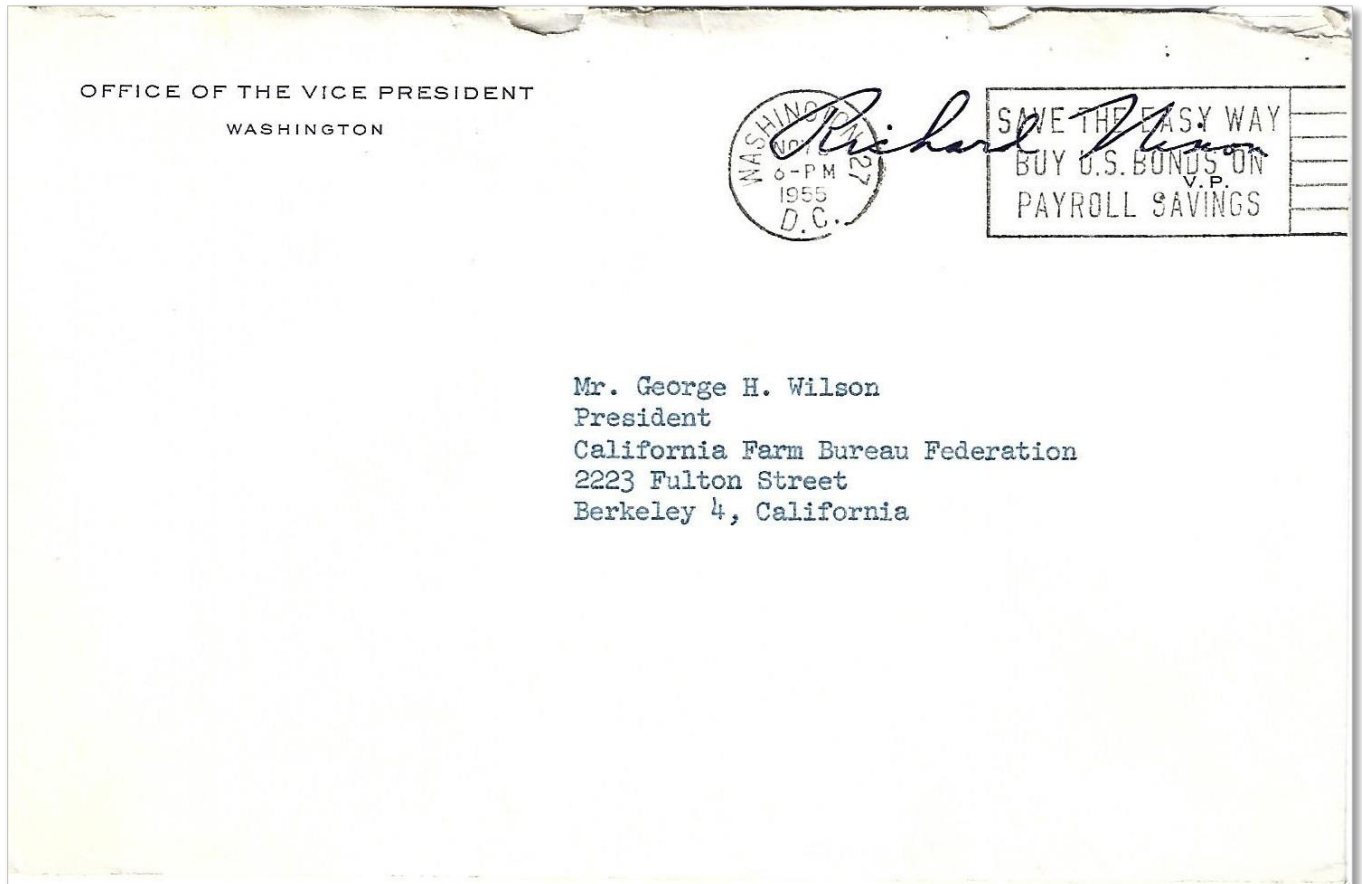


Figure 21: Envelope from Richard Nixon letter, U.S. Vice President, 1955. Envelope provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON

February 7, 1958

Dear George:

I hope it can be arranged for me to see you
when I am in Sacramento. It would be a
pleasure to visit with you.

Sincere best wishes.

As ever,

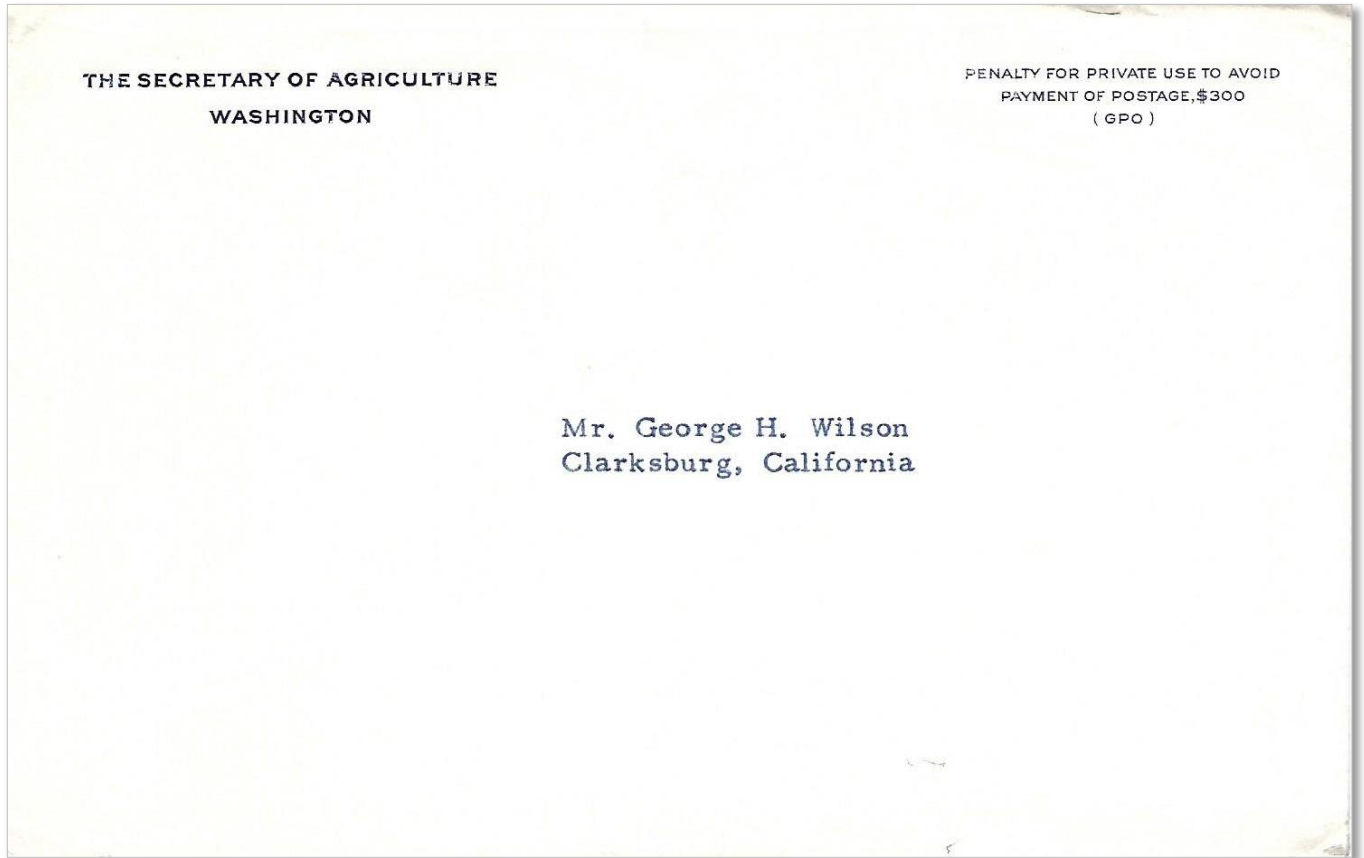
A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Ezra T. Benson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "E".

Mr. George H. Wilson
Clarksburg, California

Figure 22: Letter from Ezra T. Benson, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, 1958. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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see

Figure 23: Envelope from Ezra T. Benson letter, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, 1958. Envelope provided by Richard Wilson.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

December 22, 1958

Dear Mr. Wilson:

This is just a note to tell you how sorry I am to have missed seeing you when you came by my office recently.

Charlie McWhorter told me of your idea for improving communication by simplifying the spelling and pronunciation of the English language. Certainly, the matter of communication is one of the most important factors in the struggle of ideas which is now taking place and I very much appreciate your offering this suggestion.

I hope that we shall have the opportunity to get together on some future occasion either here or in California.

With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Nixon".

Richard Nixon

Mr. George H. Wilson
Clarksburg
California

Figure 24: Letter from Richard Nixon, U.S. Vice President, 1958. Letter provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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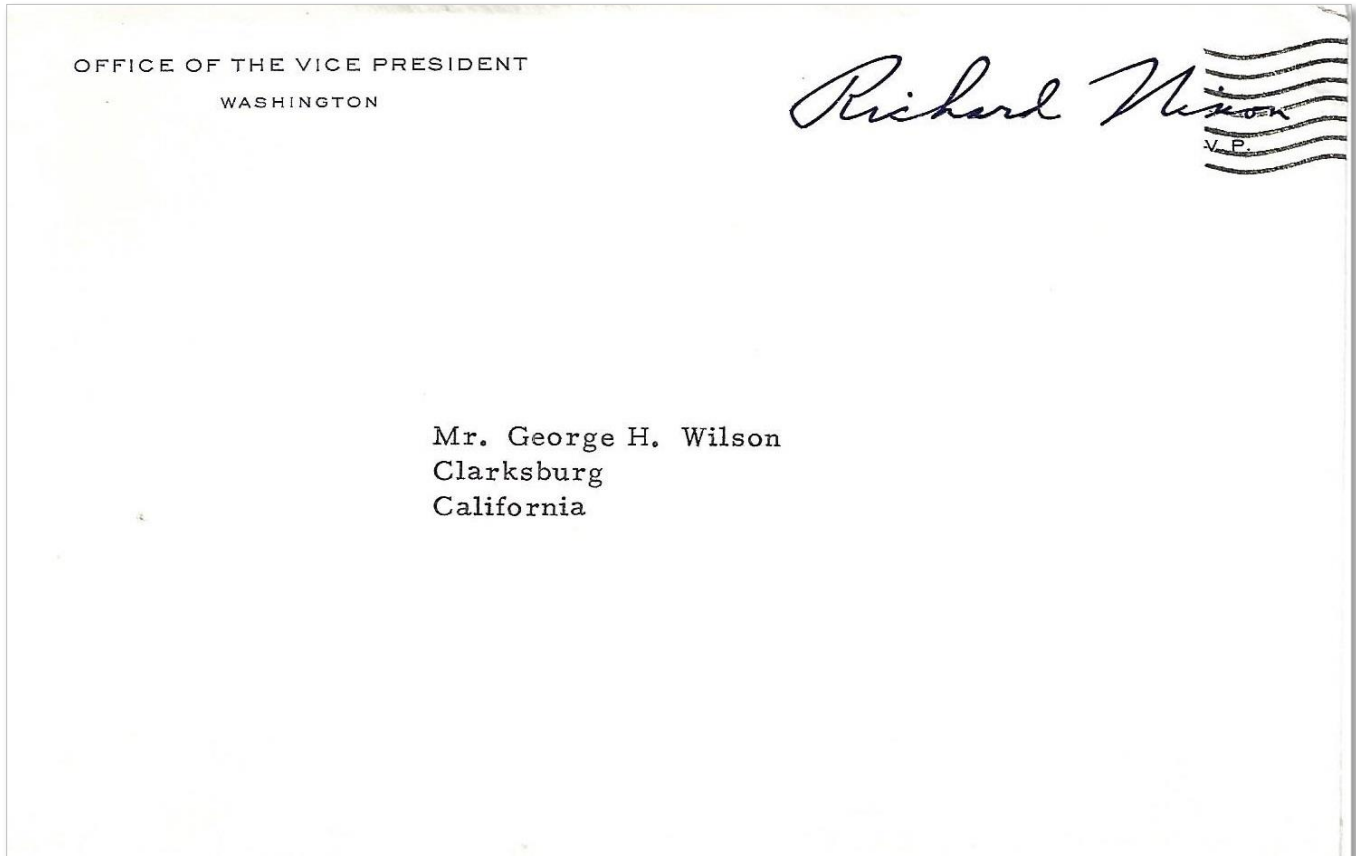


Figure 25: Envelope from Richard Nixon letter, U.S. Vice President, 1958. Envelope provided by Richard Wilson.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

Resource Historic Significance Documentation

Historic Context of the Utter Ranch:

Following its formation in 1920 by the Holland Land Company, Clarksburg's prime agricultural crop was sugar beets. The growth of the industry in the area prompted the construction of the sugar refinery in 1933 followed by six decades of active sugar production. (Visit CA Delta 2017)

George H. Wilson was one of the first sugar beet farmers to purchase land from the Holland Land Company in the Clarksburg area. He encouraged others to do the same, including his college friend, Bob Yelland. Thus, George and the Utter Ranch were instrumental in founding the sugar beet industry that spawned the economic development, which allowed the town of Clarksburg to flourish beginning in the 1920s.

The property that includes the Utter Ranch and Barn is part of the 20,000 acres purchased by Holland Land Company in Yolo County. The Land Company constructed levees, tree lined roads and water distribution systems to make the land habitable and usable as productive farmland. The property continues in its rich family-owned agriculture tradition today. The Barn historically served as the hub of the ranch, housing equipment and product ready for distribution. Today, the original 292-acre parcel is planted in a variety of grapes, and the Barn continues to serve as the vineyard focal point.

The Barn continues to convey the hope and prosperity of California farming and agriculture started there nearly a century ago, as it did during the entirety of the period of significance. Very little has changed. It remains surrounded by the vineyard George's great grandchildren farm with Babel Slough flowing just to the east of the parcel. A single-family dwelling was constructed to the north of the Barn in 1970, but the home does not detract from the rural setting.

Barn Design:



Figure 26: West and South façades of the Barn at Utter Ranch, looking northeast. Photo by Lyn Hooper, 2020.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

Resource Historic Significance Documentation

The Barn is approximately 6,500 square feet and measures roughly 48 feet by 156 feet 8 inches. The main portion of the structure is topped with a 6:12 monitor roof reaching a height at its ridge of nearly 19'-10" above grade, and the east side extends approximately 16 feet under a 2:12 shed roof. The monitor roof includes skylight panels at alternating bays with solid galvanized fluted metal roofing panels and is open at the gable ends and eaves to allow for both light and ventilation respectively.

The Barn is oriented with its long sides facing east and west along Babel Slough. The north and south façades each have an oversized double outward swinging door in the main portion of the barn and a sliding barn style door under the shed roof. The west façade has an oversized barn-style sliding door finished with metal to match the siding. The north façade serves as the main entrance and thus is the primary façade. The long east façade facing Babel Slough and the south façade are secondary, while the west façade, although it faces the farm acreage, is considered the rear of the structure.

The structure is framed with timbers and dimensional lumber and sided with painted galvanized corrugated (fluted in shape) sheet steel. The siding panels extend approximately eight feet above grade on the west façade and originally terminated in open-air bays. Today only six bays remain open-air, the remaining openings have all been infilled with fluted panels to match adjacent siding. The east façade is formed by a cast in place raised footing topped with more open-air bays. All the bays along the east façade have been infilled with awning window sashes.

Integrity of the Barn:



Figure 27: Interior view of the main portion of the barn. Looking southwest. Photo by Lyn Hooper, 2020.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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The Barn retains a great deal of integrity. It remains in its original location and the rural farm setting that surrounds the structure looks much like it would have in 1937 when George purchased the property. Although the current crops surrounding the barn are planted in grapes rather than sugar beets, the feeling and association of the property remains what it would have been a century ago when George owned and managed the ranch. The exterior of the structure has had some alterations with the concealing of most of the open-air bays, however, the opening framing remains, and the additional materials are clearly evident; thus, the building retains an adequate amount of integrity of design. It is unclear if the galvanized steel siding is original or a replacement in-kind; however, according to George's son, Richard Wilson, the barn has always had the current type of siding. Additionally, the framing materials are all original. The workmanship is evident in the field constructed trusses which remain with only minor repairs to accommodate cracked or broken members. Thus, the structure also retains a high degree of integrity of materials and workmanship.



Figure 28: Interior view of the monitor roof and skylights of the Barn, showing generally original framing elements and workmanship. Photo by Lyn Hooper, 2020.

Many alterations have been made within the interior of the barn to allow it to continue to serve the ranch and its current agriculture related needs. None of the alterations have diminished the historic significance of the structure and all have taken care to be constructed in such a manner that their removal would leave the structure unimpaired. George's great grandchildren are now using the barn to privately showcase their wines made from the vines his son David Wilson planted decades ago.

The Barn at Utter Ranch

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Historic Analysis:

The Utter Ranch was where George H. Wilson spent much of his productive life farming and expanding on his experience in the trade, which he then shared freely with the community of Clarksburg as well as the global community. It retains a high degree of integrity to the period of significance and should be considered as a local historic resource for its representation of the early twentieth century agrarian life, that fostered the development of the sugar beet industry in Clarksburg and Yolo County, and for its association with George H. Wilson who was instrumental in shaping the landscape of the community.

Preparer's Qualifications:

Lyn Hooper, NCARB, CASp, ADAC is licensed to practice architecture in California and Montana. She has more than 25 years of professional experience in the field of architecture, including more than 17 years working on historic properties for both public and private owners. Ms. Hooper has a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oregon and a Master of Arts in Historic Preservation from Savannah College of Art and Design. Additionally, she meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for Historic Architecture, Historic Preservation, and Architectural History as defined by 36 CFR Part 61.

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