OMB Control No. 1024-0018
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: _Pioneer Oil Refinery_____
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing**:**
___N/A_____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: __0.35 miles SW of intersection of Pine Street and Newhall Avenue_____
City or town: _Santa Clarita_____ State: _California_____ County: _Los Angeles_____
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

_____

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

_____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

_____

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	☐
Public – Local	X
Public – State	☐
Public – Federal	☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	☐
District	X
Site	☐
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
9		structures
		objects
11	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION
manufacturing facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: METAL: steel, corrugated metal, iron; WOOD: heavy timbers; BRICK

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Pioneer Oil Refinery is an inactive refinery dating from the nineteenth century, located in an industrial park on a flag-shaped lot set back several hundred feet down an access road off of Pine Street in Santa Clarita. The lot is enclosed by a chain-link fence. The northern part of the lot is generally flat while the southern portion gradually slopes upward. Two buildings and nine structures are scattered across the otherwise undeveloped lot. Eight of the eleven buildings and structures are located at the north end of the lot and three are located at the top of a hill at the south end. There is no formal circulation between buildings and structures, just packed soil and gravel. An area at the northern end of the lot appears to have been paved at an unknown date, and the paving is inconsistent and deteriorating. Native shrubs and trees grow throughout the lot, particularly at the northern end. The two buildings of the former refinery are wood-framed gabled sheds with corrugated metal walls and roofs while the majority of the seven structures are massive riveted steel tanks that were used for the storage and treatment of petroleum. The refinery has stood vacant for decades and the resources are in fair, deteriorating condition. The district retains all aspects of integrity.

Narrative Description

Pioneer Oil Refinery was constructed in 1876 by California Star Oil Works, an early predecessor of the Standard Oil Company (later Chevron), to process petroleum extracted from the nearby Pico Canyon oil drilling site. The refinery produced kerosene for lamp-burning through a process of heating, cooling, and treating the petroleum. The refinery was operational until 1888. Although the refinery closed, the property remained in use to support the oil extraction operation in Pico Canyon through the early twentieth century. In 1930, Standard Oil restored the property as an interpretive display for the public.

Detailed descriptions of the buildings and structures are listed generally north-to-south and west-to-east. All resources are district contributors.

1. Pump House — One Contributing Building

The Pump House is located at the northwest corner of the district. Its primary elevation faces northwest toward the access road. The one-story rectangular building has a side-gabled roof and roof monitor. It is of wood frame construction and the exterior walls and roof are corrugated metal. A wood trellis covered with corrugated metal and supported by round metal posts extends from the northwest elevation to create a projecting porch. The building does not appear to have a foundation; the vertical wood posts that make up its frame are driven directly into the ground. After decades of being vacant, the building is partially buried underneath approximately two feet of expansive clay soil. Inside the Pump House there is extant pump equipment that has been partially buried by soil deposits. According to interpretive signage inside, the existing equipment is a one-cylinder, two-horsepower engine that was used in the early 1900s to provide water to oil-producing sites in Pico Canyon. The northwest side of the building is enclosed by a length of chain link fence. Visual observation indicates that north wall of the building was removed, and the metal and wood was trellis added, presumably so the building could serve as an interpretive display at an unknown date. This may have occurred as part of the 1930 restoration effort. The Pump House is in poor to fair condition. The corrugated metal panels that make up the roof and walls are corroding, and some of the panels of the roof are missing or loose. The vertical wood supports that were driven directly into the ground are deteriorating beneath the deposited soil.

2. Acid Tank — One Contributing Structure

The Acid Tank is located to the west of the Pump House. It is a tall, vertically oriented, cylindrical tank made of steel panels with exterior rivets. The top and bottom of the tank are conical, and the top of the tank has a flue. The tank is elevated on a heavy timber platform. A piece of pipe extends from the north side of the tank. This tank was used to treat the oil with acid and agitate the product with air during the refining process.[1] The Acid Tank itself is in fair condition; it appears to be sound, but the steel has corroded over time. Some timbers of the

[1] Stan Walker, "Refining the Oil," accessed June 2020, https://www.elsmerecanyon.com/pioneerrefinery/refining/refining.htm.

platform have severely deteriorated, and the entire platform has shifted over time. The platform appears to be partially buried by soil deposits.

3. Wash Tank **One Contributing Structure**

The Wash Tank is located to the southwest of the Acid Tank and Pump House. The vertically oriented, cylindrical tank is narrower in diameter than the Acid Tank. The tank is made of steel panels fastened with exterior rivets and bolts. There are two holes, ostensibly for drainage, at its bottom edge. One hole is outfitted with a spigot. The tank has no extant top or covering. It is elevated on a heavy timber platform. This tank was used to wash acid out of treated oil during the refining process, using a neutralizing soda.[2] The Wash Tank itself is fair condition; it appears to be sound, but the steel has corroded over time. The tank's platform has shifted, and the tank is leaning at an angle. A separate wood beam wedged between the ground and the tank was put in place at an unknown date to prevent the tank from tipping.

4. West Rundown Tank **Two Contributing Structures**
5. East Rundown Tank

The Rundown Tanks are two side-by-side horizontally oriented cylindrical ferrous metal tanks. The tanks are made of steel panels fastened with exterior rivets. Each tank has a round access hatch at the top of its north end. Above the access hatch of the West Rundown Tank are remnants of a pulley system. Along the top edge of the West Rundown Tank are two threaded attachment points for pipe along its top edge; the East Rundown Tank has six. There is no platform and the tanks are lying directly on the ground. Research indicates these tanks were used for storing finished products.[3] The tanks have become partially buried over time due to soil deposits. Pitting corrosion has created small holes in both tanks. The West Rundown Tank is not fully upright and has rolled slightly to the west.

6. Residuum Tank **One Contributing Structure**

The Residuum Tank is located east of the Rundown Tanks and northwest of the Stills (**Resources 7 and 8**). It is a cylindrical wood tank made of vertical staves and a series of metal hoops. The tank has a circular hole between two staves near its bottom edge. The purpose of this hole is not known; presumably used to extract or drain material from the tank. A metal pipe runs from the top edge of the Residuum Tank edge southeast toward the Stills. The tank has no extant top or covering. The tank is slightly elevated on a series of wood planks or "sleepers." This tank was used to store heavier residues that resulted from the refining process. These residues were sold as lubricants and used as fuel to heat the stills.[4] The Residuum Tank is in poor to fair condition. The hoops and staves are loose, causing the tank to lose its shape. The staves show

[2] Ibid.
[3] Stan Walker, "Pioneer Oil Refinery: Recent Photos," accessed June 2020, https://www.elsmerecanyon.com/pioneerrefinery/recentphotos/recentphotos.htm.
[4] Ibid.

signs of deterioration, possibly dry rot, particularly along the bottom of the tank. As the tank has no covering or top, it was filled with debris at the time of survey.

7. Still No. 3 **Two Contributing Structures**
8. Still No. 4

The Stills, the most substantial structures in the district, are located southwest of the Residuum Tank. Metal plates on the face of each still indicate that they are called Still No. 3 (west) and Still No. 4 (east). There were originally four stills. Two were repurposed from the failed 1873 refinery; they were removed and relocated north to Richmond, California sometime in the early 1960s for use in an unrealized Chevron Oil Museum.[5]

Still No. 3 has a cylindrical brick bottom with a cylindrical metal still above. The upper portion of the still is made of steel panels fastened with exterior rivets. The top of the still is flat. A small metal plate on the north face of the still identifies "Still No. 3" with a capacity of 100 barrels. Below this plate is a large bronze plaque installed in 1930 to dedicate the property to D.G. Scofield and the workers of the Pioneer Oil Refinery. On the east face of the still is a round access hatch door. A series of pipes lead up from the top of the still toward Still No. 4 and the deteriorated condenser to the rear. The brick chimney stack adjacent to Still No. 3 has fallen and broken into three pieces, likely following an earthquake.

Still No. 4 is the larger of the two still structures. It has a cylindrical brick furnace with a cylindrical metal still above. The upper portion of the still is made of steel panels fastened with exterior rivets. It appears that the still is double-walled and that an inner metal cylinder extends lower than the lip of the outer metal cylinder. The top of the still is a gooseneck that leads to a series of pipes toward a condenser that would have originally been enclosed by a wooden box or trough. There are four sets of metal doors along the bottom edge of the brick portion of the still; due to soil deposits over time, the set of doors at the south edge is partially buried. A small metal plate on the north face of the brick identifies "Still No. 4" with a capacity of 150 barrels. There are small hatches across the surface of the outer metal still. The brick chimney stack adjacent to Still No. 4 is still standing and is leaning.

The two stills are surrounded by a brick and round metal railing fence, not original, although a form of enclosure did exist historically (**Figure 1**). The two stills are in fair condition. The pieces of the broken chimney stack adjacent to Still No. 3 revealed that it was filled with concrete and narrow rebar. This work took place at an unknown date, likely during the 1930 restoration. The brick adjacent to Still No. 4 is leaning. The mortar of the brick kilns is deteriorating, resulting in loose brick, and the structures are partially buried at the rear due to soil deposits. The condenser has deteriorated; a loose pile of pipes and wood is all that remains.

[5] Leon Worden, "Original Boilers, Newhall Pioneer Oil Refinery: Chevron Richmond Refinery, 2016," SCVTV, accessed June 2020, https://scvhistory.com/scvhistory/ch1601.htm.

9. Water Tank **One Contributing Structure**

The Water Tank is located west of the Shed (**Resource 10**). It is a tall, cylindrical, vertically oriented tank made from steel panels fastened with exterior rivets. There are remnants of a guard rail and possibly a ladder along its upper edge. There are three large pipes and two narrower pipes leading into the tank, as well as several valves and spigots along the lower edge of the tank at its west side. The top of the tank appears to be sealed with a flat lid based on aerial imagery. The tank is in fair to good condition, apart from the corroded patina of the steel exterior.

10. Shed **One Contributing Building**

The Shed is a one-story rectangular building of wood frame construction, with a side-gabled roof. The exterior walls are sheet metal and the roof is corrugated metal. There are three openings with wood surrounds, and a pair of hinged sheet metal doors on the northwest elevation. There are no extant windows. On the northeast elevation a wood projection shelters a circuit breaker and starting compensator that appear to date from the early 1900s. A starting compensator is used in conjunction with a circuit and controls voltage to equipment such as a motor. Inside the Shed, extant equipment appears to have been associated with the pumping or movement of oil or water. The interior floor is dirt, possibly due to soil deposits over time. Flooring material may be extant under the packed dirt. There is a single metal light fixture inside. The Shed is in fair condition. Portions of the sheet metal cladding and corrugated metal roofing are missing and appear to have sheared off the building due to high winds. The remaining sheet metal and corrugated metal has corroded over time. The wood elements, including the enclosure for the circuit breaker and compensator, are deteriorating.

11. Oil Tank **One Contributing Structure**

The Oil Tank is located on one of the highest points in the district. The large, cylindrical tank is made of steel panels fastened with exterior rivets. There are three large valves and a round access hatch at the tank's bottom edge. A large metal pipe extends from the bottom of the tank and leads down the slope before entering the ground. The area around the tank is paved with deteriorating asphalt. Along the southeast edge of the tank, there are severely deteriorated remnants of a wood ladder or staircase. The top of the tank appears to be sealed with a flat lid based on aerial imagery. Research indicates that this large tank was used for storing oil pumped from Pico Canyon until the early 1940s.[6] The tank is visible on aerial photographs dated 1930. Early descriptions of the refinery mention numerous tanks ranging in capacity from twenty to one hundred barrels of storage. These tanks are no longer extant and were replaced with the existing tank at an unknown date. The tank is in fair to good condition, apart from the corroded patina of the steel exterior.

[6] Stan Walker, "Pioneer Oil Refinery: Recent Photos."

Integrity

The district retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship to convey the feeling of a nineteenth-century oil refinery and its association with the development of the oil industry in California, as well as early oil refinery construction.

Location
Pioneer Oil Refinery retains integrity of location; research did not reveal any evidence to suggest that the existing structures and buildings have been moved from their original location. Historic photos show the two extant Stills and the Residuum Tank (**Figures 2, 4, 5**). While some resources have been removed, including two stills and an unknown number of tanks on the hill, the district as a whole remains where it was originally established, preserving its relationship with the nearby railroad and oil well Pico No. 4. The historic boundaries of the refinery were more rectangular than flag-shaped, encompassing a Southern Pacific Railroad Spur that is no longer extant (**Figures 8, 9**). At an unknown time, the legal parcel on which the refinery was located was subdivided into nine irregular parcels. The Pioneer Oil Refinery district is located on the largest of these parcels.

Design
Pioneer Oil Refinery retains integrity of design. The arrangement of the building and structures in the district and their individual scale and utilitarian nature reflect the refinery's historic function and use as well as petroleum refining technology of the era. Although research indicates some buildings and structures are no longer extant, as a rare, surviving example of a property type, the remaining district resources are sufficient to convey the property's original purpose, design, and function.

Setting
Historic aerial photography indicates that the industrial development surrounding Pioneer Oil Refinery began during the 1970s. The more immediate setting of the refinery, including the natural topography, mature trees, native scrub, extensive open space, and proximity to the railroad line, remains intact. These features reflect the physical conditions that existed while the refinery was operational.

Materials
Pioneer Oil Refinery retains integrity of materials. Visual observation and comparison to historic photographs suggest that a majority of original materials were used in the restoration of the refinery in 1930 and otherwise the original materials remain. Cast iron, brick, and wood reflect the refining technology of the era as well as the types of materials readily available at the time.

Workmanship
Pioneer Oil Refinery retains integrity of workmanship, reflected in the utilitarian, vernacular components, such as the wood-frame buildings with no foundations, large cast iron tanks fastened by exterior rivets, and the brick masonry.

Feeling

Integrity of feeling is intact. The remaining physical components of the refinery, together with integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and setting convey the sense of a nineteenth and early twentieth-century oil refining and oil drilling support facility.

Association

Integrity of association is intact because Pioneer Oil Refinery retains sufficient physical integrity as a whole to convey its historical and architectural significance as well as research potential.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [X] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
INDUSTRY
ENGINEERING

Period of Significance
1876-1888
1930

Significant Dates
1876
1930

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Pioneer Oil Refinery is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under Criteria A and C. The district is significant under Criterion A in the area of Industry for its direct association with the birth of the commercial petroleum industry in California, and under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare remaining example of an early oil refinery that exemplifies the distinguishing characteristics of the type and period, as well as the technological breakthroughs of the 1870s. Due to its rarity and the nature of its restoration, based on all available information, the district satisfies Criteria Consideration E: Reconstructed Properties. The first period of significance, 1876 to 1888, encompasses construction through the end of distillery operations. The second period of significance, 1930, is the year the refinery was rehabilitated by the Standard Oil Company for interpretive, educational use.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Industry

Development in the City of Santa Clarita

The City of Santa Clarita was incorporated in 1987, combining the communities of Newhall, Saugus, Valencia, and Canyon Country. These communities had been established on former Rancho San Francisco land through farming, ranching, mining, and oil exploration, as well as train depots.

In 1804, the Spanish established an *estancia*, or agricultural outpost associated with the San Fernando Mission near later Castaic Junction.[7] This larger area eventually became Rancho San Francisco. The wheat, corn, vineyards, and livestock of the *estancia* supported the needs of the mission while extra goods were used for trade. In 1839, the rancho land was granted to Antonio del Valle, who further developed the area for sheep and cattle ranching until a severe drought in the 1860s.[8]

Gold was discovered in Placerita Canyon in 1842 by Francisco López, predating the Sutter's Mill discovery that prompted the California Gold Rush by six years. The approximate site of the discovery is memorialized by the Oak of the Golden Dream in Santa Clarita. Between 1842 and 1847, miners were able to retrieve around 1,300 pounds of gold from the canyon.[9]

[7] Historic Resources Group, *City of Santa Clarita Historic Preservation Survey & Planning Analysis* (Santa Clarita, August 2009), 19.
[8] Ibid., 19-20.
[9] Ibid., 20.

Prominent businessman Henry Mayo Newhall came to California in 1848 seeking gold. When this venture failed, he found work in San Francisco, eventually becoming proprietor of a successful auction house. He began investing his fortune in rail companies and served as president of the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad. After selling the company to Southern Pacific, Newhall turned his attention to real estate and cattle ranching.[10] He purchased over 45,000 acres of the former Rancho San Francisco in 1875, which he renamed Newhall Ranch. Henry Newhall began raising cattle and cultivating wheat, sugar cane, alfalfa, and citrus fruit trees. He also deeded a right-of-way through his land to Southern Pacific and gave the company land to establish a town in 1876.[11] The community, named Newhall, moved six miles south in 1878 due to an insufficient water supply.[12]

Agriculture and gold attracted settlers to the area and more goods were being transported across the state. Lyon's Station, a regular stop for the Butterfield Overland Stage, had a tavern, telegraph office, and later a store and post office for travelers, and was located near the later intersection of Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue.[13] Improvements to the treacherous Newhall Pass, including the completion of Beale's Cut in 1863, made travel through the area easier and safer. Beale's Cut was a passageway cut into the mountains. Originally cut to thirty feet by Phinneas Banning in 1854, the way was deepened to ninety feet by surveyor Edward Fitzgerald Beale. Beale's Cut was used until it was replaced by the Newhall Tunnel in 1910.[14]

The discovery and commercial production of oil changed the trajectory of the Santa Clarita Valley's development. While the earliest inhabitants of the area had known about the oil seeps in Pico Canyon for centuries, organized efforts to drill and collect the resource did not begin until the mid-1800s. Several ventures to tap the resource failed until Charles Alexander Mentry, a Frenchman who drilled over forty wells in Pennsylvania, applied his technical expertise in Pico Canyon in 1875. This resulted in the famous Pico No. 4 well, which produced for over a hundred years. Oil profits soon surpassed that of farming and ranching, drawing attention to the area's full economic potential and bringing oil men to the area who in turn brought their families and established homes and businesses.[15]

In 1876, the Southern Pacific Railroad was completed through the Santa Clarita Valley. This route was a spur off the 1869 Transcontinental Railroad, the western half of which was constructed by the Central Pacific Railroad Company. This was made possible by the San Fernando Railroad Tunnel. At almost 7,000 feet long, it was the third longest tunnel in the country at the time, and allowed for the Southern Pacific and Central Railroads to connect in 1876 near what became Lang Station, in later Canyon Country.[16] The Saugus train depot was

[10] Ibid., 18.
[11] Ibid., 18, 25.
[12] Ibid., 26.
[13] Ibid., 23-24.
[14] Ibid., 24.
[15] Ibid., 21.
[16] Ibid., 25.

constructed on the original Newhall town site after an 1887 Southern Pacific Railroad spur was completed between Ventura and the Santa Clarita Valley.[17]

Growth was "sporadic and intermittent" in the communities that eventually became the City of Santa Clarita.[18] Film industry activity during the 1920s attracted additional development, and after World War II, the population doubled. Despite the increased population, the area remained largely agricultural until the 1960s, when the completion of I-5 to the Santa Clarita Valley facilitated more suburban development including housing tracts and shopping centers.[19]

Early Oil Industry in California

For centuries, crude oil—oil that has not been in any way processed or refined—was used for a variety of basic applications, such as waterproofing wooden ships, ointments, construction adhesive, and the creation of "flaming projectiles."[20] In the 1700s, mapmakers identified petroleum on maps of the British Colonies over what became northwestern Pennsylvania. At that time, oil was used for medicinal purposes. In an 1820 article, Timothy Alden described the oil in Pennsylvania, how it was collected and used as medicine, and speculated on its potential for use in illumination.[21] Prior to the development of modern drilling and pumping techniques, crude oil was generally gathered out of ditches or skimmed off the surfaces of water, where it naturally bubbled to the surface, using paddles or absorbent blankets.[22]

In 1859, Edward Bissell, a lawyer from New York, purchased land in Pennsylvania near later Titusville. He founded the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, the first petroleum company in the United States, and began preparing ways to maximize oil production on his land in Pennsylvania. Bissell hired Edwin Drake and William A. Smith, a salt well driller, to apply salt well drilling methods. Using a steam-powered engine and a drill bit suspended on a rope through a windlass—a mechanism used to hoist heavy machinery—the team was able to achieve a depth of nearly seventy feet. Once drilling was complete, crude oil rose almost to the top of the well and was easily collected into barrels or concrete pits. This breakthrough is considered the birth of the modern petroleum industry in the United States.[23]

[17] Ibid., 26.
[18] Ibid., 36.
[19] Ibid., 33-38.
[20] Samuel Chang Hsu and Paul R. Robinson, eds. *Practical Advances in Petroleum Processing: Volume 1*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media, Inc., 2006, 2-4.
[21] Ernest C. Miller, ed. *This Was Early Oil: Contemporary Accounts of the Growing Petroleum Industry, 1848-1885* (Harrisburg, PA; The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1968), 1; Jonathan E. Helmreich, *Eternal Hope: The Life of Timothy Alden, Jr.* (Danvers, MA: Rosemont Publishing, 2001), 111.
[22] Hsu and Robinson, 2-4; Miller, 2.
[23] The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Pioneer Oil Refinery: The First Successful Oil Refinery in California, National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, 1975, Newhall, California (September 27, 1975), 1, accessed June 2020, https://www.asme.org/wwwasmeorg/media/resourcefiles/aboutasme/history/landmarks/8_pioneeroilref_1876.pdf.

During the 1860s, kerosene was the most valuable and in-demand petroleum product. At that time, it was primarily used in lamps for illumination, and was preferred to the other oil-burning options. The price of whale oil was becoming increasingly more expensive as whaling fleets over-hunted whales, and lard oil, while cheaper, produced a "smoky, smelly" flame.[24] In the earliest distillation processes, made up of elements such as cast-iron kettles, water-cooled coils and wooden vats, portions of the lightest crude oil distillates were retained and sold as solvents; most burned off in the process. Distillates that were heavier than kerosene were occasionally sold as lubricants, and any remaining undistilled residues were often discarded.[25]

Oil seeps were abundant throughout California. Attempts to collect or monetize the material on a large scale were not made until the nineteenth century. Native Americans used tar-like substances from the seeps as waterproofing and caulking material for ships, canoes, vases, and pitchers, as well as an adhesive. The Spanish, too, were aware of the oil and used it for waterproofing and caulking, while more focused on the region's other natural resources. In 1848, the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill attracted settlers and fortune-seekers to the region and added a sense of urgency to California's admittance to the Union.[26]

During the 1850s and 1860s, multiple attempts were made at drilling for oil throughout the new state. An oil boom in the mid-1860s was short-lived as a result of several factors. The early oil men often lacked the necessary expertise and technology, and the cost of shipping any product was prohibitively high, as the Southern Pacific Railroad had not yet been completed through the area. Local efforts could not compete with the plentiful and inexpensive oil being shipped to San Francisco from Pennsylvania, and the California oil industry stagnated until 1876.[27]

The Pico Canyon area of the Santa Clarita Valley was rich with natural oil seeps. At least one well was completed in the area by about 1869, prompting the development of a small, rudimentary refinery in 1873.[28] The small refinery consisted of equipment pre-fabricated in San Francisco and built on a site near Lyon's Station.[29] This early attempt was ultimately unsuccessful. The refinery was unable to produce a sufficiently smoke-free kerosene for sale, the site was too far from a railroad station, and the company and was plagued with financial issues.[30]

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[24] Hsu and Robinson, 2-3.
[25] Ibid., 11.
[26] Miller, 3-4.
[27] Stephen M. Testa, "Geologic Perceptions Regarding Oil Prospects and Future Growth and Development of California in the Post Gold-Rush Era," in Oil Industry History 2 No. 1 (Titusville, PA: Drake Well Foundation, 2001), 72-82, accessed June 2020, http://www.aegsc.org/chapters/inlandempire/pdf/OIL%20INDUSTRY%20HISTORY.pdf; Lionel V. Redpath, *Petroleum in California: A Concise and Reliable History of the Oil Industry of the State* (Los Angeles: Lionel V. Redpath, 1900), 47; Kenny A. Franks and Paul F. Lambert, Early California Oil: A Photographic History, 1865-1940 (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1985), 6-7.
[28] Franks and Lambert, 41; American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 3.
[29] Henry G. Hanks, *Fourth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist* (Sacramento, CA: California State Mining Bureau, 1884), 298.
[30] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 3.

Charles Alexander Mentry was an experienced oil well driller from Pennsylvania who began drilling in Pico Canyon around 1875. Research indicates that Mentry was working for, or may have been a part of, the Star Oil Works Company. His first well, Pico No. 1, produced a modest amount of oil. The next two were fairly unsuccessful. Pico No. 4, drilled to a depth of 370 feet using a steam-powered drill, was a "gusher," and California's first well to produce on a truly commercial scale.[31] Mentry stayed on as superintendent of the drilling operation, and the ensuing oil rush resulted in a boom town called Mentryville, consisting of redwood cabins and a boarding house for single men.[32] In 1876, Star Oil Works was reorganized as California Star Oil Works. Two men from San Francisco, oil merchant F.B. Taylor and his junior partner D.G. Scofield, eventually took supervisory roles in the company.[33]

The company continued to deepen their wells in Pico Canyon and began construction on a new, larger refinery to process the resulting oil. Under the supervision of J.A. Scott, the refinery was completed by August 1876 on a property close to the Southern Pacific Railroad line, near the later intersection of Pine Street and Newhall Avenue. The name "Pioneer Oil Refinery" appears to have originated with the idea that the refinery was an early and important example of the property type, rather than an official name for the facility. The refinery consisted of several tanks of varying capacities and three brick stills, two of which were repurposed from the failed 1873 refinery. A fourth still was added soon after construction was completed. [34]

Pioneer Oil Refinery produced benzene, illuminating oil, two types of lubricating oil, and small quantities of two grades of high-quality kerosene used by ships, railroads, factories and mines, and had a production capacity of 22,000 barrels a year.[35] An increase in both the oil production at the nearby wells and the market price of kerosene garnered interest in the California Star Oil Works Company. In 1879, a group of men including C.N. Felton, George Loomis, and Lloyd Tevis, established the Pacific Coast Oil Company that acquired the assets of the California Star Oil Works Company.[36]

The Pacific Coast Oil Company enlarged and improved the refinery. A two-inch cast iron pipeline was constructed, directly connecting the refinery to the wells at Pico Canyon. Several sources indicate that this was the first oil pipeline in the state of California.[37] In 1880, the Pacific Coast Oil Company constructed a larger refinery at Alameda Point (no longer extant), rendering

[31] Pico No. 4 continued to produce oil for over one-hundred years before being capped in 1990. Alan Pollack, Kim Stephens, and E.J. Stephens, *The Santa Clarita Valley* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 20; American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 3; "First California Oil Well," American Oil and Gas Historical Society, accessed June 2020, https://aoghs.org/petroleum-pioneers/first-california-oil-well/.
[32] Cecilia Rasmussen, "LA Then and Now: After Oil Boomtown's Bust, Nature Added Its Blows," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 2006, B2.
[33] Marius S. Vassilou, *Historical Dictionary of the Petroleum Industry* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 113; Pollack et al., 20; American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 8.
[34] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 5-6.
[35] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 6; Pollack et al., 23.
[36] Vassilou, 113.
[37] Woodward, 2; Franks and Lambert, 55.

the technology and capacity of Pioneer Oil Refinery obsolete.[38] After April 1885, Pioneer Oil Refinery no longer produced kerosene. The refinery worked to partially distill products finished in Alameda and sold residues (or residuum) as fuel oil.[39] Production continued until about 1888, when Pioneer Oil Refinery closed.[40]

Through the 1900s, the oil wells at Pico Canyon continued to produce at a lesser rate than in their heyday. Research indicates that the district structures and buildings, although no longer used for refining, continued to support these oil drilling efforts.[41] During World War I, Standard Oil salvaged portions of the refinery due to wartime restrictions on iron, steel, and copper.[42]

Oil production in California continued to increase as drilling and refining technology improved. In the 1920s, there was a major oil boom, particularly in Southern California. Wells and refineries owned by major companies including Shell, Standard (later Chevron), and Union Oil (later Conoco Phillips) were established throughout the state. Production reached a statewide peak in 1929 with 292,534,221 barrels, the largest ever for a single year up to that point. For forty years prior to World War II, California was one of the three top oil-producing states in the country and produced nearly seventeen percent of the world's oil.[43] Oil production still accounts for three percent of the state's economy.[44]

Pioneer Oil Refinery is directly associated with the beginning of the commercial petroleum industry in California. The completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad and recent advances in refining processes made the refinery a success, unlike many of its rudimentary predecessors. The petroleum industry in California became very lucrative once the ability to process a naturally occurring resource into large quantities of high-quality, in-demand products such as kerosene was established.[45]

The availability of petroleum products prompted further exploration of their use for fuel, especially in California where the then-dominant fuel source, coal, was typically more expensive. Reassured by the newly steady supply, sectors such as manufacturing and railroads began converting to petroleum fuels.[46] Toward the end of the nineteenth century, continued development of gasoline-powered combustion engines marked the beginning of a rapid energy

[38] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 8.
[39] Gerald T. White, *Formative Years in the Far West: A History of Standard Oil Company of California and Predecessors Through 1919* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1962), 118.
[40] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 8.
[41] Stan Walker, "Pioneer Oil Refinery: History," accessed June 2020, https://www.elsmerecanyon.com/pioneerrefinery/history/history.htm.
[42] White, 543.
[43] Franks and Lambert, 229-230.
[44] Judith Lewis Mernit, "Thick and Viscous: California Oil Production Among the Dirtiest in the Country," KCET, accessed June 2020, https://www.kcet.org/shows/earth-focus/thick-and-viscous-california-oil-production-among-the-dirtiest-in-the-country.
[45] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 8.
[46] Redpath, 29.

transition from wood and coal to oil in the United States.[47] A continued abundance of inexpensive gasoline facilitated widespread vehicle use, which transformed the state of California during the twentieth century as a system of highways and freeways emerged and cities expanded outwards into the suburbs. As the earliest commercially successful refining facility in the state, the Pioneer Oil Refinery is the property most directly associated with this important milestone in California petroleum industry history.

Criterion C: Engineering

Pioneer Oil Refinery was constructed by California Star Oil Works in August 1876 to process oil discovered in nearby Pico Canyon, replacing an earlier, more rudimentary refinery that had failed around 1873.[48] The refinery produced benzene, illuminating oil, lubricants, and kerosene.

Storage tanks of oil, ranging in capacity from twenty to one hundred barrels, were located on the hillside. By gravity alone, crude oil would flow from the tanks on the top of the hill to the stills at the bottom of the hill. The two extant stills are "cheesebox" type stills. Fire would be added to the brick kiln foundation of a still. Heating the crude petroleum would create petroleum gases, which rose out of the still and into the pipes that lead to a condenser. The condenser consisted of a wooden box filled with water. The wooden box was five feet wide, five feet tall, and one hundred twenty-five feet long. Around 1,400 feet of two-inch and three-inch iron pipes were submerged in the water. When the hot petroleum gases reached this point in the condenser, they would be cooled to a liquid state, where they flowed into a lead-lined "agitator." In the agitator, the oil was treated with chemicals and air to achieve better burning quality.

The process also included treating the oil with acid, then "washing" it to remove the acid in the Acid Tank and Wash Tank. The finished products were moved to storage tanks or barrels before being piped or hauled onto a railroad car. A spur off the Southern Pacific Line was eventually constructed to simplify this loading process. Heavier residues that remained as a result of the refining process were retained and used as fuel with steam to intensify the heat in the stills at the beginning of the process. These residues were stored in the Residuum Tank.[49]

Pioneer Oil Refinery operated until about 1888, having been rendered obsolete by a larger, newer refinery constructed in Alameda in 1880.[50] Research did not reveal what happened to the refinery after it was closed. An interpretive plaque indicates that the Pump House contains equipment dating from the early 1900s and was used to send water to Pico Canyon. The water was likely sent to the oil drilling operation at Pico No. 4, or the Mentryville area.

In 1930, the refinery was restored by Standard Oil Company of California and dedicated to D.G. Scofield and the California Star Oil Company. At that time, it was recorded as California's first

[47] Peter A. O'Connor and Cutler J. Cleveland, "U.S. Energy Transitions," *Energies* 7, no. 12 (2014): 7976.
[48] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 5-6.
[49] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 3-6.
[50] American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 8.

commercial oil refinery.[51] Contemporary accounts suggest that the refinery had fallen into a state of decay, and Standard Oil "restored [the refinery] to its original appearance," and the work resulted in an "exact reproduction of its appearance in the early days."[52]

Research indicates that the Pioneer Oil Refinery is the earliest remaining intact refinery in the state of California. An earlier refinery in the vicinity of Newhall was constructed in 1873 near Lyon's Station, abandoned, and some of its equipment was repurposed to construct Pioneer Oil Refinery. The 1880 Standard Oil refinery on Alameda Point that rendered the Pioneer Oil Refinery obsolete was itself abandoned after a larger refinery was constructed in Richmond around the turn of the century.[53] In 1887, the Hardison & Stewart Oil Company—a predecessor to Union Oil (later Conoco Phillips)—built a refinery in Santa Paula that produced "asphaltum, greases, lubricants, and illuminating oils." It was destroyed by a fire in 1896 and was not rebuilt.[54] None of these comparatively early examples of refineries still exist. The California Energy Commission lists forty-seven extant refineries throughout the state—not including Pioneer Oil—that are operational, idle, or closed. Of the forty-seven, the earliest began operating in 1896. The facility is located in Rodeo, California and as of June 2020 is owned by Phillips 66.[55] It has been altered and expanded over time to a total production capacity of 140,000 barrels a day, and no longer evokes the feeling of a nineteenth century oil refinery.[56]

Pioneer Oil Refinery is eligible for listing on the National Register at the state level of significance under Criteria A and C for its association with the birth of the commercial oil industry in California and as a rare remaining intact example of a nineteenth-century oil refinery in the state. The buildings and structures in the Pioneer Oil Refinery district exemplify the distinguishing characteristics of the type and period and physically represent the early petroleum refining process. The district also represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The buildings and structures that comprise the refinery are historically and functionally related, located in a geographically definable area, and share significance. A combination of factors, including the completion of a nearby railroad line and technological breakthroughs in refining technology made the Pioneer Oil Refinery a commercial success. This success established the money-making potential of the California oil industry and acted as a catalyst for its expansion.

Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, continued advancements in the use of oil for fuel shaped California's economy, and its roads, highways, and cities. Although these

[51] Woodward, 1.
[52] Woodward, 1; "Pioneer Oil Refinery Becomes Real Landmark: Standard Oil Company Restores Ancient Plant Near Newhall," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1930, 14.
[53] "To Build Big Oil Refinery: Standard Oil Company to Erect Plant in California," *New York Times*, September 19, 1901.
[54] Franks and Lambert, 49.
[55] "California Oil Refinery History," California Energy Commission, accessed August 4, 2020, https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-almanac/californias-petroleum-market/californias-oil-refineries/california-oil.
[56] "San Francisco Refinery," Phillips 66, accessed August 4, 2020, https://www.phillips66.com/refining/san-francisco-refinery.

developments quickly made Pioneer Oil Refinery functionally obsolete, the facility was left standing in order to provide support for oil drilling in Pico Canyon. It was replaced by larger and more efficient refineries, none of which remain or convey their original appearance. As early as 1930, the importance of the Pioneer Oil Refinery was recognized when the Standard Oil Company—a company that began in part as California Star Oil Works—restored the buildings and structures for educational and interpretive use. This thoughtful restoration effort helped ensure that the buildings and structures would stand for over a century and retain sufficient physical integrity to convey the district's significance.

Criteria Considerations: Reconstructed Properties

In the 1930s, Pioneer Oil Refinery was restored and dedicated as a memorial to D.G. Scofield and the employees of the refinery by Standard Oil Company. Based on available information, including historic photos and contemporary accounts of the restoration, the property appears to retain the majority of its original fabric. As such, the refinery does not necessarily need to meet Criteria Consideration E for reconstructed properties, as properties that are remodeled or renovated and still have the majority of their original fabric are exempt from this additional analysis. As research did not reveal the full extent of this restoration work, particularly whether new materials were introduced at the time, Criteria Consideration E has been applied.

Accuracy of the Reconstruction in a Suitable Environment

Research did not reveal extensive details of the work conducted in the 1930s. Analysis of historic photographs compared to conditions at the time of nomination suggest that the work was carried out faithfully. Historic photographs only show the large stills and Residuum Tank, and do not depict the location or condition of other resources in the district. Contemporary accounts suggest that the refinery had fallen into a state of decay, and Standard Oil Company "restored [the refinery] to its original appearance," and that the work resulted in an "exact reproduction of its appearance in the early days."[57] The work took place in a suitable environment. The refinery is in the same location as it was historically. Research did not indicate that resources were relocated as a part of the work. Pioneer Oil Refinery meets this requirement of Criteria Consideration E.

Restoration Master Plans

As the reconstructed resources are essential components in a historic district and the reconstruction was part of an overall restoration plan for the entire district, the district satisfies the Restoration Master Plan requirement. Contemporary accounts suggest that the refinery was faithfully restored from a deteriorated state to appear as it did originally. Visual observation indicates that the restoration work used primarily original or compatible materials.

[57] Lois Ann Woodward, *Pioneer Oil Refinery, Registered Landmark #172* (Berkeley, CA: State of California, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, 1936), 1; "Pioneer Oil Refinery Becomes Real Landmark: Standard Oil Company Restores Ancient Plant Near Newhall," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1930.

Last Surviving Property of a Type

Criteria Consideration E stipulates that a reconstruction may be eligible if "no other property with the same associative values has survived." Research indicates that Pioneer Oil Refinery is one of the oldest remaining oil refineries in the state, if not the nation. It appears to be the only remaining property that represents this type and period of construction, as well as the early history of the California Star Oil Works Company. Another associated property, Mentryville, has also been restored, consisting of Mentry's home, a barn, and a schoolhouse rather than an early industrial property.[58] Surviving examples of homes, barns, and schoolhouses from the era are far more common.

[58] "Jo Anne Darcy at Historical Society Event," SCVTV, accessed June 2020, https://scvhistory.com/scvhistory/jd7901.htm.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
_____previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
_____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
_X__ Other
Name of repository: _Chevron Corporate Archives_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): California Historical Landmark No. 172

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___4 acres_____

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 34.369659 Longitude: -118.519869

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Los Angeles County Parcel Number 2827-006-913.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The legal parcel boundary encompasses all of the buildings and structures that make up the district and does not exceed the historic limits of the refinery. The boundaries of the refinery property were historically larger. At an unknown date, the refinery property was subdivided into nine smaller parcels, the largest of which is No. 2827-006-913.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Amanda Duane
organization: GPA Consulting
street & number: 617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90014
e-mail: amanda@gpaconsulting-us.com
telephone: (310) 792-2690
date: June 2020; Revised July 2020, August 2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	Pioneer Oil Refinery
City or Vicinity:	Santa Clarita
County:	Los Angeles
State:	California
Photographer:	Amanda Duane
Date Photographed:	March and July 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 26 Context view looking west toward Pump House (left) and Rundown Tanks (right) from property entrance

2 of 26 Context view looking northeast toward Stills and Residuum Tank (left) and Rundown Tanks

3 of 26 Context view looking west toward Pump House (right), Acid Tank (left of Pump House) and Wash Tank (left)

4 of 26 Context view looking southeast at Stills

5 of 26 Context view looking northeast at Water Tank (left) and Shed (right)

6 of 26 View looking northwest at Pump House

7 of 26 View looking southwest at Pump House

8 of 26 Pump House interior, view looking east

9 of 26 Pump House interior, view looking west

10 of 26 View looking northwest at Wash Tank

11 of 26 View looking southwest at Acid Tank

12 of 26 View looking southeast at Rundown Tanks

13 of 26 View looking southwest at Residuum Tank

14 of 26 View looking west at Still No. 4 (foreground) and Still No.3 (rear)

15 of 26 View looking southwest at Still No. 4

16 of 26 View looking southeast at Still No 3. (center) and Still No. 4 (left)

17 of 26 View looking east at chimney stacks to the rear of Still No. 3 and 4

18 of 26 View looking south at pipes and wood that comprised the condenser

19 of 26 View looking south at Shed

20 of 26 View looking east at Shed

21 of 26 View looking west at Shed

22 of 26 Interior view of Shed looking southwest

23 of 26 View looking northwest at Water Tank

24 of 26 Detail view looking southwest at equipment at base of Water Tank

25 of 26 View looking southeast at Oil Tank

26 of 26 Detail view looking east at equipment at base of Oil Tank

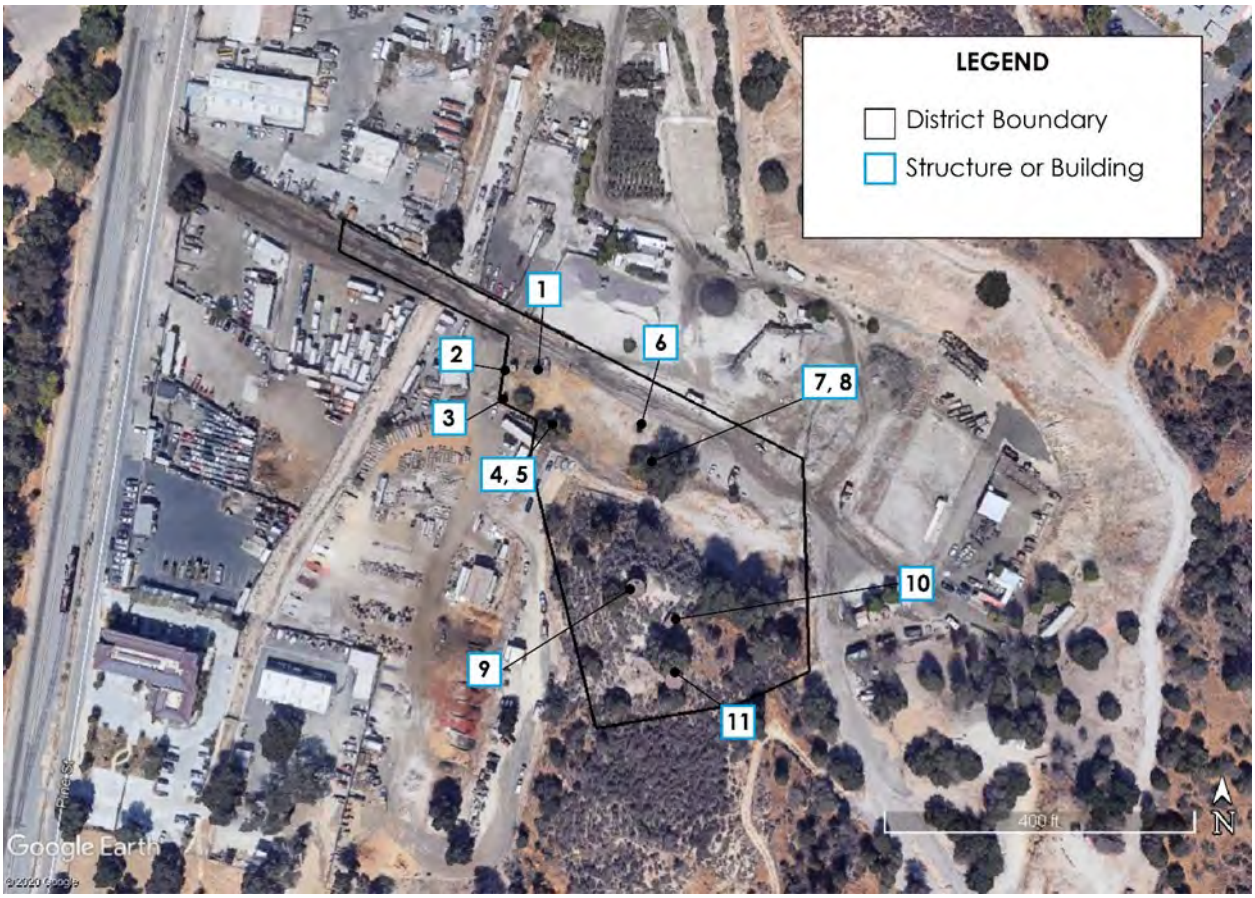
Pioneer Oil Refinery
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Location Map

Latitude: 34.369659 Longitude: -118.519869

Sketch Map



1. Pump House
2. Acid Tank
3. Wash Tank
4. West Rundown Tank
5. East Rundown Tank
6. Residuum Tank
7. Still No. 3
8. Still No. 4
9. Water Tank
10. Shed
11. Oil Tank

Pioneer Oil Refinery
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Photo Key 1 of 3

Pioneer Oil Refinery
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Photo Key 2 of 3

Pioneer Oil Refinery
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Photo Key 3 of 3

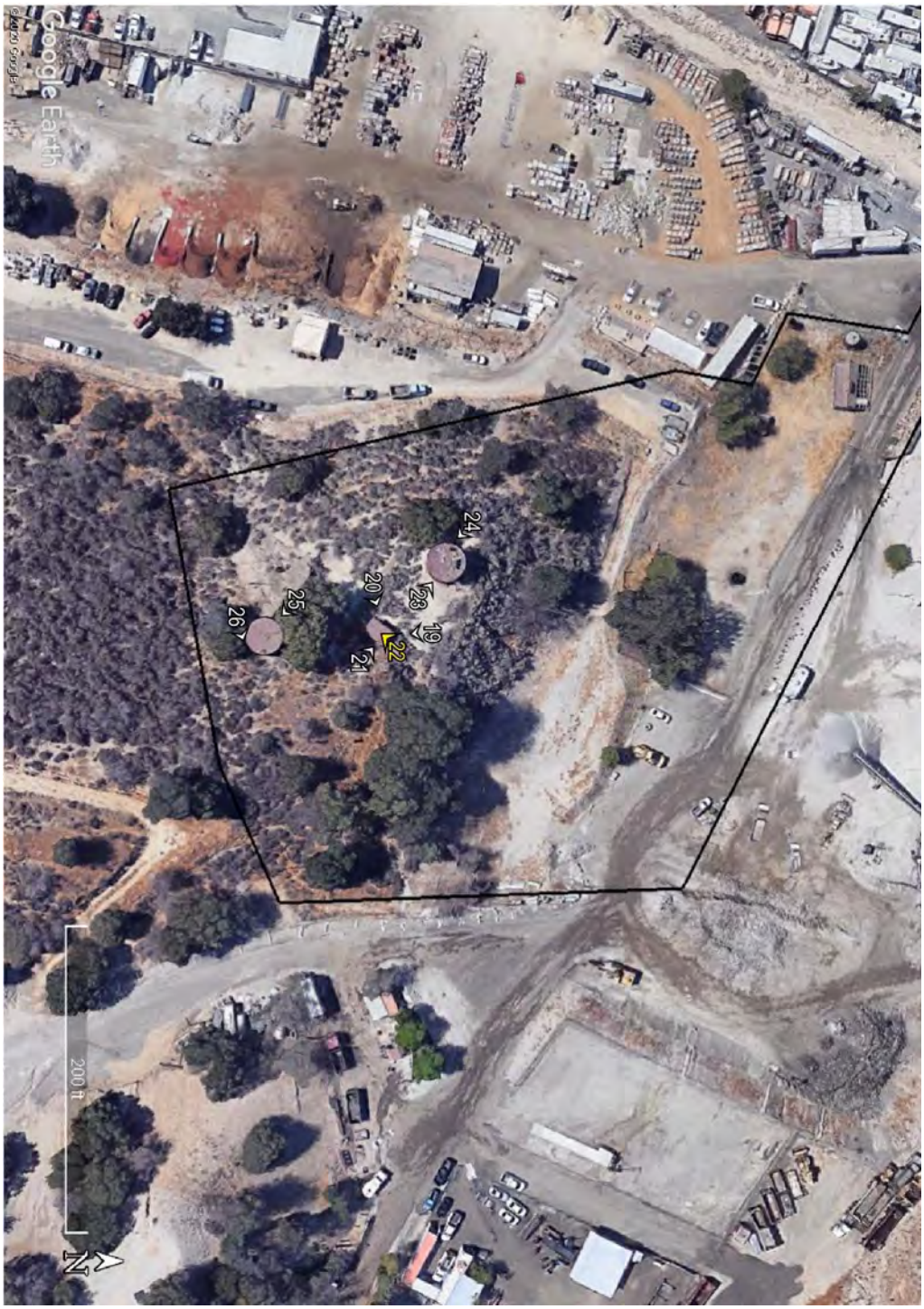


Figure 1 Enclosure around stills, circa 1876; Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 2 All four Stills (left), intact condenser to the rear of Stills, and Residuum Tank (right), date unknown; Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 3 All four Stills and intact condenser to the rear of Stills, date unknown; Works Progress Administration Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

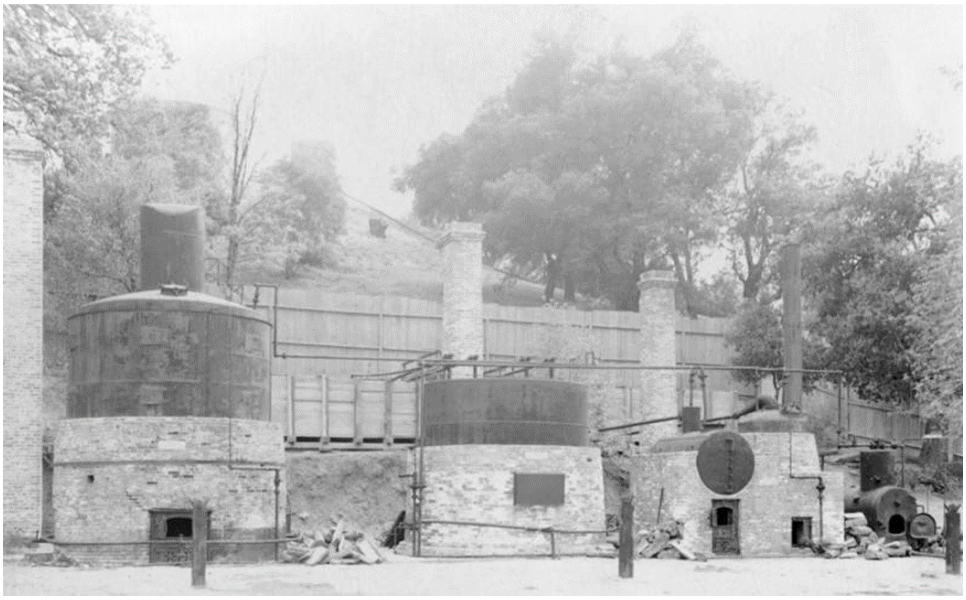


Figure 4 All four Stills (right) and Residuum Tank (left), date unknown; Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 5 All four Stills (left) and Residuum Tank (right), date unknown; Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 6 Intact condenser in foreground, circa 1940; University of Southern California Digital Library

Figure 7 All four Stills and interpretive signage (right), 1957; Valley Times Collection, Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 8 Detail, Los Angeles County Public Works, Miscellaneous Records 196-309

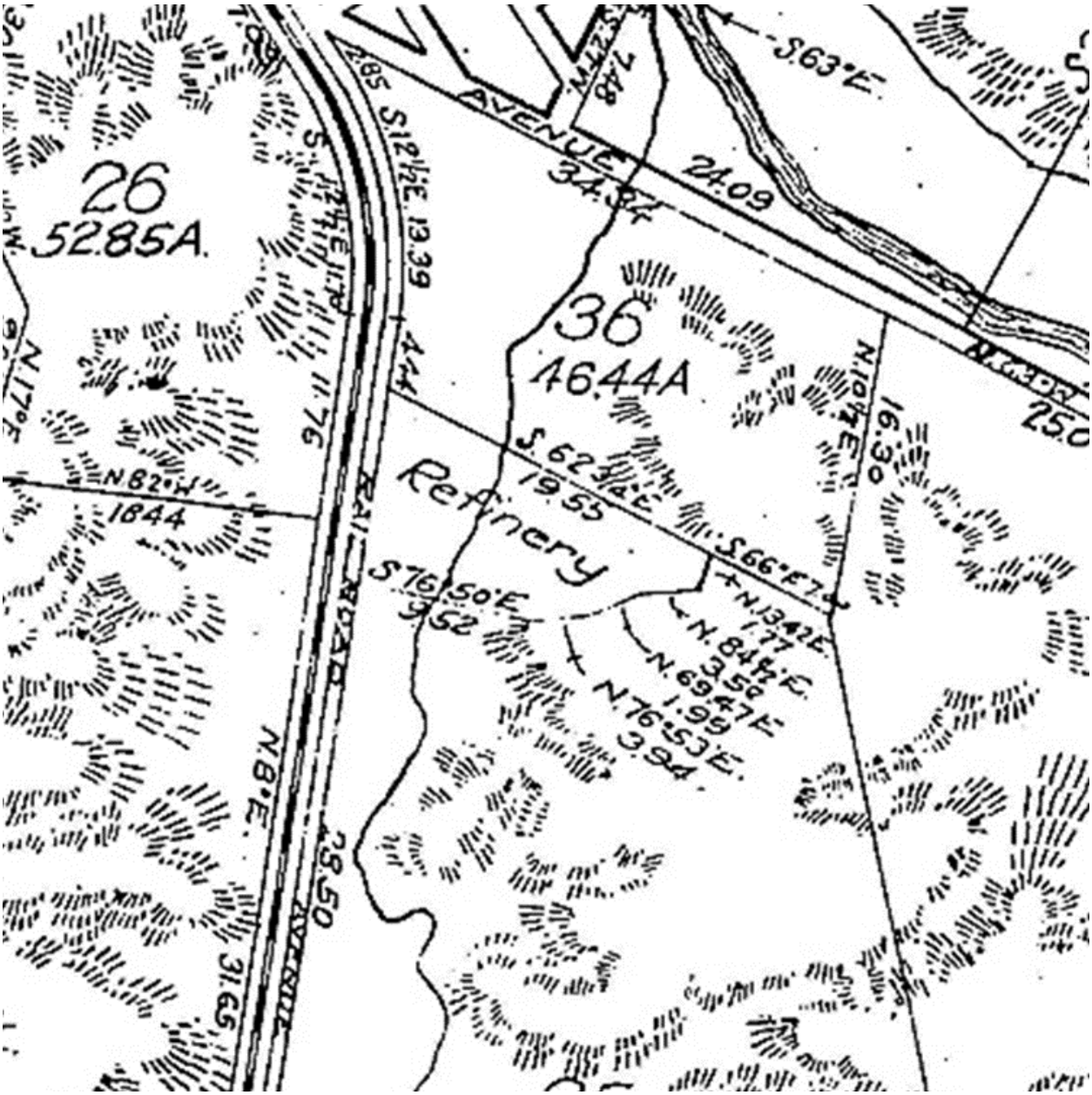


Figure 9 Magazine article excerpt, 1930, Page 1 of 2; Chevron Heritage Center, Chevron Corporation

JUST FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE

The Company dedicates the restored Newhall refinery as a memorial to the late D. G. Scofield and his associates, pioneers of the West's petroleum industry

In a quiet canyon near Newhall in southern California, Standard Oil pioneers a half-century ago erected the West's first oil refinery operating on a commercial scale. Recently, in this same canyon, more than 300 persons, including many Company employees and executives, assembled to witness the dedication of the old plant as a unique memorial to the late D. G. Scofield and associates, who developed the Newhall oil field.

The program was made decidedly colorful by the reminiscences and yarns of some of the "boys" who actually worked at the plant and in the Newhall field in the early days. Walton Young, retired superintendent of the Newhall Division, Producing Department, related stories of the old plant and its first operators. J. H. Whitney, J. W. Saunders, and Clay Reynolds were among the other old-timers present.

The late Mr. Scofield, who at the time of his death was president of this Company, was represented at the ceremony by Mrs. Rosamond B. Watson, his granddaughter, who unveiled a bronze tablet inscribed to the memory of Scofield and his associates. General Superintendent L. B. Little, of the Southern California District, Producing Department, acted as master of ceremonies.

Due to lack of records and plans, it was necessary in restoring the old refinery to rely largely upon the recollections of veteran employees who at one time or another had been associated with the plant. But, none the less, one sees today a very reliable replica of the original refinery. The reconstruction was done by the Southern Service Unit, Producing Department.

With the establishment of this unique memorial, Newhall is expected to become increasingly important as a point of historic interest to tourists, and particularly to oilmen, for here is the cradle of

Part of the crowd of 300 people at the restored Newhall refinery who witnessed the plant's dedication as a memorial to the California oil industry and its pioneers. The late D. G. Scofield and his associates, of the California Star Oil Works Company, founded here the West's first refinery to operate on a commercial scale

Participating in the dedication ceremony were (L. to R.) Frank "Happy" Wintz, operator of "Standard Oil Announcer" car; District Sales Manager J. F. Jeffries, Los Angeles Agency; General Superintendent L. B. Little, So. Cal. District, Producing Department; Walton Young and J. H. Whitney, old-time oil men

Employees of the Southern Service Unit, Producing Department, who did the actual work of reconstructing the Newhall refinery: (L. to R.) H. H. Heilman, C. R. Muenzel, B. Walker, H. W. Hixon, C. E. Sitzman (production foreman, Newhall Division), A. G. Johnson, F. S. Condit, C. W. Loyd, L. M. McWhorter, Z. R. Oxford

6 Among Ourselves

Figure 10 Magazine article excerpt, 1930, Page 2 of 2; Chevron Heritage Center, Chevron Corporation

California's oil industry. The first commercial oil production in the state was obtained in Pico Canyon, a few miles from the refinery. The two-inch cast-iron pipe line which carried crude oil from the wells to the Newhall refinery was the first of its kind in the state. At the time of the plant's greatest activity, it refined about 300 barrels of crude oil daily. Compare this to the Company's present southern California plant—El Segundo Refinery—which has a capacity of 100,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

The most important product of the old Newhall refinery was kerosene. Old-timers were proud of the quality of this kerosene. As one elderly inhabitant explained, "It did not explode when it was put into a lamp, for the refinery knew how to take out the 'explosive something'." At that time, the "explosive something" was allowed to run off in waste pipes as useless —today it is known as gasoline!

When one now takes the inland route to Los Angeles, he sees signs in the vicinity of Newhall directing the way to the historic refinery. Following their directions, the traveler soon finds himself in the sylvan retreat where the dependable, non-explosive kerosene was once manufactured. And if the visitor continues his course of exploration as far as Pico Canyon, six miles away, he will see the oldest active oil well in California, drilled by the California Star Oil Works Company in the late '70s. It yields a quarter-barrel of oil a day, still producing as faithfully as at the beginning of its career, 54 years ago.

The Company, in preserving the Newhall refinery, has selected a most fitting memorial to honor the men whose foresight laid the foundation for the California oil industry.

Pipe Liners Fight Fire

BUT for the prompt and efficient assistance which the Estero Bay Loading Station of the Kettleman Trunk Line furnished, with its fire-extinguishing equipment one recent evening, at least two buildings at Morro Bay, California, would have been destroyed. This is the opinion expressed by R. E. Easton, president of the Santa Maria Gas Company, in a letter to W. S. Pierce, Superintendent of the Kettleman Trunk Line, Pipe Line Department.

Transfer Department Issues Company Dividends Efficiently

Scene in the Transfer Department, Home Office, showing great activity during the recent preparation and distribution of dividend certificates and checks

WHEN the regular cash dividend and the extra 2% stock dividend checks and certificates were recently issued, 70 employees in the Transfer Department, Home Office, were fully occupied preparing and dispatching 23,522 stock certificates, 60,466 regular-dividend checks, and 57,275 extra-dividend checks. In approximately 25 hours, 118,214 checks and shares were signed by the Asst. Treasurer's Department with the signagraph machine, which writes ten signatures in one operation, or at the rate of 20,000 per day.

Ingenious mosquito "chaser," consisting of airplane propeller and automobile engine, erected at Repelon No. 3 well, Colombia, by S.O.E.'s. On platform: (L.) H. N. Notestine; (R.) H. O. May

Pipe Liner Is Golf Champ

THE Pipe Line Department boasts a real golf champion—and a woman champion at that! Miss Doris McGlashan, of the superintendent's office at Coalinga, California, recently won the women's San Joaquin Valley miniature-golf championship at Fresno by defeating Miss Cora Tooley, of Taft. Miss McGlashan well deserves the congratulations of her associates, for she was hard pressed by her opponent throughout the match.

100th Club Meeting Held

THE 100th regular meeting of the Northern Division Employees' Club, Standard Gasoline Company, was held recently at Taft, California. A. J. Cleveland, secretary, who with John Kapser, of the salvage department, attended the club's first meeting, in 1920, gave a talk on the club's history.

During the meeting, nominations for the coming election of officers were made. Nominees were as follows:

President: A. I. Lawson, W. K. Minor, C. V. Baxter, G. L. Ross;

Vice-President: G. Casley, W. F. Christianer, H. C. Voorheis, A. J. Cleveland;

Secretary: W. B. King, P. F. Ginter, G. R. Taylor, R. G. Dixon;

Treasurer: R. R. Robertson, R. Lindsey, J. Ketridge.

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Figure 11 Magazine article excerpt, 1991; Chevron Heritage Center, Chevron Corporation

In the early part of the 20th century, the Los Medanos pump station (above) was a full-time home to this community of Standard Oil workers and their families.

wood or raking leaves; but she always gave them clothes if they needed them, and the men always left with a sack of potatoes, some sugar, flour and a can of coffee."

Resident population of the community hovered at around 25, but the pump station also welcomed a menagerie of transients — not only the hobos, but also traveling maintenance gangs of painters, line walkers (who walked the length of the pipeline, inspecting for leaks) mechanics and boilermakers. These work crews stayed briefly in the bunkhouses, then moved on. Their transience, unfortunately, boded the future for most residents of Los Medanos, which fell nearly silent during the Depression.

"After the stock market crash, and the ensuing Depression, the pipeliners moved south to a shorter, less costly pipeline route," Hannon explains. "But those were the days of root beer and roses — the end of the glorious pre-Depression era and a wonderful childhood." ■ *Rachel Elson*

Saluting the oldest refinery

'Teakettle' stills are source of civic pride in Santa Clarita

In 1991, as modern technology pushes the world more and more toward McLuhan's "global village," it is hard to conceive of a time when gasoline did not drive society, or when world economies did not turn on the cost of fuel.

But in 1876, when California Star Oil Works — one of Chevron's corporate ancestors — built the Pioneer Oil Refinery, gasoline production was so irrelevant that it was considered wasteful. "Gasoline, as we know it, was just a byproduct with no market," says Chevron U.S.A. Regional Vice President Wally Fassler. "They primarily manufactured kerosene and benzene for home lighting — 'illuminating oil,' they called it."

Pioneer, California's first successful oil refinery, is now the oldest existing refinery in the world. California Star operated both the Pioneer facility and the nearby Pico Canyon Field, home to California's first commercial oil well and source of most of Pioneer's crude.

When the Pioneer plant began operations in the dusty Santa Clarita Valley, 35 miles north of what is now downtown Los Angeles, it took about a dozen men to run the refinery. The two "teakettle" stills of the Pioneer Oil Refinery bubbled and boiled each day to churn out 20 barrels of product.

Over the next few years, California Star Oil Works added two more stills with larger capacities, greatly expanding the plant's output. But the Pioneer Refinery, even when operating at peak levels in 1879, could yield no more than 150 barrels a day. (In contrast, an average modern refinery can generate 250,000 to 300,000 barrels of product a day.)

The Pioneer refinery was abandoned less than a decade after its construction in 1876, presumably for the more advanced equipment and larger capacity of a refinery built a few miles to the south. The refinery and its grounds fell into disrepair for half a century, until 1930, when a Standard Oil superintendent spearheaded an effort to restore the site.

Traveling into history: Chevron retirees Perry Minton (left) and Jim Daily (right) visit the Pioneer Refinery with Public Affairs Representative Dick McGrath.

Today, only an occasional visitor or tourist happens upon the refinery site, which still holds two of the original four stills. Located off one of Santa Clarita's back roads, and still on Chevron-owned property, the refinery has been designated as a state historical landmark.

It has also become a source of civic pride to its neighbors in Santa Clarita. Members of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society describe it as a "treasure," and when vandals covered the site with graffiti two years ago, local community groups quickly organized a one-day cleanup brigade for sandblasting and painting.

Chevron used to run tours of the site, hosting a few hundred school children each week. Today, declining resources have forced the company to limit public access to daylight hours; now the gates are locked except for special, prearranged visits.

"Chevron's long-range plan is to once again make this historic resource open to the public, either at the present site or elsewhere in the community," says Fassler. "Thirty-five or 40 years ago the company went through a tremendous amount of work to refurbish the refinery and establish it as a historic landmark. We'd like more people to have a sense of the refinery's importance to the community." ■ *R.E.*

Photo 1 Context view looking west toward Pump House (left) and Rundown Tanks (right) from property entrance

Photo 2 Context view looking northeast toward Stills and Residuum Tank (left) and Rundown Tanks

Photo 3 Context view looking west toward Pump House (right), Acid Tank (left of Pump House) and Wash Tank (left)

Photo 4 Context view looking southeast at Stills

Photo 5 Context view looking northeast at Water Tank (left) and Shed (right)

Photo 6 View looking northwest at Pump House

Photo 7 View looking southwest at Pump House

Photo 8 Pump House interior, view looking east

Photo 9 Pump House interior, view looking west

Photo 10 View looking northwest at Wash Tank

Photo 11 View looking southwest at Acid Tank

Photo 12 View looking southeast at Rundown Tanks

Photo 13 View looking southwest at Residuum Tank

Photo 14 View looking west at Still No. 4 (foreground) and Still No.3 (rear)

Photo 15 View looking southwest at Still No. 4

Photo 16 View looking southeast at Still No 3. (center) and Still No. 4 (left)

Photo 17 View looking east at chimney stacks to the rear of Still No. 3 and 4

Photo 18 View looking south at pipes and wood that comprised the condenser

Photo 19 View looking south at Shed

Photo 20 View looking east at Shed

Photo 21 View looking west at Shed

Photo 22 Interior view of Shed looking southwest

Photo 23 View looking northwest at Water Tank

Photo 24 Detail view looking southwest at equipment at base of Water Tank

Photo 25 View looking southeast at Oil Tank

Photo 26 Detail view looking east at equipment at base of Oil Tank