

MARTHA LYNN TANK HOUSE LANDMARK EVALUATION REPORT

12889 VISCAINO PLACE
LOS ALTOS HILLS, CALIFORNIA
[24391]

PREPARED FOR
FREMONT HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

October 30, 2025

FINAL



INTRODUCTION

This Landmark Evaluation Report has been prepared at the request of the Fremont Hills Country Club for the structure known as the Martha Lynn Tank House located within the bounds of the Fremont Hills Country Club at 12889 Viscaïno Place (APN 175-55-049) in the Fremont Hills neighborhood of Los Altos Hills. Originally situated within a homestead owned by Martha Lynn following the Rancho era (circa 1776- circa 1854), the tank house was constructed during her ownership in 1906 following the San Francisco earthquake. San Francisco-based pharmacist Dr. Thomas Shumate acquired the property shortly thereafter in circa 1910 and built a summer estate consisting of a residence and stables. From the time of the tank house's construction through the mid-1950s, the property containing the tank house retained its agricultural use, even as the Shumates amassed the surrounding 400 acres to serve as a walnut orchard and a horse ranch. The parcel was subsequently acquired in 1956 by the Fremont Hills Development Company for the purpose of establishing the Fremont Hills subdivision, inclusive of a 15-acre country club site, the Fremont Hills Country Club (**Figure 1**). The Fremont Hills Country Club has continuously used several of the Lynn and Shumate estate-era buildings for their recreational operations, including Shumate's stables for the club's equestrian program (**Figure 2**). The country club has also retained and converted the Martha Lynn Tank House into restrooms associated with the equestrian facilities.

The Martha Lynn Tank House (also referred to as "Martha Lynn Water Tower") is listed in the Town of Los Altos Hills *Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures*, dated June 6, 2018, and is therefore considered a historic resource by the Town of Los Altos Hills.¹ The structure, however, has not been formally designated as a Town of Los Altos Hills Landmark. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the structure under the landmark criteria for Los Altos Hills.

¹ The Martha Lynn Tank House has continued to be listed by the town as a historical resource, per the more recent *Town of Los Altos Hills Historical Resources List*, dated 2024 and available online at: <https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6785/Town-of-LAH-Historical-Resources-2024-List>.

Methodology

This report follows a standard outline for evaluating local historic resources and provides a summary of the current local historic status, a building description, and historic context for the Martha Lynn Tank House located within the bounds of the Fremont Hills Country Club. Page & Turnbull prepared this report using research collected at local repositories, including the Santa Clara County Office of the Assessor-Recorder, the Town of Los Altos Hills Planning and Community Development Department, and the Los Altos Library, as well as online sources including Ancestry.com, the California Digital Newspaper Collection, and Newspapers.com. Key primary sources consulted and cited in this report include Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation and historical newspapers.

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a site visit to 12889 Viscaino Place on August 5, 2025 to photograph the structure and its existing conditions. All photographs within this report were taken at that time, unless otherwise noted.

Summary of Findings

In Page & Turnbull's professional opinion, the Martha Lynn Tank House located on the Fremont Hills Country Club property at 12889 Viscaino Place is a rare surviving example of an early twentieth-century tapered-tower overhang type, a once-common but now scarce form of domestic water infrastructure in Santa Clara County. Constructed in 1906 on the Martha Lynn homestead and later incorporated into the Shumate Ranch, the structure is directly associated with the region's early twentieth-century agricultural and equestrian heritage and the development patterns that shaped Los Altos Hills. The tank house continues to convey its historical significance despite the passage of time and the deterioration of some original materials. Its preserved form, materials, and craftsmanship embody the functional ingenuity of vernacular builders, while its enduring presence within an equestrian setting reinforces its contextual link to the rural character of the Town. As such, the tank house appears to meet the following Town of Los Altos Hills' criteria for Landmark designation:

- Criterion A: Its character, interest, or value as part of the development of Los Altos Hills, and/or exemplification of the cultural, educational, economic, agricultural, social or historical heritage of Los Altos Hills;
- Criterion C: Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics or an architectural type of specimen; and
- Criterion D: Its unique location or singular physical characteristics, whether manmade or natural, representing an established or familiar visual feature of a neighborhood,

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Martha Lynn Tank House is a three-story, wood-frame, tapered-tower overhang tank house. It features a hipped roof clad in wood shingles with exposed rafter tails; its tapered-tower base is also clad in wood shingles. The overhanging belvedere contains a round wood-panel water tank and features simple wood railing and decorative lattice sections below the roof eave.² A surface-mounted wood ladder on the southwest elevation provides access to the elevated belvedere via a hatch in the floor. The interior at the ground floor is currently divided into two rooms, which serve as a men's and women's restroom.

Site

The Martha Lynn Tank House is situated within the Fremont Hills Country Club property located at 12889 Viscaino Place in Los Altos Hills. The 17-acre property lies east of Interstate 280 between Purissima Road and the Fremont Hills subdivision and features hilly terrain. It contains a Midcentury Modern clubhouse constructed in 1961; an Olympic-sized swimming pool and associated swim facilities; 13 tennis and pickleball courts; the Windy Hill Equestrian Center facilities with stables of varying ages, two riding arenas, and associated outbuildings and paddocks; and a surface parking lot (**Figure 3**). The tank house is located atop a hill within the equestrian area of the property, east of the stables and north of the riding arenas.

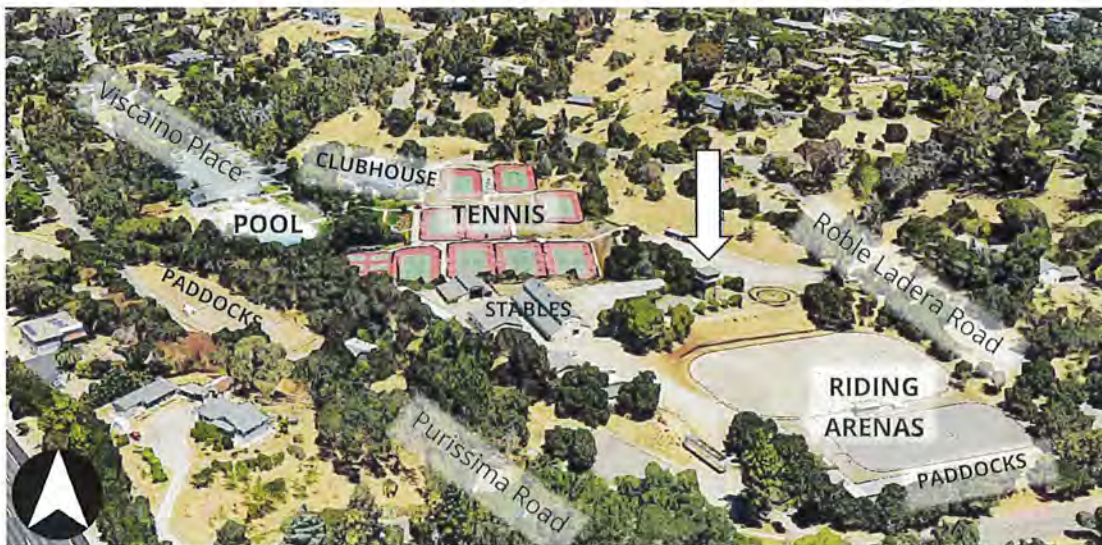


Figure 3. Bird's eye view of the Fremont Hills Country Club property at 12889 Viscaino Place, looking north. The tank house is identified with a white arrow. Source: Google Earth. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

² A belvedere, when associated with a water tank (especially a water tower), refers to an architectural feature, typically at the top, designed to accommodate a person and provide a scenic viewpoint of the surrounding area.



Figure 6. Southwest facade, looking northeast.



Figure 7. Door detail on southwest facade, looking north.



Figure 9. Oblique view of southeast (left) and northeast (right) facades, looking west.



Figure 10. Northwest facade, looking southeast.



Figure 11. Concrete foundation detail.



Figure 12. Window on northwest facade.

Surrounding Area

The area surrounding the Martha Lynn Tank House consists of the Fremont Hills Country Club's equestrian area (known as Windy Hill Equestrian), which includes several one-story stables and outbuildings, two riding arenas, a round pen, wood-fenced paddocks, and a surface parking lot accessed via Roble Ladera Road (**Figure 17 through Figure 19**). Based on historic aerial photographs, the two extant stables with monitor roofs appear to have been constructed by 1930, while the northern riding arena appears by 1958 and the southern arena by 1963. Between these features are natural areas, usually planted with grass and a scattering of mature trees. This southern portion of the country club parcel is bounded by Roble Ladera Road on the east and Purissima Road on the south and west. Large residential lots comprise the majority of properties along these boundary roads.



Figure 17. Windy Hill Equestrian area, looking southwest towards stables.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Los Altos Hills History

OHLONE, SPANISH, AND MEXICAN/RANCHO ERA PERIODS (1776-1854)

Originally inhabited by Ohlone peoples before European contact in approximately 1775, the area's earliest human presence was documented through archaeological excavations conducted in 1955, 1964, and 1970, which revealed burial sites and cultural artifacts throughout what would become Los Altos Hills.³ During the Spanish and Mexican periods, the land fell within two major Mexican land grants. In 1840, Governor Juan B. Alvarado granted Rancho La Purísima Concepción, encompassing 4,436 acres, to Jose Gorgonio and his son Jose Ramon, both Indigenous laborers from Mission Santa Clara. Juana Briones de Miranda, a prominent landowner and early settler of San Francisco, purchased the grant in 1844 for \$300.⁴ The site of her adobe is a California Historical Landmark (No. 524).⁵ Adjacent to the Briones land was Rancho San Antonio, a similarly sized tract granted to Juan Prado Mesa. Adobe Creek, still a recognizable feature today, served as the boundary between the two ranchos. These grants and their associated families formed the basis for the region's early Euro-American land tenure and development patterns.

AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (1855-1910)

The American period brought intensified agricultural and horticultural development. In 1855, Briones sold approximately 3,000 acres of her rancho to Martin Murphy, founder of Sunnyvale (**Figure 20**). Murphy later gifted the majority of the tract to his daughter Elizabeth Yuba and her husband William Taaffe, who established a country estate on land that now comprises the Foothill College campus.⁶ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the area's agricultural productivity shifted from viticulture (mainly Zinfandel grapes) to orchard crops, including apricots, prunes, and plums, after a grape blight devastated local wine production. This change aligned Los Altos Hills with the broader identity of the Santa Clara Valley as the "Valley of Heart's Delight," known nationally for its abundant fruit harvests.⁷ It was during this period that Martha Lynn moved her family to a homestead in the area (by 1906), where they endured the 1906 earthquake and built the existing tank house with the assistance of their neighbor, Harold L. Brubaker.

³ Town of Los Altos Hills, "Town History." Accessed online, <https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/218/Town-History>.

⁴ Town of Los Altos Hills, "Town History."

⁵ California Office of Historic Preservation, Landmarks by County: Santa Clara, accessed online, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21522.

⁶ Town of Los Altos Hills, "Town History."

⁷ Town of Los Altos Hills, "Town History."



Figure 21. Shumate House, circa 1915. Source: *Los Altos Hills: A Colorful Story*.



Figure 22. Willard Griffin House, circa 1901. Source: Los Altos Hills Historical Society.

POST-WORLD WAR II ERA (1946-1956)

By the postwar period, however, the pressures of suburban development began to threaten the established rural character of the Los Altos Hills. By 1950, roughly 500 families lived in the area. Developers began proposing residential subdivisions with densities of four to six homes per acre, which alarmed local residents who favored preservation of the one-house-per-acre character of the community.⁹ In response, neighborhood associations formed in various parts of the area, including along Page Mill Road, Moody Road, and Robleda Avenue. These associations later consolidated their efforts through the formation of a formal Incorporation Committee in 1954. Led by William Simrell Jr., the committee developed a set of guiding documents known as the "Green Sheets," which articulated the community's zoning preferences, desired municipal boundaries, fiscal estimates, and land-use goals.¹⁰

As nearby towns like Atherton, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, and Los Altos began banning horses as their once-widespread equestrian estates began to undergo subdivision, the horsemen of Los Altos Hills rode on horseback to gather signatures for incorporation of a town that would protect the rural character and equestrian history of their rolling hills.¹¹ After considerable debate and public outreach, residents voted on incorporation on January 10, 1956, the same year Shumate Ranch was sold to the Fremont Hills Development Company. With a turnout of 65 percent, the measure passed narrowly and the Town of Los Altos Hills was officially incorporated on January 27, 1956, as the fourteenth municipality in Santa Clara County.¹² Opponents of incorporation soon initiated efforts to

⁹ Los Altos Hills Historical Society, *Fifteenth Anniversary Booklet*, 1971, <https://lah-history.org/DigitalArchive/FifteenthAnniversaryBooklet>.

¹⁰ Los Altos Hills Historical Society, *Fifteenth Anniversary Booklet*.

¹¹ Los Altos Hills History Committee, "History of Horses & Pathways: Their Influence on Making Los Altos Hills A Connected Community," accessed online, <https://vimeo.com/105355543>.

¹² Los Altos Hills Historical Society, *Fifteenth Anniversary Booklet*.

supporting tower was known as a tank house. Tank houses were often located adjacent to the kitchen or service yard to reduce the run of pipes necessary to supply water to laundry areas or indoor washrooms. By enclosing the tank, farmers created a useful, multi-story space for purposes like storage or living quarters below the tank (**Figure 23**). Owning a water tank and tank house was a sign of prosperity, as it was a significant investment for a farm owner.¹⁶ The specific design of tank house varied, and six California domestic tank house subtypes ultimately developed.

The subtype expressed by the Martha Lynn Tank House is the "tapered tower with overhang" tank subtype. This design is characterized by a tapered vertical tower, the walls of which incline inward as they rise, and an overhanging tank enclosure that projects outward from the narrower top of the tower. This unique silhouette gave the structure improved stability and increased the capacity of the water tank without expanding the ground footprint.

This type of tank house was particularly well-suited for Santa Clara County's agricultural conditions, where its tapered design provided enhanced wind resistance and stability in the wide, open terrain of the Santa Clara Valley. The overhanging tank enclosure allowed for a larger water tank (increased weight) on a smaller base, a practical consideration for smaller homesteads or properties on hillsides. These tank houses often utilized local redwood lumber for most of its components, including the tank itself as well as clapboard siding, for its rot-resistant properties.

¹⁶ Ellen Bowen and Lee Anne Wentz. "Tankhouses & Water Towers." YouTube video, 1:15:00. Presented by the Historical Society of Santa Rosa, July 20, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thaUBrH_q4s.

California is notable for the sheer number of tank houses that were built, with one source estimating that over 90 percent of all existing enclosed water towers in the nation are in the state.¹⁷ Another source estimated that “hundreds—perhaps thousands—once dotted the Santa Clara Valley landscape.”¹⁸ These structures were a defining feature of Santa Clara Valley’s rural landscape from the 1850s to the 1930s. The decline of tank houses and water towers began with the introduction of modern deep-drilled wells and electric pumps, which eliminated the need for gravity-fed systems.

Today, there are few remaining known water tank house structures, especially those exhibiting the tapered tower with overhang subtype and fewer that have been formally designated at the local, state or national level. For instance, in a review of the California Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), 12 water tanks or tank houses in Santa Clara County appear to have been formally evaluated for state and/or federal listing.¹⁹ Designated water tanks in Santa Clara County include the water tank at 201 Alma Street in Palo Alto (**Figure 24**), a reinforced concrete cylinder constructed in 1910. Another cylindrical water tank (1925), albeit of redwood, is that of the National Register-listed Messina Orchard in San José (**Figure 25**). A limited number of water tanks appear to reflect the tapered tower with overhang subtype. The tank house (1910) of the National Register-listed property Miller/Melone Ranch (**Figure 26**) in Saratoga appears to be a straight-box subtype. In nearby Los Altos, the tank house at 10 Yerba Buena Avenue (1912, **Figure 27**) is a Los Altos Landmark, but it is unclear from public view whether it is a tapered or straight-box subtype.



Figure 24. Fred Eyerly Water Tank/Tower Well at 10 Alma Street, Palo Alto. Source: PaloAlto.gov



Figure 25. Water Tank at Messina Orchard. Source: Messina Orchard National Register Nomination.

¹⁷ Thomas Cooper, *Tankhouse: California's Redwood Water Towers from a Bygone Era*. Santa Rosa, CA: Barn Owl Press, 2011.

¹⁸ Historic American Building Survey (HABS). "John Krohn Tank House, 13000 Foothill Avenue, San Martin, Santa Clara County, CA." Accessed online, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ca0977/>.

¹⁹ <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1068/files/Santa%20Clara.csv>



Figure 28. Spagnoli Tank House in Los Altos, ca. 2020.
Source: Los Altos History Museum.

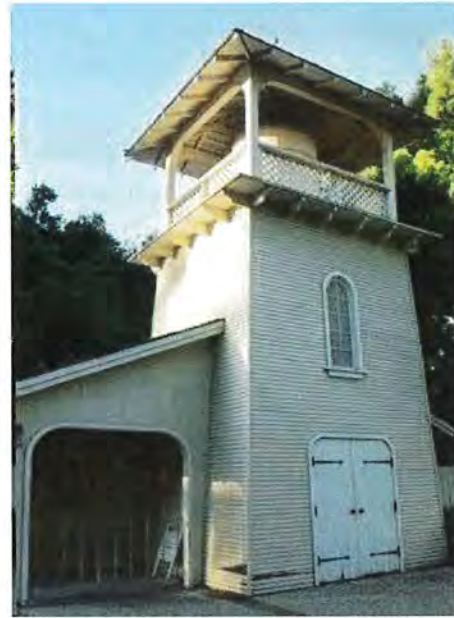


Figure 29. Califaro Tank House at History San José, date unknown. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/>



Figure 30. John Krohn Tank House in San Martin, 1980.
Source: Historic American Building Survey, CA-2111.

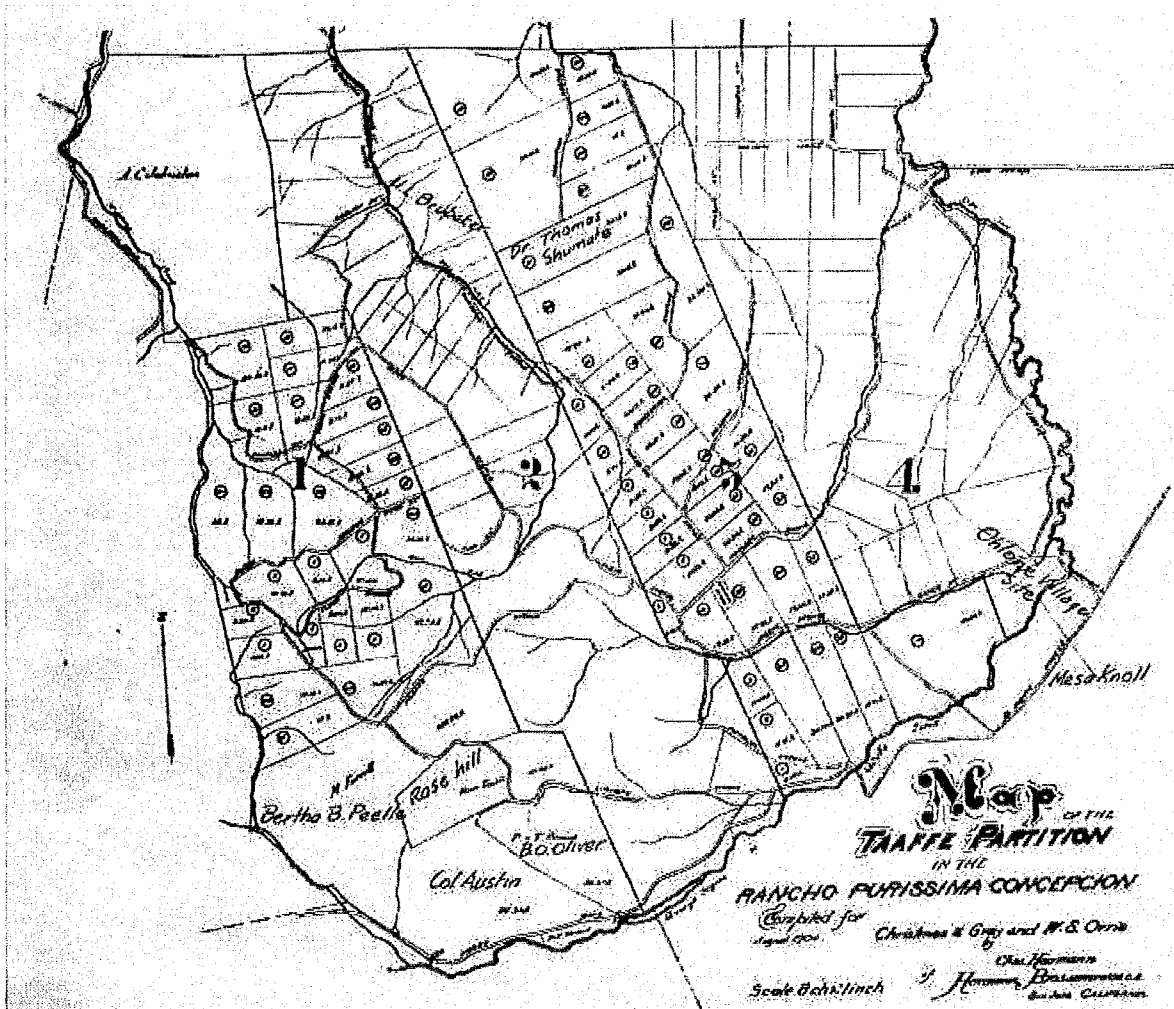


Figure 31. Map of the Taaffe Partition within Rancho Purisima Concepcion, August 1904. Note the Brubaker and Shumate parcels in the north-central section of the map. Source: *Los Altos Hills: A Colorful History*.



Figure 33. Aerial photograph with an arrow indicating the tank house, May 1953. The current Fremont Hills Country Club property boundary is outlined in red. Source: Google Earth.
Edited by Page & Turnbull.

In 1956, the Fremont Hills Development Company initiated the subdivision of its 400-acre purchase (previously the Shumate Ranch) with plans to include a 15-acre site for a country club with "swimming pool, three or more tennis courts and horseback riding facilities" with membership "open to residents of the 387-acre multimillion-dollar luxury subdivision being developed there as well as to other residents of the area."²⁵ The Los Altos Hills Planning Commission required riding trails as well as a network of pedestrian pathways through the Fremont Hills subdivision, which contributed to the town's extensive pathway network. A pool and two riding rings were under construction in 1958 with the equestrian programming utilizing "an existing barn on the site...for boarding horses of members" (**Figure 34 and Figure 35**).²⁶ More broadly, Shumate's extant "barns and stable area" were retained for the country club's use, which also included the extant tank house.²⁷

²⁵ *Peninsula Times Tribune*, "Country club planned for hills subdivision," December 19, 1956.

²⁶ *Peninsula Times Tribune*, "Country club planned for hills subdivision," December 19, 1956.

²⁷ *Peninsula Times Tribune*, "Rustic Setting for New Club," July 16, 1958.



Figure 35. New riding ring with tank house at back right, indicated with black arrow, 1958.
Source: *Peninsula Times Tribune*.

A 10,000 square-foot clubhouse was built by Tanklage Construction Company in 1961 with Palo Alto-based landscape architect Thomas Sherlock responsible for the site planning and landscape design elements (**Figure 36**).²⁸ Two tennis courts were added by 1963 with additional tennis courts and landscape elements expanded through 1968 (**Figure 37** and **Figure 38**). Despite this surrounding development, the Martha Lynn Tank House and two of Shumate's stables remain extant.

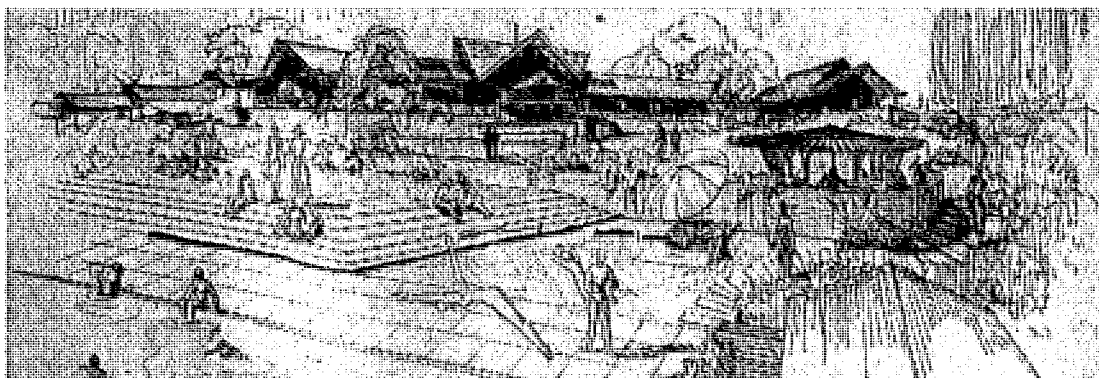


Figure 36. Rendering of clubhouse, 1960. Source: *Peninsula Times Tribune*.

²⁸ *Peninsula Times Tribune*, "Sherlock named to design Hills club landscaping," January 21, 1958.

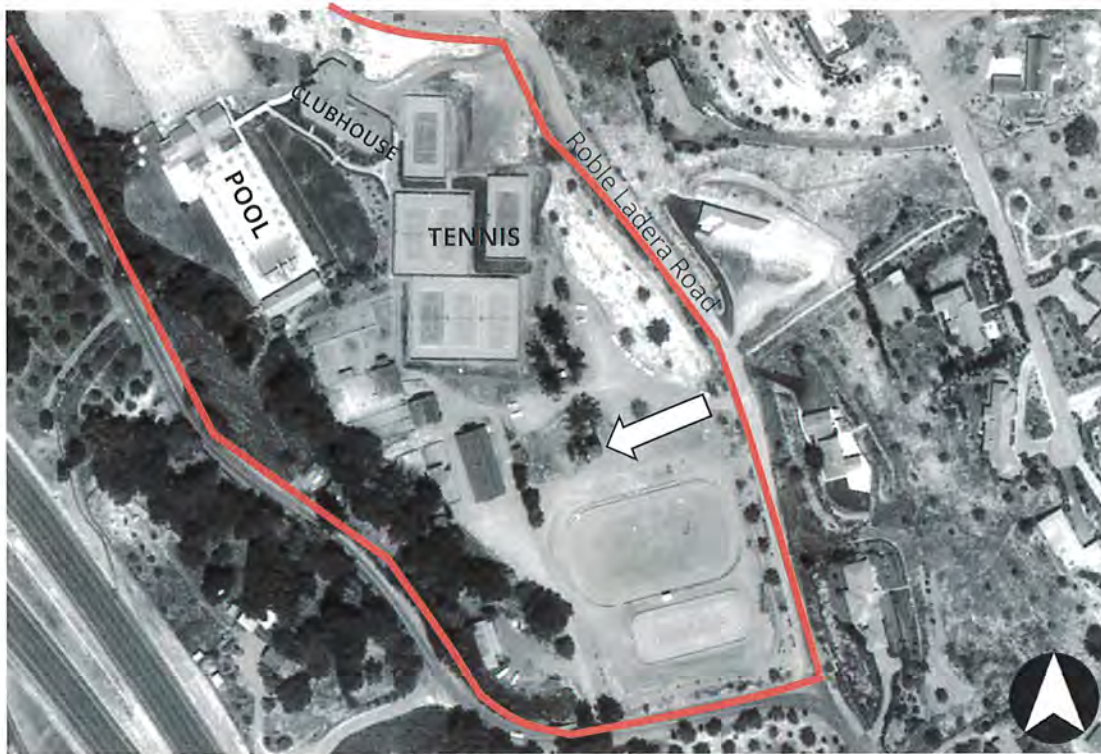


Figure 38. Aerial photograph with an arrow indicating the tank house, 1968. The visible portion of the current Fremont Hills Country Club property boundary is outlined in red. Source: Cartwright Aerial Surveys, Flight CAS-2310, Frame 1-37, May 1968. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection.
Edited by Page & Turnbull.

MARTHA LYNN TANK HOUSE CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

While research did not uncover any permit history specifically for the tank house, existing documentation states that it was constructed in 1906 following the earthquake on the Martha Lynn homestead by volunteer labor, led by neighbor Harold L. Brubaker.²⁹ At some time after the Fremont Hills Country Club acquired the tank house but prior to the tank house being documented by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) in 1979, the interior at the ground level was outfitted to serve as men's and women's restroom facilities (**Figure 39**). The function of the interior prior to the remodel is unknown, but the base of tank houses were often used for storage or utility rooms. Overall, it appears that otherwise little to no exterior alterations have occurred or that replacement materials have been used since the time of its construction in 1906 (**Figure 40 and Figure 41**).

²⁹ Town of Los Altos Hills General Plan, Appendix A: Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures (Revision 6/26/2018): 3.



Figure 40. "Martha R. Lynn Tower" on the Dr. Thomas E. Shumate Ranch, date unknown. Source: Los Altos Hills Historical Scrapbook Digital Archive.



Figure 41. Southwest façade in 2025, showing minimal changes.

Ownership History

The following table provides a summary of the ownership history of the tank house, beginning with the year of construction, compiled from historic resources, including books, newspaper articles, city directories, and other public records.

TABLE 1. OWNERSHIP HISTORY FOR 12889 VISCAINO PLACE.

Date(s)	Owner(s)	Occupation
Circa 1906-1910	Martha Lynn	Homesteader
1910-1952	Dr. Thomas Shumate	Drug store operator
1952-1956	Freda Shumate	<i>None documented</i>
1956-1958	Fremont Hills Development Company	Real estate developer
1958-Present	Fremont Hills Country Club	Recreational facility

Around 1910–1912, Dr. Shumate acquired a tract of land at the corner of Fremont and Concepción roads in what is now the Town of Los Altos Hills. He initiated improvements on this property for the purpose of creating a summer estate, beginning with modest structures, including a stable and garage, followed by a gardener's quarters, and culminating in the construction of a limestone Italianate residence between 1915 and 1916.³⁷ The limestone was repurposed from San Francisco's Indiana Building at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and the house was designed by William S. Merchant, who had previously collaborated with Bernard Maybeck on the Palace of Fine Arts.³⁸ Located approximately a quarter-mile east of the Fremont Hills Country Club property, the house is addressed 12775 Viscaïno Road and was designated Los Altos Hills Landmark in 1994.³⁹

In San Francisco, Dr. Shumate held numerous prominent roles, serving as police commissioner from 1912 to 1937 as well as director of St. Francis Hospital (until 1950), the Medico-Dental Building, the Old Liberty Bank (later absorbed into Bank of America), and the Philippine Telephone Company.⁴⁰

By the time of his death on February 29, 1952, Dr. Shumate had amassed a substantial Los Altos Hills estate totaling approximately 400 acres, which included ranchland and walnut orchards. This land spanned from Fremont and Concepcion Roads to Purissima Road. He also owned the Troy Stock Farm, which spanned another 400 acres on the Mountain View–Alviso Road near Sunnyvale, where he kept American Saddlebred horses.⁴¹

Following Dr. Shumate's death, his widow Freda, along with their surviving children Al and Virginia, managed the estate until its sale in 1956. The property was transformed by the Fremont Hills Development Company into the sites of Fremont Hills Elementary School (acquired by the Palo Alto Unified School District in January 1957), the Fremont Hills Country Club (established in 1958 with clubhouse and pool constructed in 1961), and residential neighborhoods.⁴²

Owner, Fremont Hills Country Club (1958-Present)

The Fremont Hills Country Club was established in 1958 as part of the Fremont Hills subdivision, a residential development carved from the former Shumate Ranch by the Fremont Hills Development

³⁷ The equestrian facilities later became part of the Fremont Hills Riding Academy (now Windy Hill Equestrian), which includes stables, riding rings, and the tank house (as a restroom facility).

³⁸ Los Altos History Committee, "Memo: Requested Maintenance for the Original Shumate Gate at the corner of Concepcion & Viscaïno and the Shumate Pillar along Concepcion." Accessed online, <https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7352/Memo-Regarding-SG-041325-V4>.

³⁹ Clyde Noel, "A classic Italian villa," *Los Altos Town Crier* October 12, 2021. Accessed online, https://www.losaltosonline.com/archives/a-classic-italian-villa/article_10e61fa8-083b-5ead-a332-083707d6efe7.html.

⁴⁰ Fava, *Los Altos Hills: A Colorful History* (1976), 85-86.

⁴¹ Fava, *Los Altos Hills: A Colorful History* (1976), 85.

⁴² *Peninsula Times Tribune*, "Sherlock named to design Hills club landscaping," January 21, 1958.

TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS LANDMARK DESIGNATION EVALUATION

The Town of Los Altos Hills' Landmark designation is an inventory of local structures, natural features, sites, and areas that exhibit historical, architectural, cultural, and/or aesthetic significance within city limits. Resources can be listed as a local Landmark through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically designated as a Los Altos Hills Landmark. Properties can be nominated as Landmarks by the resolution of the City Council or upon the request of the Los Altos Hills Standing History Committee, the property owner, or an authorized agent of the property to be designated.

In order for a property to be eligible for designation as a Los Altos Hills Landmark, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, and/or its exemplification of the cultural, educational, economic, agricultural, social or historical heritage of the City.
- b) Its identification with a person, or persons, who significantly contributed to the culture, history, or development of the Town.
- c) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics or an architectural type of specimen.
- d) Its unique location or singular physical characteristics, whether manmade or natural, representing an established or familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the Town of Los Altos Hills, or its relationship to any other landmark if its preservation is essential to the integrity of that landmark.
- e) Its potential of yielding archaeological information.
- f) Any property which is listed on the National Register and is described in Section 470a of Title 16 of the United States Code and/or is a Registered State Landmark.⁴⁶

The following section examines the eligibility of the Martha Lynn Tank House situated at the Fremont Hills Country Club, addressed at 12889 Viscaino Place, for individual listing as a Town of Los Altos Hills Landmark.

CRITERION A

The Martha Lynn Tank House is eligible under Los Altos Hills Criterion (a) for its association with significant events. The structure possesses character, interest, and value as part of the development of Los Altos Hills and exemplifies the agricultural and equestrian heritage of the Town. Built in 1906 as part of the Martha Lynn homestead and later incorporated into the Shumate Ranch, the structure

⁴⁶ Los Altos Hills Municipal Code, §11-1.05 Designation criteria. Accessed online, <https://ecode360.com/44000651#44000656>.

CRITERION D

The Martha Lynn Tank House is eligible under Los Altos Hills Criterion (d) for its association with its unique location and setting. The structure occupies a unique location atop a hill within the Fremont Hills Country Club's equestrian grounds, making it a prominent and familiar visual feature in the area. Its height, distinctive silhouette, and association with the surrounding open space contribute to its visual status. In combination with nearby historic resources, such as remnants of the Shumate Ranch stables, the Martha Lynn Tank House's preservation is integral to maintaining the historic character and layered narrative of the Fremont Hills area.

Moreover, the structure has remained situated at its location of original construction since circa 1906. Its longtime and continued presence on the same parcel preserves the direct physical connection to its historic period of use as part of the Lynn homestead and later the Shumate Ranch. Despite surrounding development, the structure's feeling is that of a bygone era, as its scale, form, and vernacular character evoke the historic rural setting and functional role of tank houses in early twentieth-century Santa Clara County agriculture. While the Fremont Hills neighborhood has been built up since the mid-twentieth century, the Martha Lynn Tank House remains within an open, equestrian-oriented environment on the Fremont Hills Country Club grounds, reflecting its historical association with Los Altos Hills' rural and agricultural history and uses. Therefore, the Martha Lynn Tank House is eligible under Criterion (d) with a period of significance of 1906 to 1956, during which time the property is most strongly associated with agrarian activities prior to the Town's incorporation.

CRITERION E

The Martha Lynn Tank House is not eligible under Los Altos Hills Criterion (e). The "potential of yielding archaeological information" does not relate to above-ground built resources.

CRITERION F (NATIONAL REGISTER/LANDMARK LISTING)

The Martha Lynn Tank House is not eligible under Los Altos Hills Criterion (f). It is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is it listed as a Registered State Landmark.

Character-Defining Features and Non-Contributing Features

Since the Martha Lynn Tank House appears to be eligible for listing as a Town of Los Altos Hills Landmark under several criteria for designation, a list of the structure's character-defining elements or features is helpful. Character-defining features are the physical features that convey why a property is significant and when it was significant. Characteristics can be expressed in terms of form

CONCLUSION

The Martha Lynn Tank House located on the Fremont Hills Country Club property at 12889 Viscaïno Place is a rare surviving example of an early twentieth-century tapered-tower with overhang subtype, a once-common but now scarce form of domestic water infrastructure throughout the Santa Clara Valley and what is defined today as Santa Clara County. Constructed in 1906 on the Martha Lynn homestead and later incorporated into the Shumate Ranch, the structure is directly associated with the region's early twentieth-century agricultural and equestrian heritage and the development patterns that shaped Los Altos Hills. The tank house continues to convey its historical significance despite the passage of time and the deterioration of some original materials. Its preserved form, materials, and workmanship embody the functional ingenuity of vernacular builders, while its enduring location, setting and hence, presence within an equestrian backdrop reinforces its contextual link to the rural character of the Town. As such, the Martha Lynn Tank House meets the Town of Los Altos Hills' criteria for Landmark designation under Criteria (a), (c), and (d), with a period of significance of 1906 to 1956. It remains a unique and important physical reminder of the community's agricultural past.

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Peninsula Times Tribune, "Rites tomorrow for Los Altos, Dr. Shumate," February 28, 1952.

--- "Country club planned for hills subdivision," December 19, 1956.

--- "Sherlock named to design Hills club landscaping," January 21, 1958.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Preparer Qualifications

This Preliminary Landmark Evaluation was prepared by Page & Turnbull of San Francisco, California. Page & Turnbull staff responsible for this report include Christina Dikas, Principal-in-charge; Jen Hembree, Cultural Resources Planner, project manager; and Maggie Nicholson, Cultural Resources Planner, primary author, all of whom meet or exceed the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Historic Architecture, Architectural History, or History*.