The ranch at Martinez was John Muir's home from 1880 until his death in 1914, the period during which he emerged as one of the most important national leaders in the Conservation Movement.

From 1889 to 1914, John Muir played a critical and vital role in the drive to establish national parks, national forests, and to apply scientific methods of sustained-yield management to the federal forests. As a recognized and leading authority on the glaciers, mountains and forests of West, and as an able and popular writer on Nature, John Muir devoted his talents and nationwide prestige to forwarding the cause of National Conservation. In this task he served as an important, although unofficial, adviser to Presidents Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft. Specific conservation achievements with which Muir was closely associated include: the creation of Yosemite National Park, General Grant National Park, and the enlargement of Sequoia National Park in 1890; advice on the establishment of the first national forest reserved in 1891; a leading role, working with the National Forest Commission, 1896-97, in securing the National Forest Management Act of 1897, and defending the 13 new forest reservations established by President Cleveland, 1897-98; as adviser to President Roosevelt 1901-1909: supporting the establishment of the U. S. Forest Service and the transfer of National Forest Reserves to that agency, 1901-1905; securing the completion of Yosemite National Park, 1903-1906; and defending the Hetch Hetchy Valley section of Yosemite National Park from 1901 to 1913.

Condition of the Site:

This site includes the Martinez adobe, a two-story adobe built about 1851, which served John Muir's residence from 1880 to 1890, the "Manor", a large two-story frame house built in 1881, which served as Muir's residence from 1890 until (Continued on attached sheet)
**California**

**John Muir House (and Martinez Adobe)**

7. Importance and Description - Continued

His death in 1914; and about five acres of the original 300-acre ranch. The two houses are both in excellent condition and have been little altered since Muir's day. They are used as private residences. Although now set in the midst of intense urban development, the topography has fortunately preserved to a remarkable degree the rural ranch setting of the remaining original five acres. These grounds contain many of the trees and plants set out by Muir himself.

References:


9. Reports and Studies

-Historic American Building Survey Inventory: John Muir House and Vincente Martinez Adobe.
**UNITED STATES**
**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. STATE</th>
<th>2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE &quot;ARCH&quot; BEFORE THEME NO XX-Literature, XX-Architecture, XX-Conservation of Natural Resources;</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. NAME(S) OF SITE</th>
<th>4. APPROX. ACREAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Muir House</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, road, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet)</th>
<th>6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contra Costa County, 4440 Alhambra Ave., Martinez</td>
<td>U.S. Government (National Park Service)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes it important and what remains are extant)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erected in 1882, the John Muir Home is a good example of a typical country residence designed in the Italian Villa style. Plans for the house were prepared by James E. Wolfe &amp; Sons, architects, and the house was built for Dr. John Strentzel, John Muir's father-in-law, for about $9,500. The structure is an imposing two-story wood frame building with full basement and attic, with a formal plan, symmetrical about a central hall and entrance. The residence is about 40 feet wide by 42 deep, with a 19 by 25-foot 2-story kitchen wing located in the rear; the main house contains 11 rooms. Built of redwood, the house has rusticated wood quoins at the corners, which gives it the appearance of stone construction. There are one-story bay windows situated on either side of the main hexagonal-shaped porch. Windows on the first floor front have moulded hoods supported by brackets. Windows on the second floor front are arranged in pairs and the center pair has a pedimented hood. The cornice is bracketed and the hipped roof is surmounted by a square cupola. Inside, the main house is divided by a central hall, with the parlor and library located to the west and the family parlor and dining room to the east of the hall. The second floor contains 7 bedrooms. The kitchen is located in a rear wing and above it are rooms for the servants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

- Oscar Lewis, Here Lived the Californians (New York, 1957), 205-207;

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, ex. NPS study, HABS, etc.)

- Historic American Building Survey CAL-1890.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS ATTACHED: YES |

11. CONDITION Orig. Bldg. good |

12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Museum |

13. DATE OF VISIT Dec. 10, 1960 |

14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell |

15. TITLE Historian |

16. DATE Nov. 22, 1966 |

* Dry mount on an 8 x 10½ sheet of fairly heavy paper. Identify by view and name of the site, date of photograph, and name of photographer. Give location of negative. If attached, enclose in proper negative envelopes.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)
John Muir House (1890-1914)
Martinez, California

December 10, 1960

Charles W. Snell
Neg. 2236-Western Region