

San Fernando Valley State College

MORONGO VALLEY AND YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

"
Their Settlement and Land Use Patterns

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Geography

by

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ABSTRACT

MORONGO VALLEY AND YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

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Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley, California are spatially differentiated in their settlement and land use patterns. The manner in which the two communities have become spatially differentiated has, in part, been the result of various decisions concerning the disposal and acquisition of the public land. These decisions were manifested in two interrelated processes: (1) the disposal of the public land by the Federal Government; and (2) the acquisition of this land by individuals and corporations as well as other governmental units.

Certain public land acts were identified which served as the mechanisms for these two processes and also as having influenced the development of settlement and land use patterns in each community: Texas Pacific Railroad Act, Homestead acts, Desert Land Act, Timber and Stone Act, and Small Tract Act. Parcels of land acquired in both communities under these acts have undergone change through land

division and subdivision.

It is shown that the decisions involved in and the manner of selection of public land through the provisions of the various land acts in the two communities explain, in part, their present differences in settlement and land use patterns.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Use of the desert lands of the southwestern United States, especially Southern California, has changed rapidly during the last twenty-five years. Previously these lands were sparsely settled and used primarily for mining and livestock grazing, but today, because of the attractiveness of such features as climate and cheap land plus population migrations and technological advancements, many of these areas are being used for urban, resort, and industrial activities.¹

The attraction of coastal Southern California after the Second World War resulted in the tremendous growth of the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and the population pressure developed there has been a major factor in augmenting the pressure on the adjacent desert.² The southwestern portion of the Mojave Desert, an area which extends along the northern base of the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and Little San Bernardino Mountains at distances from 30 to 150 miles from the Los Angeles metropolitan area, has been subjected to intensive and extensive settlement.³

The dispersion of settlements in this area did not begin at one point as have most urban developments, but at various places about the same time after World War II.⁴ Factors which have played important roles in the development of these settlements have been identified by Logan as:⁵

1. "discovery" of the desert--(by Americans)--who only recently have come to appreciate its beauty, climate and solitude;
2. technological advances permitting comfortable living;
3. the desire to escape from the sprawling urban areas of the coast;
4. the increased air pollution;
5. the availability of cheap government land;
6. real estate promotion.

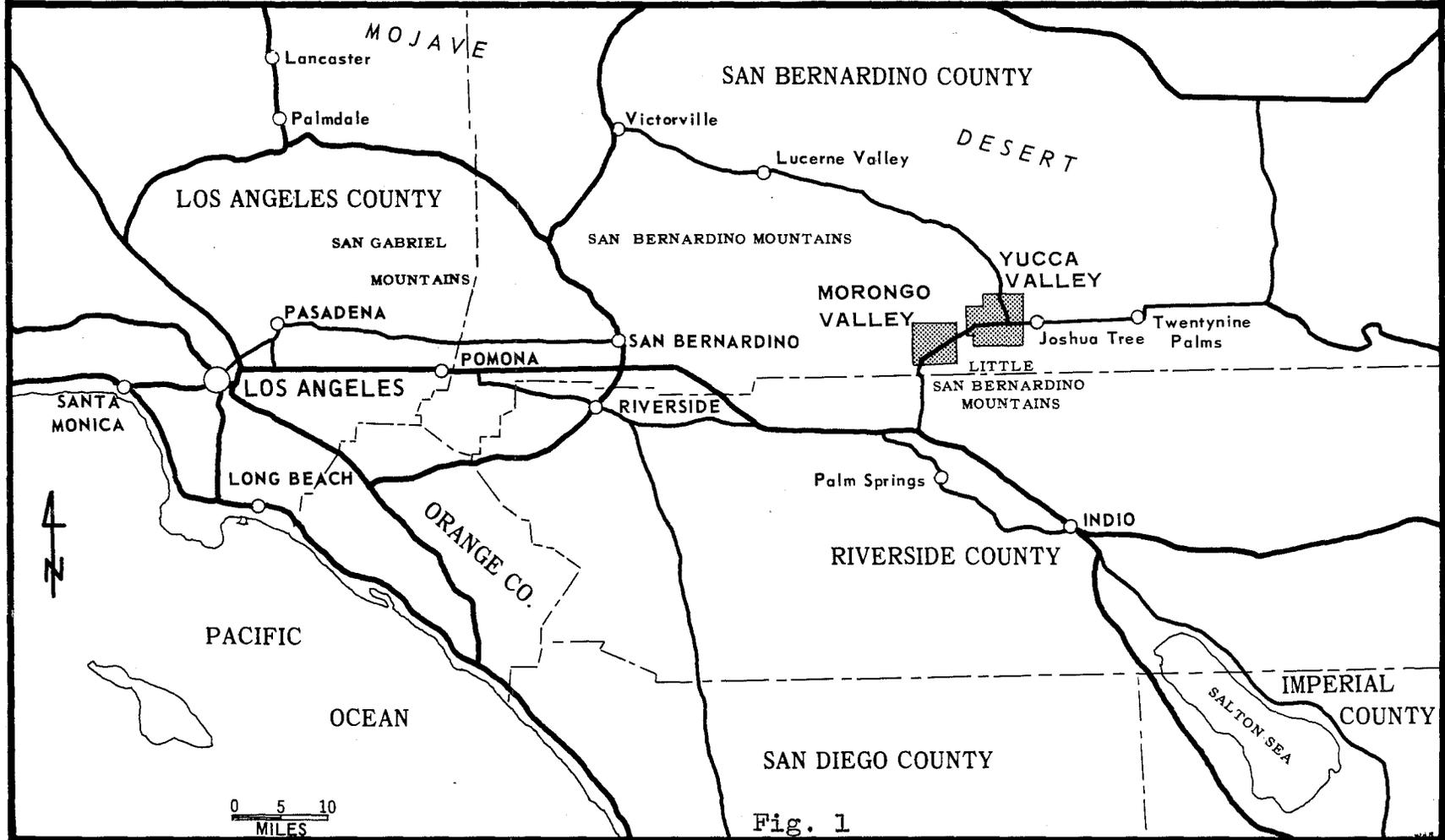
Although these factors have played major roles in the development of several desert settlements, other spatial and temporal factors, which are discussed later, must be considered when trying to explain the development of these communities. Some of these settlements have taken on urban patterns and functions, while others, nearby, have not. The dynamic change in land use and the differentiation of settlement patterns of certain desert communities is the focus of this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For this study two proximate desert communities, Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley, California were selected for comparative analyses of their settlement and land use patterns (Fig. 1). Both communities were settled about the same time in the late nineteenth century and were oriented to some agriculture and livestock raising, but by the mid-1950's they were differentiated in their settlement and land use.

How did the settlement and land use patterns of Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley come to be different? Differences between the two are the reflection of complex

THE LOCATIONS OF MORONGO VALLEY AND YUCCA VALLEY
IN RELATION TO THE LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN AREA



relationships of various political, social and economic conditions concerning the disposal and acquisition of public land in the two communities. These differences may be partially explained by the manner in which the Federal Government disposed of public land in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley, as well as the manner in which the public land was acquired by private citizens and corporations through the Texas Pacific Railroad Act, the Homestead Acts, Desert Land Act, Timber and Stone Act, and Small Tract Act.

MORONGO VALLEY

Morongo Valley is located approximately 130 miles east of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The community takes its name from a structural depression seven miles long and one-half to two miles wide oriented northeast-southwest and enclosed by the San Bernardino Mountains on the northwest and the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the southeast (Fig. 2).

The Morongo Valley study area is delimited as the survey township 1 south, range 4 east of the San Bernardino Meridian. This approximately thirty-six square mile area was delimited as the Community of Morongo Valley in an unpublished report of the San Bernardino County Planning Commission.⁶

Physical Setting

The Morongo Valley depression has been partially filled with alluvial material washed out of Big and Little

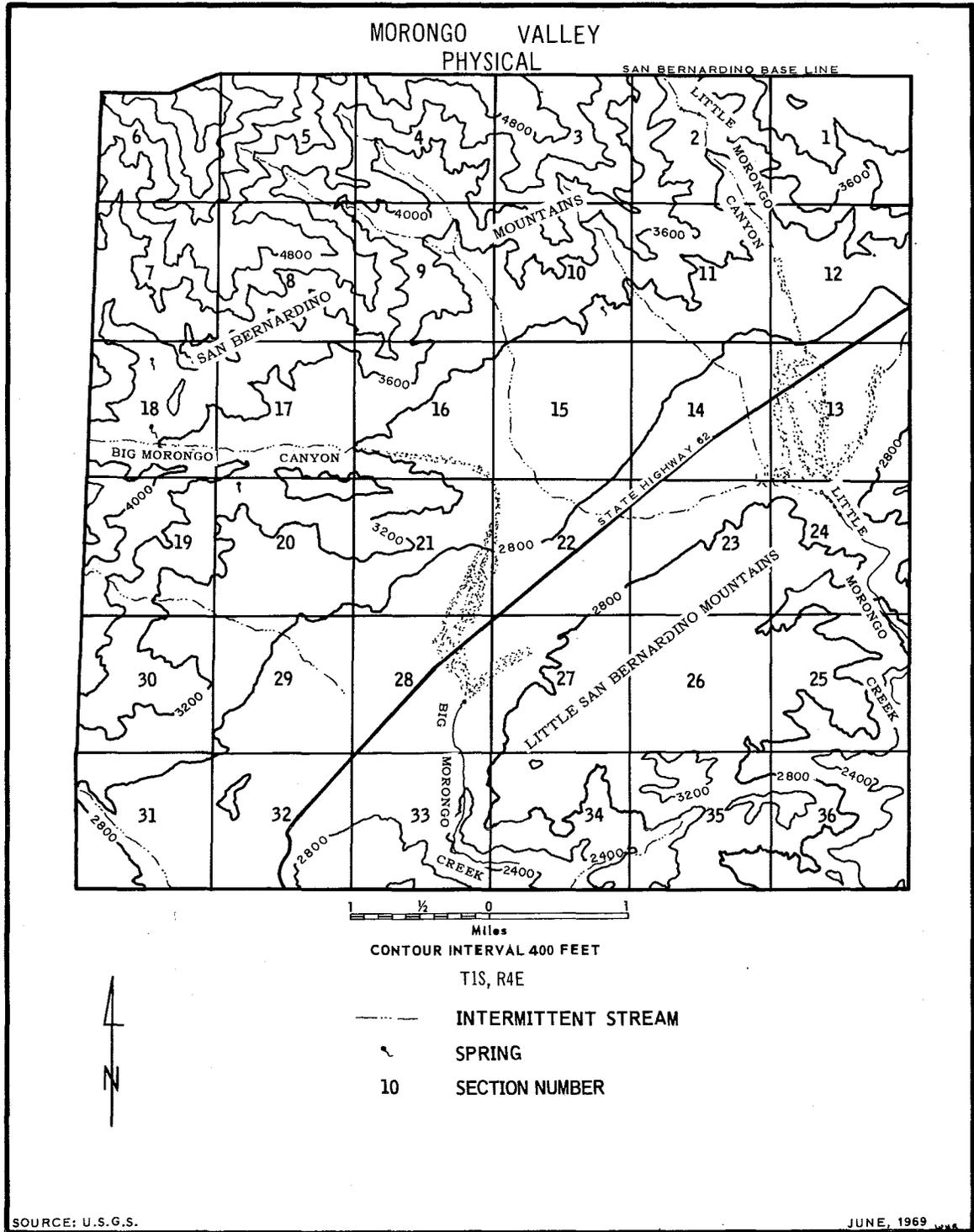


Fig. 2

Morongo canyons which have produced higher slopes on the northwestern side of the valley. The out-wash of Big Morongo Canyon has produced a ridge across the width of the valley which has divided the depression into two basins.⁷

Streams in both Big and Little Morongo canyons are intermittent, stream water seeping into the ground along the northwestern rim of the valley re-emerging along the southeastern rim forming marshy ponds in the lower portions of the basins. Ground water is forced to the surface at these sites by an impervious layer of accumulated erosional material. Where the ground water is forced to the surface two creeks, Big and Little Morongo, have risen.

Climatically the valley fits into the "High Desert" regime with the mean January temperature usually below 50 F. and that of July below 90 F.⁸ Annual precipitation averages about 5.5 inches in the valley with most rainfall occurring in the winter and spring months, with some thundershowers in the summer. This precipitation recharges the ground water by seeping into the pervious soils and also from run-off and drainage of the upper slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains. The elevations of these upper slopes rise above 5,000 feet, while the average elevation of the valley is approximately 2,800 feet.

Vegetation cover in the valley is composed of creosote bush, yucca, and cholla cactus. Many other plants are associated with these prominent species. Vegetation in the well watered portions of the valley near the marshes and

springs is composed of stands of alder, tamarisk, cottonwood, and riparian grasses. The higher slopes of the surrounding mountains have relatively sparse vegetation although in some areas pinon and oak are found.

Cultural Setting

Although settlement of Morongo Valley began in the late nineteenth century, major settlement activity did not begin until about 1912. The earliest record of white men in the area was in 1855, when the United States General Land Office surveyed the area. In the survey report, evidence was given of some Indian inhabitants in the valley.⁹

Sites of early white settlement were near the marshy area of each canyon where some cultivation of wheat and alfalfa was attempted. These two areas were settled about 1876 and were used primarily for the watering of cattle and sheep which browsed in the valley.¹⁰

The first patented homestead, filed in 1898, was located in Section 28 near Big Morongo Creek (See Figs. 2 and 5 for general location). Following this first acquisition the valley was used as open range for cattle and no other homesteads were patented. After 1911 homesteading resumed and many parcels of land were acquired through several public land acts. Acquisition of five-acre lots, also through a public land act, did not begin until the early 1950's and ended in 1957.

Today the population of Morongo Valley is estimated to be from 810 to 1,000 persons.¹¹ Morongo Valley is an

unincorporated, non-agricultural, resort-residential community with two distinct nodes of concentrated settlement, one in the lower southwestern portion of the valley and the other in the northeastern part. Many acres of land in both areas have been subdivided. Commercial land development within these two nodes forms a linear pattern along State Highway 62 (Fig. 2) which follows a southwest-northeast axis through the valley.

The remaining portions of the valley are sparsely settled with scattered dwelling units built on five-acre lots and other sized parcels. Thus, the overall appearance of the settled area is one of low density development with two nodes of denser agglomerated settlement. (Fig. 3a).

YUCCA VALLEY

Yucca Valley lies to the northeast of Morongo Valley (Fig. 1). Yucca Valley is bordered on the north by the Sawtooth Mountains, on the east by the community of Joshua Tree, and on the south by the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The total community area comprises approximately forty-three square miles and is located within portions of T1S, R5E; T1N, R5E; T1S, R6E; and T1N, R6E of the San Bernardino Meridian (Fig. 4).¹² The community takes its name from a valley-like structure which is enclosed on three sides but open to the east.

Physical Setting

Yucca Valley is an area of internal drainage, filled

Figure 3a: Morongo Valley is shown in background center with sparsely scattered dwellings and two nodes of settlement. Yucca Valley is shown in foreground center. State Highway 62 is shown as it runs through both areas with major development along both sides in Yucca Valley. Source: Yucca Valley News, Yucca Valley, California.

Figure 3b: View looking north shows Yucca Valley in foreground and Sawtooth Mountains across center. Subdivided parcels with dwellings and without are shown. Also shown are large undeveloped parcels. Source: Yucca Valley News, Yucca Valley, California.



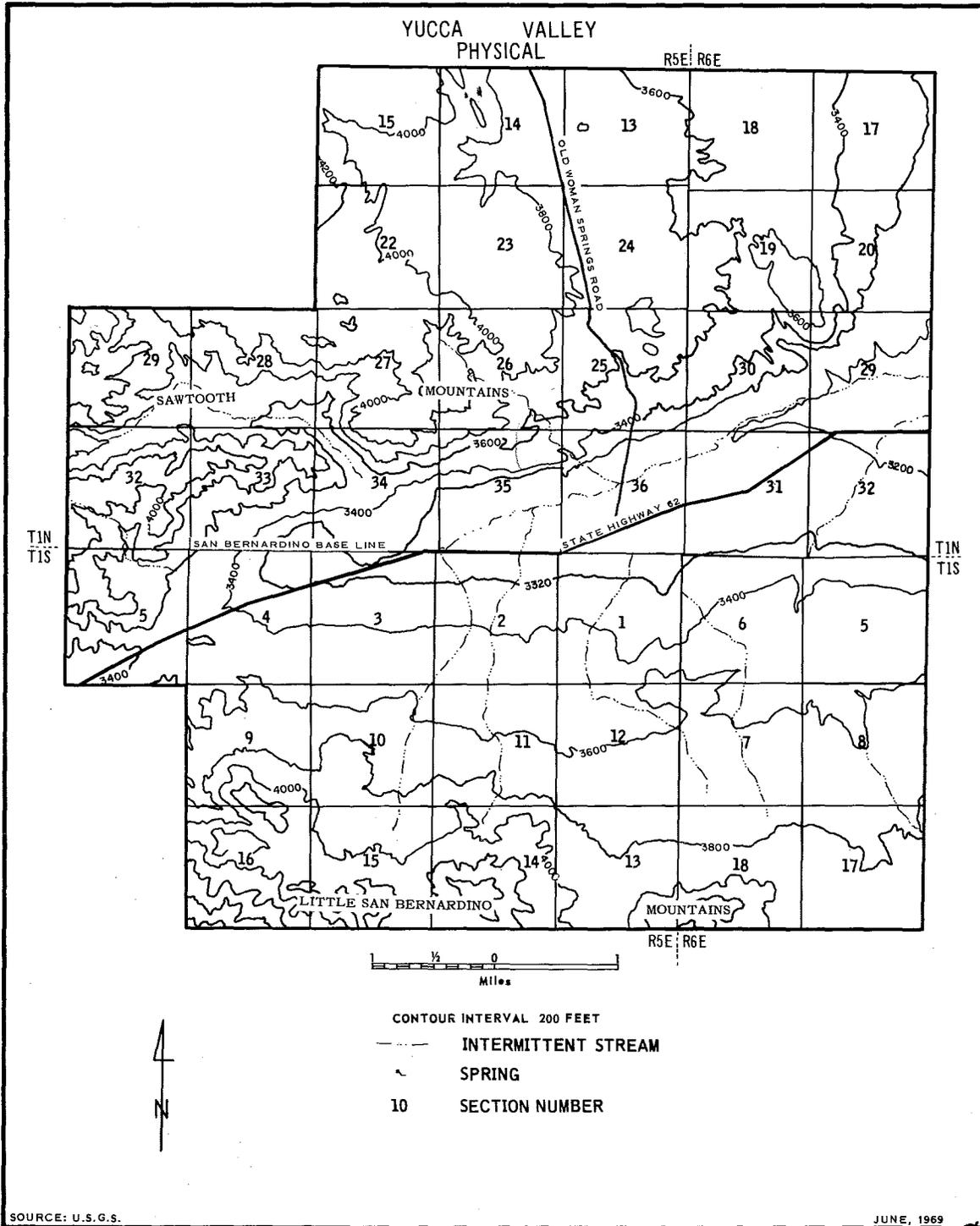


Fig. 4

by alluvial material from bordering slopes. On the south are the well developed alluvial slopes from the Little San Bernardino Mountains.¹³ Small hills appear in the valley where basement material rises above the alluvium. This basement material, similar to that in the bordering mountains, consists of granite, quartz monzonite, and permatite dikes.¹⁴

Climatically Yucca Valley is also in the "High Desert" regime with average annual precipitation about five inches and occurring mostly in the winter and spring months with summer thundershowers. Precipitation both on the upper slopes which rise above 5,000 feet and on the valley which has an average elevation of 3,300 feet recharges the ground water.

This ground water recharged by infiltration of run-off down the slopes of the Sawtooth and Little San Bernardino Mountains is most important to the domestic water supply. The ground water supplies most domestic water through wells in the valley, some of which are near the surface and others at depths of 500 feet.¹⁵ Movement of ground water is locally impeded by what are presumed to be displacements along faults which separate the main valley into smaller ground water basins.

Vegetation is similar to that in Morongo Valley except for the occurrence of Joshua tree in large stands in the undeveloped portions of the valley. Several introduced deciduous trees have been planted near dwellings on the

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golf course, and in parks.

Cultural Setting

Yucca Valley was also surveyed in 1855 by the United States General Land Office, thus establishing a uniform land system in the area. The first white settlement in the valley began in 1881 when a well was dug and barn, corral, and water trough were built nearby to accommodate cattlemen who drove herds through the valley.¹⁶

Although there was some settlement in the valley in the late nineteenth century, there were no recorded filings or patents for homesteads until 1910. After this date acquisition of public land followed with parcels of various sizes being homesteaded. In the early 1950's tracts of government five-acre lots were also opened to acquisition by those who would improve upon them.

The use of land in Yucca Valley has changed greatly from early livestock raising and attempts at alfalfa cultivation to residential, resort, and commercial-service uses. Extensive subdivision occurred in the community after the first unit was laid out in 1946-47. Subdivided acreage is dispersed throughout the community, with large empty tracts of private land as well as government small tracts interspersed (Fig. 3b).

Estimates of present population range from 5,700 to 9,000.¹⁷ Population growth led to the establishment of several services which cater to both the resident and weekend-tourist populations. As in Morongo Valley, most

commercial development has taken place along the state highway as it runs east-west through the community. Despite its increased growth the community has remained unincorporated and relies upon the county for some public services.

PROCEDURE

The following procedure was designed to try to establish those factors which explain the differentiation of settlement and land use patterns in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley:

1. Field mapping of current patterns.
2. Collection of historical land acquisition data from the public records of the Bureau of Land Management.
3. Collection of present land use and ownership data from the San Bernardino County Planning Department and Tax Assessor's Office.
4. Interviewing of local residents and officials.
5. Library research.

This study is presented in three remaining parts. First, a discussion of the Federal Land Acts and the resultant patterns of land acquisition in each community; second, changes in population of each community, patterns of settlement and land use, and the subsequent organization of community services; and third, conclusions.

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CHAPTER II

LAND ACQUISITION PATTERNS: BASIS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

The differentiation of Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley in their settlement and land use patterns is in part due to the manner in which public land was acquired through the provisions of several public land acts. Most were enacted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but most of the land was taken up in the twentieth century.

The patterns of land acquisition under these acts were spatial reflections of decisions made by both the Federal Government in its disposition of public land, and of private citizens and corporations in their acquisition of the public land over time.

The period of land acquisition under the Texas Pacific Railroad Act, the Homestead acts, Desert Land Act, and Timber and Stone Act was relatively short, being about thirty years from 1910 to the late 1930's (Table 1). The period of acquisition under the Small Tract Act was much shorter, from 1949 to 1957. The events which transpired during those two periods are important in the explanation of the patterns of public land acquisition in each community.

TEXAS PACIFIC RAILROAD ACT

The acquisition of public land by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company through a provision of the Texas Pacific Railroad Act of 1871 (16 Stat. 573) has had a major impact

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND PERIOD OF LAND ACQUISITION UNDER VARIOUS LAND ACTS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES*

MORONGO VALLEY

LAND ACT	1890-1900	1901-1910	1911-1920	1921-1930	1931-1940
HOMESTEAD ACT	1	---	6	6	6
SECOND HOMESTEAD ACT	---	---	1	---	---
DESERT LAND ACT	---	---	6	---	---
TIMBER AND STONE ACT	---	---	1	---	---

YUCCA VALLEY

HOMESTEAD ACT	---	1	9	11	11
SECOND HOMESTEAD ACT	---	---	1	1	1
ENLARGED HOMESTEAD ACT	---	---	---	1	---
DESERT LAND ACT	---	---	1	---	---

*Data compiled by author from Public Land Books 6 and 31 of B.L.M., Riverside, California.

on the pattern of public land acquisition in Yucca Valley but none in Morongo Valley.¹

Due to a provision in the 1871 Act the Southern Pacific Railroad Company could obtain twenty odd-numbered sections of public land per mile of track at a distance no greater than twenty miles on each side of the rail line. However, if land was not available within the twenty mile limit because of prior acquisition, the company could select public lands within thirty miles on each side of the rail line.² When the company selected its route for the line from Mojave, California to Yuma, Arizona, via Los Angeles, it passed through the Coachella Valley, placing both Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley within the grant limits.³

A total of 11,527 acres were obtained by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in Morongo Valley during 1899 (Table 2). However, the company reconveyed all of its land to the Federal Government in March of 1902. There is no evidence to indicate whether the company did this because of the provision to dispose of its land after three years, or because Morongo Valley was part of a forest reserve at the time. In any event, the Federal Government retained control over the future disposition and classification of the public land in Morongo Valley after the land was returned.

In Yucca Valley the Southern Pacific Railroad Company made one early acquisition in 1871, but not until July of 1910 did the company begin to obtain the remaining odd-

numbered sections. A total of 14,483 acres were acquired (Table 2). No land was reconveyed to the Federal Government and the company retained its land beyond the three year limit by mortgaging its land, a procedure ruled legal and accepted as a disposal making the land no longer subject to Federal suits to return it to the public domain.⁴

Therefore, in Yucca Valley the railroad acquired all of the odd-numbered sections, which meant that acquisitions under the other public land acts were confined to the even-numbered sections over which the Federal Government retained control (Fig. 5).

HOMESTEAD ACTS

The Homestead Act of 1862 (12 Stat. 392), the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 (35 Stat. 639), and the Second Homestead Act of 1902 (32 Stat. 203) were the means of large scale land acquisition in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley.⁵ Under both the Homestead Act and the Second Homestead Act 160 acres of public land could be acquired. As many as 480 acres could be obtained through the Enlarged Homestead Act. Some cultivation was required under each, but provision was made for purchase or commutation after certain time limits.

In 1898 the first private acquisition under the Homestead Act was made on 160 acres in Morongo Valley. No acquisitions were made in Yucca Valley at this time. That homesteading did not resume after this first acquisition

TABLE 2

RAILROAD LAND GRANTS IN MORONGO VALLEY AND YUCCA VALLEY*

MORONGO VALLEY		YUCCA VALLEY	
Section	Acres	Section	Acres
1	641.48	1	688.20
3	643.63	3	700.32
5	643	5	710.48
7	638.90	T1S, R5E 9	640
9	640	11	640
11	640	13	640
13	640	15	640
15	640	5	673.64
17	640	T1S, R6E 7	639.36
T1S, R4E		17	640
19	640	13	773.29
21	640	15	640
23	640	23	640
25	640	T1N, R5E 25	649.84
27	640	27	640
29	640	29	640
31	640	33	640
33	640	35	640
35	640	17	640
	11,527.01	T1N, R6E 19	644.60
		29	640
		31	644
			14,483.13

*Source: B.L.M. Public Land Books 6 and 31, Riverside, California.

in Morongo Valley until 1912 may be explained by two factors. First, Morongo Valley was included in a forest reserve withdrawn in 1893 and was not opened to re-entry and settlement until 1911.⁶ Second, in June 1912, an Act (37 Stat. 123) was passed which reduced various requirements of the Homestead Act.⁷

Acquisitions under the Homestead acts in Morongo Valley totaled 2,520 acres, approximately 11% of the total area (Table 3). The choice of location for these homesteads seems to have been associated with the availability of water (Compare Figs. 2 and 6). Of the twenty-one parcels homesteaded, thirteen were located in the lower southwestern portion of the valley. This locale has many ponds and is the channel of Big Morongo Creek. Another cluster of five parcels is in the northeastern portion of the valley located near the lower entrance to Little Morongo Canyon, also the site of ponds and a creek. The remaining homesteads were located in sections 12, 16 and 18.

In Yucca Valley homesteading began in 1910, the same year that Southern Pacific Railroad continued its grant acquisitions. There is no evidence that the area was also included in the withdrawn forest reserve. However, the passage of the 1912 Act may have influenced homesteading after that date.

A total of 5,797 acres, 21% of the total area, were homesteaded in Yucca Valley. These homesteaded parcels presented a checkerboard pattern, with the parcels situated

TABLE 3

AMOUNT OF ACREAGE ACQUIRED UNDER VARIOUS LAND ACTS IN THE TWO COMMUNITIES*

LAND ACT	YUGGA VALLEY	PER CENT OF TOTAL AREA	MORONGO VALLEY	PER CENT OF TOTAL AREA
HOMESTEAD ACT	4942.81	17.96	2360.00	10.24
SECOND HOMESTEAD ACT	454.54	1.65	160.00	.70
ENLARGED HOMESTEAD ACT	400.00	1.45	-----	-----
DESERT LAND ACT	111.87	.40	800.00	3.47
TIMBER AND STONE ACT	-----	-----	160.00	.70
SMALL TRACT ACT	3780.00	13.73	4535.00	19.74

*Data compiled by author from Public Land Books 6 and 31 at B.L.M. Office in Riverside, California.

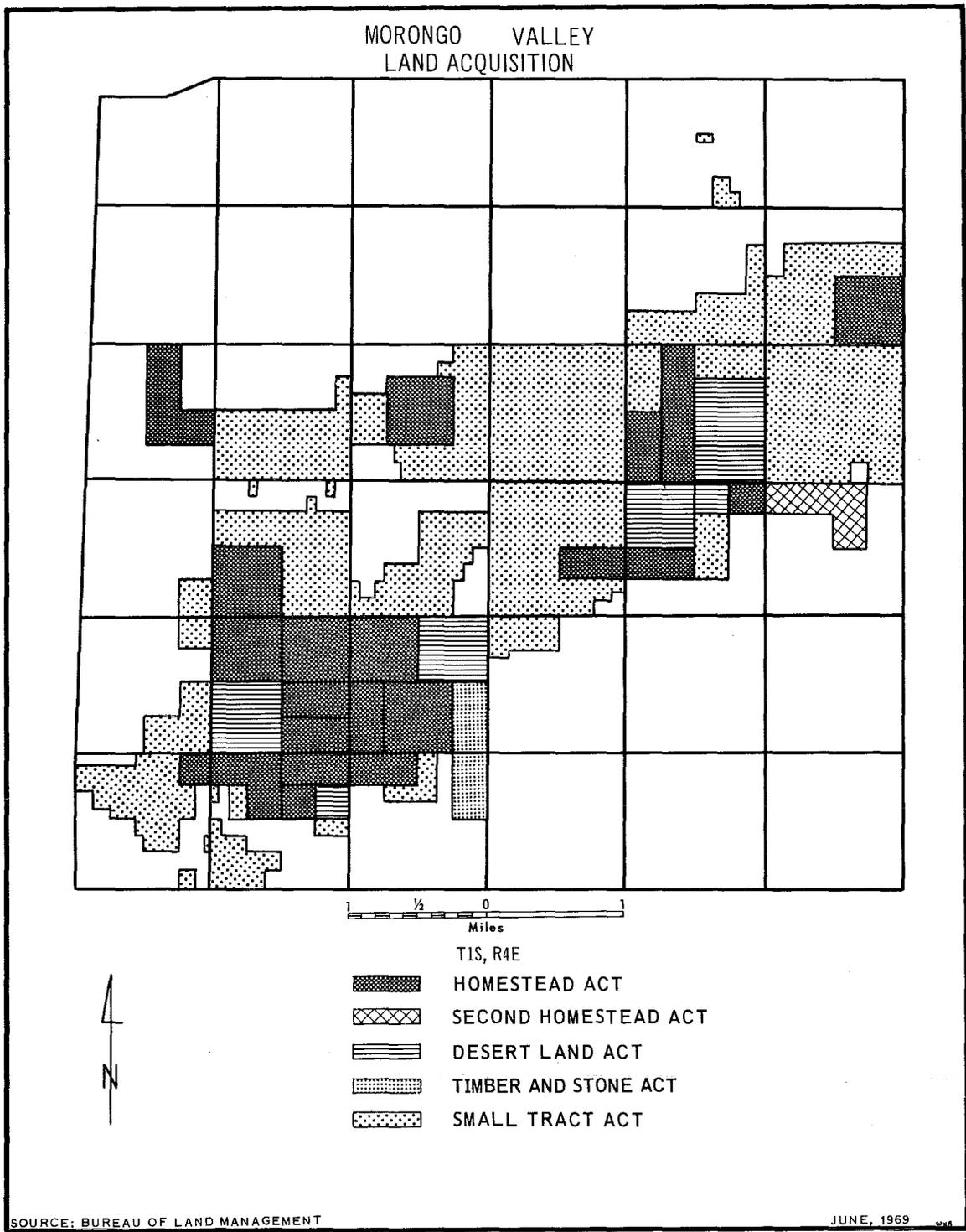


Fig. 6

only within even-numbered sections, because of the railroad owned odd-numbered sections (Fig. 5).

DESERT LAND ACT

The passage of the Desert Land Act in 1877 (19 Stat. 377) was in response to the opinion of some that 160 acre tracts of land were unsuitable for agricultural purposes in the semi-arid portions of the country. The act provided for acquisition of as many as 640 acres of land unfit for cultivation without irrigation.⁸ In 1891 the acreage obtainable was reduced to 320 acres.

Eight hundred acres of public land in six parcels were given final patent under the Desert Land Act in Morongo Valley (Table 3). All were made during the first twenty years of this century. The locations of these parcels were in the same two clusters of homesteaded parcels (Fig. 6).

The availability of water was an important factor in acquiring land under this act because of the irrigation provision. As indicated earlier, some water was available near the two creeks, near which the two clusters of homesteads were located. The use of this water for irrigation was indicated in a report made in 1918.⁹

The irrigation of these Desert Land Act parcels is substantiated in only the settled cluster in the lower southwestern part of the valley where a few hundred acres of cleared, leveled and irrigated land is found. There is no similar evidence of irrigation having been attempted in

the other settlement cluster. This, however, does not mean that some irrigation, if only dropping a bucket of water on the ground, did not take place to gain final patent.

In Yucca Valley only one parcel of 111.87 acres was patented under the Desert Land Act (Fig. 5). This parcel was acquired during the same period as those in Morongo Valley (Table 1). That there was only one parcel acquired under this act in Yucca Valley may be due to the limited availability of water for extensive irrigation.¹⁰

At the time of this acquisition there was only one well which could have been used for irrigation, but the well was 2½ miles distant from the parcel and there is no sign of any pipe line laid between the two. Irrigation of other parcels was limited until more wells were proved successful.

TIMBER AND STONE ACT

The Timber and Stone Act (20 Stat. 89) was passed in 1878. It provided for the acquisition of as many as 160 acres of public land valuable for timber or stone and unfit for cultivation.¹¹ One parcel of land was patented in Morongo Valley under this act. This 160 acre parcel was located in the E½SE¼ of Section 28 and the E½NE¼ of Section 33 (Fig. 6). This site was covered with tamarisk, alder and cottonwood trees which probably satisfied the requirement for timber. No acquisitions were made in Yucca Valley under this act.

SMALL TRACT ACT

The impact of the Small Tract Act of 1938 (52 Stat. 609) in the acquisition of public land was tremendous in both Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley.¹² The act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to sell or lease not more than five acres of certain classified public lands for home, cabin, health, recreational or business sites, subject to reservation to the United States of all gas, oil and other mineral deposits.¹³ To attain final patent some improvement upon the land was to be made, usually the construction of a dwelling which complied with the local building code.

By an Act of June 1954 (68 Stat. 239) the Small Tract Act was amended. This amendment allowed the Secretary of the Interior to permit the sale or lease of small tracts valuable for residence, recreation, business or community site purposes, to individuals, associations, corporations, states, municipalities or other governmental subdivisions, if such sale or lease would not unreasonably interfere with the use of water for grazing or unduly impair the protection of watershed areas.¹⁴

The Small Tract Act is somewhat different from the other public land acts in that the government had control over those areas which could be used for small tract lots. The decision as where to acquire a small tract lot was directed by the government to a greater degree than was the

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case for the other acts. The number of acres actually acquired directly under this act is difficult to determine. Therefore, in this study the total acreage classified in small tracts is used to represent the number of acquisitions.

In Morongo Valley a total of 4,535 acres of public land were acquired under this act (Table 3). The pattern of these small tract lot locations is significant in that they have almost completely been confined to the valley floor and lower slopes (Fig. 6). Only two sections, 13 and 15, were completely taken up. The major result, however, is a dispersed pattern of small tract lots throughout Morongo Valley, generally filling in the open areas among the larger parcels of land obtained through the other public land acts. Many small tract areas adjoin larger parcels of land in the two clusters of settlement (Fig. 3a).

In Yucca Valley a different pattern of acquisition of small tract lots developed. A total of 3,780 acres were acquired (Table 3). However, because the Southern Pacific Railroad Company owned the odd-numbered sections, only some parts of the unacquired land in the even-numbered sections could be used for small tract lots (Fig. 5). Thus, some even-numbered sections contain only small tract lots, while others contain both small tracts and larger parcels of land.

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6. Secretary of State, United States Statutes at Large, Vol. 27, Proclamation No. 48, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 1068-1069. Also see O'Neal, p. 115.
7. Samuel Trask Dana and Myron Krueger, California Lands, (Washington, D. C.: The American Forestry Association, 1958), p. 249.
8. Superintendent of Documents, United States Code, Vol. 4, Title 43, Sections 321-329, pp. 6279-6283.
9. Thompson, pp. 642-643.
10. Ibid., p. 642.
11. Paul W. Gates, History of Public Land Law Development, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 551. Also see, Superintendent of Documents, United States Code, Vol. 4, Title 43, Sections 311-315, p. 6271.
12. For an account of the impact of this act on San Bernardino County, see Schneider, p. 22.
13. Schneider, p. 23.
14. Dana and Krueger, p. 260.

CHAPTER III

SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE PATTERNS

The present settlement and land use patterns of Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley are the results of numerous political, social and economic decisions associated with the private acquisition of public land. The two communities have been spatially differentiated in their settlement and land use patterns since the first acquisitions of land under the public land acts. However, due to changes in population and land division and ownership, as well as subsequent changes in community organization, Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley have become even more spatially differentiated.

POPULATION

The residential population of Morongo Valley increased from 88 in 1950 to 810 in 1969--an increase of 920 per cent. During this same period Yucca Valley increased from 351 to 5,700--an increase of 1623 per cent.¹ Several factors account for this population growth in both communities in the last twenty-five years: (1) the expanded need for recreational and residential areas within a reasonable automobile commuting distance from a growing Los Angeles metropolitan area; (2) the opening of many acres by the Federal Government during this period to private acquisition, as well as the marketing of subdivided lots within the communities; (3) increased affluence and

leisure time, as well as early retirement allowing some people to move to the desert permanently or at least to maintain a second home in these areas; and (4) the advent of good car and house air-conditioning and other technological advances have helped to make living in the desert more comfortable for many who probably would not have thought of living there before.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

In both communities the change in settlement patterns has been the result of land division and alteration of land holding. Subdivision has been one of the major types of land division, operating in two forms: (1) the planned subdivision or record of survey; and (2) the lot split. The planned subdivision is a unit of land which has been divided into certain lot sizes according to public regulations and formally recorded with the county. The unit is planned in the sense that streets are usually laid out and paved and utilities are made available to each lot. The record of survey is similar to the planned subdivision in that lots are laid out, surveyed and recorded with the county. However, unlike the planned subdivision there is usually no further development of the unit.²

The other form of subdivision, the lot split, is just what its name implies. The owner of a parcel of land may decide to split his lot into a number of lots, depending on the size of his parcel and the legal minimum lot size.

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The lot split is not recorded with the county as a subdivision and therefore little control is exercised over this form of subdivision. Lot splits have occurred on all sizes of land parcels from the small tract lot to whole sections.³

Another type of land division which is prominent in both communities is the five-acre small tract lot. As mentioned above the small tract lots were located on public land under the control of the Federal Government. The Federal Government classified what public land would be in small tract lots and decided what lots would be opened to acquisition.

Morongo Valley

Parcels of public land acquired under the public land acts are shown in Figure 6. These totaled 7,855 acres or approximately 26% of the total community area. Of this total the largest portion, 4,535 acres, was in small tract lots.

The location of small tract lots has been prominent in the development of the community's settlement pattern. The small tract lots were confined to the valley floor and lower slopes, as were the other acquired parcels. The governmental decisions determining the exact locations of the lots resulted in the filling in of much of the open public land areas between the other land parcels.

The remaining acreage, 3,320 acres, acquired through

the other Federal land acts, were obtained in various sized parcels. These have undergone vast change through subdivision, with 855 acres (25%) developed as planned subdivision or record of survey units, and 1,485 acres as lot splits.

Planned subdivision units and record of survey units, as well as lot splits have been developed on many of the large parcels acquired in the lower southwestern portion of the valley, forming one of the community's two settlement concentrations. Lot splits and one ten-acre planned subdivision have been developed on parcels acquired in the northeastern part of the valley, forming the other node of more dense agglomerated settlement (Fig. 7).

The remaining acreage of the community is owned by several governmental units, including the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation. Other acreage is owned by the county, state and Community Services District.

Yucca Valley

The amount of land acquired under all the public land acts totaled 24,173 acres, which is about 90% of the total community area. Of this amount, 3,780 acres were acquired as small tract lots and 14,483 acres in the railroad land grant; the remainder being acquired through the other public land acts.

The pattern of these acquisitions was presented in Figure 5 in which a checkerboard pattern of land acquisition

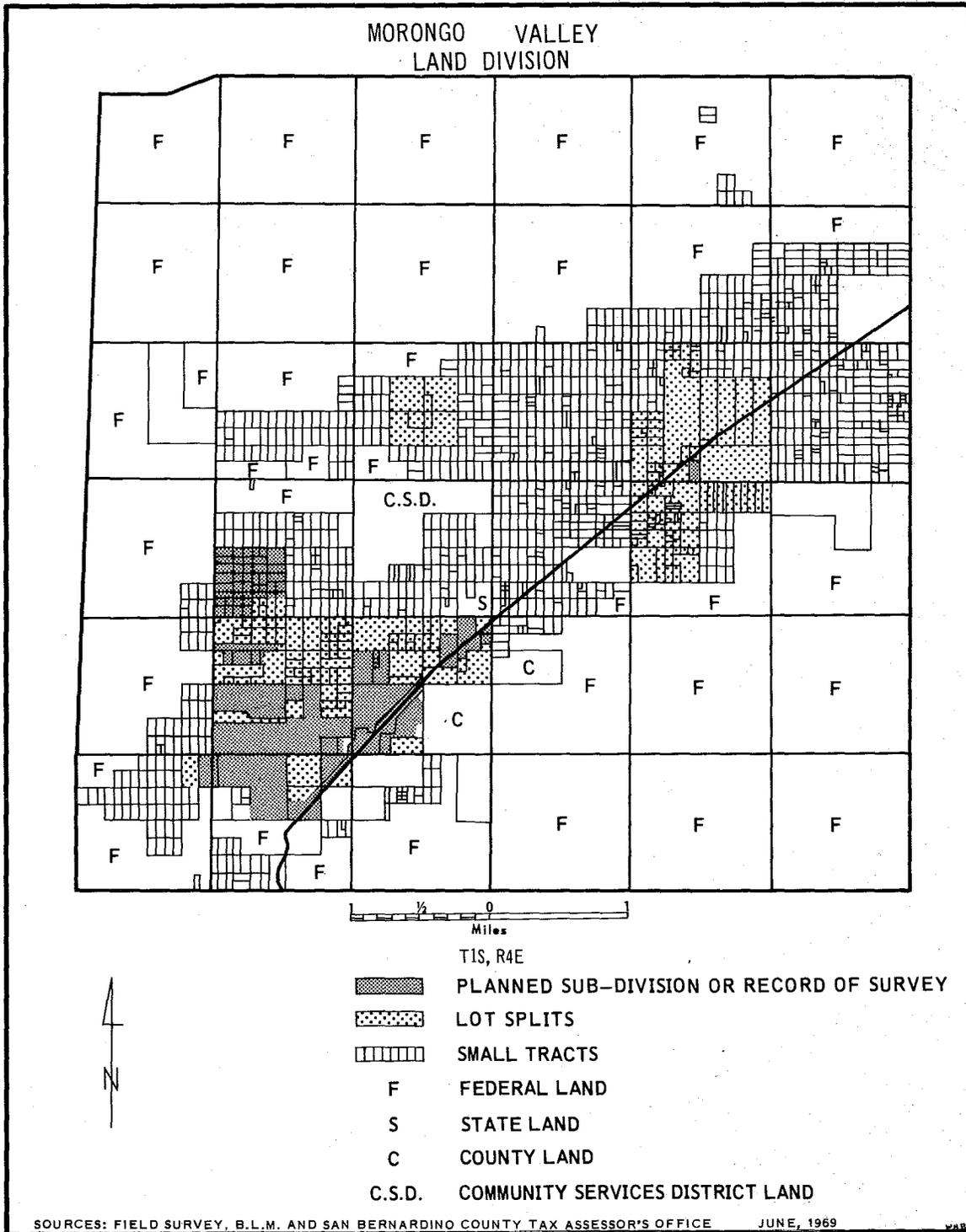


Fig. 7

is evident. Small tract lots and other land parcels were restricted to the even-numbered sections because of the railroad ownership of all odd-numbered sections. The exact location of small tract lots was again left to governmental decision, while the location of the other parcels was a combination of both private and governmental decisions.

Of the land granted to the Southern Pacific Railroad Company approximately 5,260 acres (35%) have been developed in planned subdivisions and 5,120 acres (34%) in lot splits. In other words, about 64% of the railroad land has been subdivided, while the remainder has been retained by the company or else leased or sold but has not been developed.

The land acquired through the public land acts, except the small tracts, has also changed, with 1,080 acres (18%) developed in planned subdivisions, and approximately 3,840 acres (64%) as lot splits (Fig. 8). Therefore, approximately 82% of the acreage obtained through the public land acts other than the small tracts, has been subdivided.

Considering both the railroad land and the other acreages which have been subdivided, approximately 15,300 acres (55%) of the total community have undergone change through subdivision in the last twenty-five years. Unlike Morongo Valley, there are not two nodes of concentrated settlement, but rather a more homogeneous settled area with gradual transition from concentrated to widely dispersed patterns. Concentrated settlement is found within large

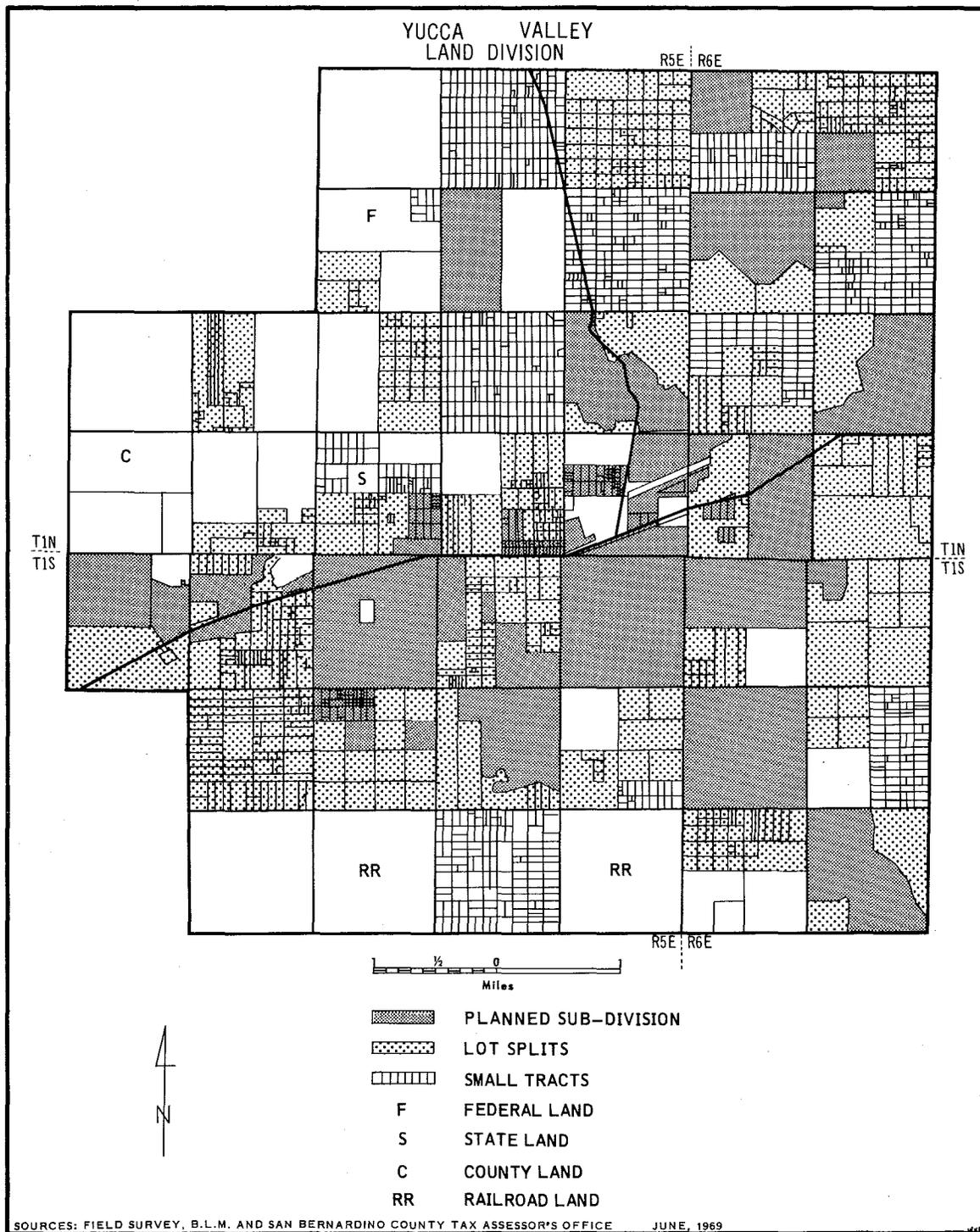


Fig. 8

subdivided units, while the more dispersed settlement is located on larger parcels and in the small tract areas.

LAND USE PATTERNS

In most cases changes in land use and development followed land subdivision in both communities. The present zoning patterns of each are generally representative of the present land uses. Three land use zoning categories for each community are: (1) residential, (2) commercial, and (3) industrial.

Residential

Land used for residential purposes is by far the largest consumer of space in the two communities. Land zoned for residential uses also makes up the largest portion of the zoned land of each. Residency is of two types: permanent and seasonal or temporary. Residency differs in the two communities and reflects the nature of residential land use in each.

In Morongo Valley the land zoned for residential use comprises more than 90% of the total community. However, the land actually used for residential purposes is limited to a smaller area (Fig. 9) which consists of subdivided lots, small tract lots and some larger parcels. Developed small tract lots make up approximately 2,500 acres. The remaining residential land, in single and multiple dwelling development, totals about 200 acres.⁴

Maintenance of a relatively low density of residential

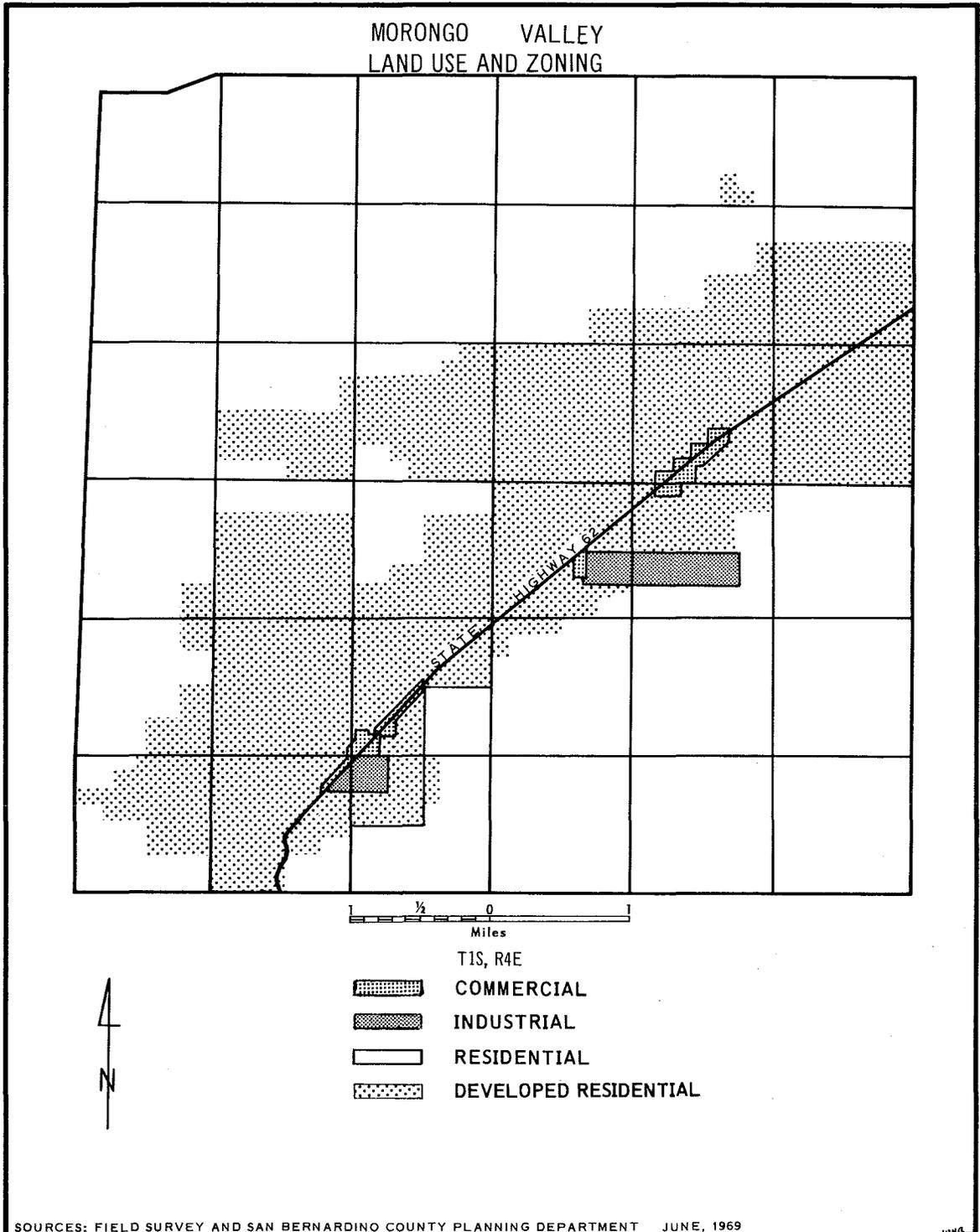


Fig. 9

development except in the two nodes of concentrated settlement is part of the policy of the County Planning Department to control development in the community.⁵ Permanent residences, which are usually occupied year round, represent approximately 40% of the total housing. The remainder consists of temporary, seasonal or recreational residences.⁶ The results of special housing study carried out by the county in Morongo Valley demonstrated that occupancy of a small tract dwelling is more likely to be on a temporary basis.⁷

Land zoned for residential use accounts for about 90% of the total area of Yucca Valley and as in Morongo Valley this makes up the largest portion of the land use zoning categories. Of the land in planned subdivisions only about 1,000 acres of about 6,300 have been developed for residential use. Approximately 45% of the 8,000 acres in lot splits has been developed. And in the case of the small tract lots only about 20% of the 3,780 acres has been developed (Fig. 10).⁸

The County Planning Department has designated three levels of residential density for Yucca Valley based on the amount of acreage available for development, the nature of the local topography and the present development of residential land: (1) low density--one dwelling per acre; (2) medium density--two to three dwellings per acre; and (3) high density--four or more per acre, the current maximum being twelve.⁹

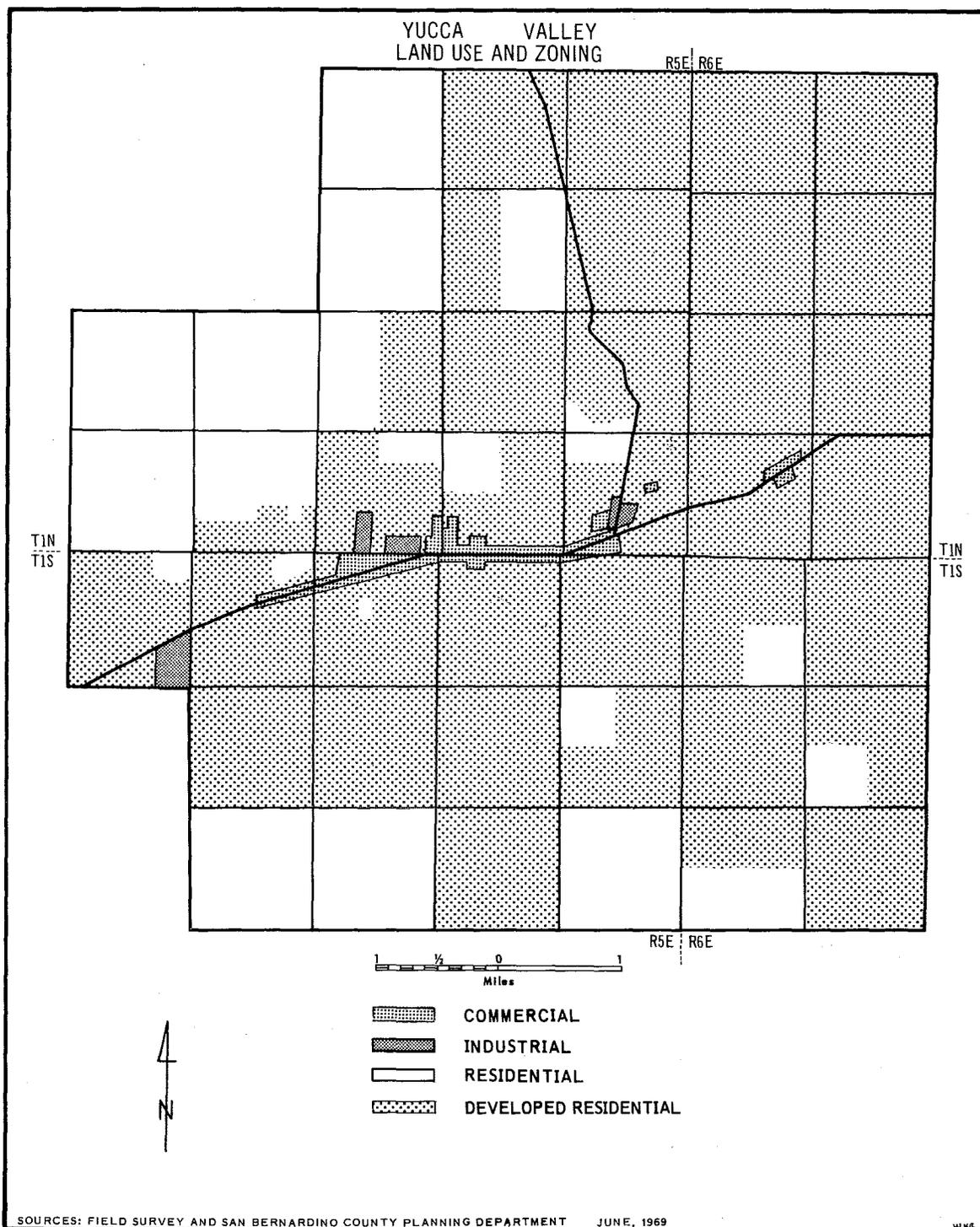


Fig. 10

These proposed residential densities correspond roughly to present developed residential land. The areas of rough topography, the Sawtooth and Little San Bernardino Mountains, have remained almost completely undeveloped and constitute the area of low density. The area of medium density is comprised of acreage in small tract lots, planned subdivisions and lot splits, mostly single family dwellings. The area of high density is restricted to the greatly developed acreage in both commercial and residential uses found along the state highway, dwelling units being single and multiple family types.

In Yucca Valley the vacancy rate has declined from 24.4% in September, 1963 to 18.7% in April, 1966.¹⁰ This seems to indicate the increasing importance of the permanent residence in contrast to the more seasonal or temporary residence in Morongo Valley.

Commercial

Land zoned for commercial use in both communities is highway oriented. The state highway serves as the main artery for both communities, connecting with one of the main routes to Los Angeles to the west and other urban centers in the southwest and east. The highway was oiled in 1934 and paved in 1947, nine years after the first planned subdivision was laid out in Morongo Valley and first subdivision was planned in Yucca Valley.¹¹

In Morongo Valley two major areas of commercial development along the state highway comprise about ten acres

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located on subdivided land. One other site which is zoned for commercial use but has not been developed is in Section 22 (Fig. 9).¹² Community oriented establishments such as a barber shop, hardware store, appliance repair shop, laundromat, two groceries and a liquor store-delicatessen are located in these two major commercial areas. Other businesses such as motels, gas stations, and cafes, are both highway and community oriented (Table 4).

Currently, the major area of commercial development in Yucca Valley is a strip five miles long (Fig. 10). The core area of this strip which is in Section 3, T1S, R5E, was part of the first subdivision in the community. Commercial establishments in this strip are located upon subdivided lots, but the relatively low density of development is indicated by numerous open and undeveloped lots which lie between some of the establishments.

The total amount of land developed in commercial uses is approximately 56 acres.¹³ Local and highway services are located throughout the strip. Gas stations, restaurants and cafes, and motels make up the more highway oriented businesses; while supermarkets, banks, drug stores, garages, variety stores, car lots, real estate offices, and professional and public facilities are mostly community related (Table 4).

Industrial

Developed industrial land and land zoned for this use are quite different in each community. Although industry

TABLE 4

TABULATION OF SELECTED SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

Facilities	Yucca Valley	Morongo Valley
Churches	14	1
Library	1	1
Post Office	1	1
Banks and Savings	3	0
Motels	11	2
Trailer Parks	4	2
Markets	3	2
Delicatessen	3	2
Cafes and Restaurants	12	4
Gas Stations	11	5
Real Estate Offices	11	5
Hospitals	1	0
Fire Stations	3	2
Airport	1	0
Golf Course	1	0
Parks	7	2
Schools	3	1

Sources: Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and Grace Munson, Morongo Valley of Many Beautiful Waters, Orange, California: Time Saver Multi-Copy, 1968.

can be important in the development of a community's economy, it has made little headway in Yucca Valley and none in Morongo Valley.

Two sites totaling about 200 acres designated for industrial use are as yet undeveloped in Morongo Valley. One is located within portions of Sections 32 and 33 near one of the settlement concentrations, and the other in portions of Sections 22 and 23 near the other settlement node (Fig. 9).

In Yucca Valley land is zoned for industry on parcels of varying size in close proximity to the commercial strip (Fig. 10). Only about ten acres are being used at this time for a concrete products company, a beer distributor, a construction company, a van and storage company, and an equipment-service-maintenance yard.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

With growth of population came changes in the organization of public services. San Bernardino County has been responsible for many public services to unincorporated settlements, but with the increases in population some local adjustments have been made in the organization of these services.

In 1958 a local Community Services District was organized to provide fire protection and street lighting and to maintain a five-acre park in Morongo Valley. The district is operated by locally elected directors. Funds are provided through a tax levy of one dollar per \$100

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assessed valuation, which is redistributed to the district by the county.¹⁵

Police protection, a library, street maintenance, land use zoning, and a rubbish disposal site are provided by the county. Water, electricity, and telephone services are offered by public utility companies and some mutual water associations. One elementary school operated by the Morongo Unified School District is located in the community.

Yucca Valley has also responded to increased public service needs by establishing several administrative units, which provide fire protection, street lighting, parks and recreation areas, water, and hospital services. All of these districts lie within the community boundaries of Yucca Valley, none covering the entire community area. Each was established through the passage of bond issues and is operated by locally elected boards.¹⁶

The county provides other services, such as police protection, a library, road and street maintenance, land use zoning, and flood control. The county rubbish disposal site services both Yucca Valley and Morongo Valley. There is one elementary, one junior high, and one high school in the community, all administered by the Morongo Unified School District.

Electricity, telephone, and water are provided by public utilities. The public utility which supplies water serves only part of the community, most of the remainder

being served by a county water district. Those areas not served by either are provided water through mutual water associations or have water hauled by commercial companies, or have their own wells.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER III

1. Data on population supplied by the San Bernardino County Planning Department and also, Yucca Valley Community General Plan, p. 2.
2. It should be noted that the record of survey unit form of subdivision was discontinued by San Bernardino County in 1959.
3. Lot splits on small tract lots are not considered because of lack of data.
4. Morongo Valley Comprehensive Zoning Plan, no pagination.
5. Ibid.
6. San Bernardino County Planning Commission, Population and Housing Data, Vol. 1, No. 15 (San Bernardino, California: April 1966), no pagination.
7. Morongo Valley Comprehensive Zoning Plan, no pagination.
8. Yucca Valley Community General Plan, p. 9.
9. Ibid., p. 16.
10. Population and Housing Data, Vol. 1, No. 15, no pagination.
11. Clark and Cowzens, p. 15.
12. Morongo Valley Comprehensive Zoning Plan, no pagination. The figure of ten acres was extrapolated from nine acres after field check.
13. Yucca Valley Community General Plan, p. 10.
14. Ibid., p. 10.
15. Grace Munson, Morongo Valley of Many Beautiful Waters, (Orange, California: Time Saver Multi-Copy, 1968), p. 2.
16. Yucca Valley Community General Plan, p. 31.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

For this study a historical approach has necessarily been employed for an understanding of and explanation for differentiation of the settlement and land use patterns in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley. The manner in which the two communities have become spatially differentiated has, in part, been the result of various decisions concerning the disposal and acquisition of public land. These decisions were formed within the socio-economic-political system of the United States and are reflective of changing attitudes and values about the use of public land. Each was initiated at some level within the system from the Federal Government down to the local government, and from the large corporation down to the individual decision maker.

Because of the complexity of these decisions and the limitations of this study, only certain decisions have been identified which were directly related to the development of the settlement and land use patterns of both communities. These decisions were manifested in two inter-related processes: (1) the disposal of the public land by the Federal Government; and (2) the acquisition of this land by individuals and corporations, as well as other governmental units.

These processes are interrelated because the

mechanisms for public land disposal and acquisition were instituted at the Federal level. These mechanisms took form as public land acts and are the result of governmental decisions reflecting the existing philosophies of the use and ownership of the public domain at the time of their enactment.

Certain public land acts were identified as having influenced the development of settlement and land use patterns in each community: Texas Pacific Railroad Act, Homestead acts, Desert Land Act, Timber and Stone Act, and Small Tract Act. Most of these were enacted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with most acquisitions coming in the twentieth century.

The decisions of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company to reconvey the land granted to it in Morongo Valley through the provisions of the Texas Pacific Railroad Act back to the United States, and to retain its land grant in Yucca Valley served as the major factor in the basis of differentiation between the two communities. The reconveyance of its land in Morongo Valley placed that land again under Federal control, while the retention of its land in Yucca Valley placed only the public land in even-numbered sections under Federal control.

The acquisition of land through the other public land acts was also important in the development of settlement and land use patterns. In Morongo Valley the availability of water was an important factor in the decisions as where

to acquire land under the Homestead acts and the Desert Land Act. Two clusters of parcels were acquired near the two major sources of water, with only a few parcels located elsewhere in the valley. A different pattern developed in Yucca Valley because public land for acquisition was located within even-numbered sections, some of which were completely taken up in acquired parcels forming a checkerboard. Water does not seem to have played an important role in these decisions to locate.

Acquisition of five-acre small tract lots in both Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley was controlled as to location by the Federal Government. Small tract lots were designated by the government adjacent to and among parcels of land obtained through the other public land acts. In Morongo Valley this resulted in the filling in of open public land on the valley floor with small tract lots. Small tract lots in Yucca Valley were confined to the open public land in some of the even-numbered sections.

The present settlement and land use patterns of the two communities have developed from the above patterns as the result of changes in land holding and development. Most development has been in the form of land subdivision.

In Morongo Valley the small tract lots have remained sparsely settled with scattered dwellings. Most of the acreage acquired through the other public land acts has been subdivided. Construction upon subdivided lots has resulted in increased density of settlement in the two

clusters where land was acquired.

In Yucca Valley much of the acreage acquired by the railroad and under the various land acts has also been subdivided. However, no real nodes or clusters of settlement have formed. The availability of many large parcels adjoining each other was beneficial to land developers. A more uniform pattern of settlement has developed with subdivisions located in many adjoining sections and small tract lots and undeveloped parcels in some scattered sections.

With these changes in settlement patterns have come changes in land use patterns. Three land use categories were identified: (1) residential; (2) commercial; and (3) industrial. Residential land is the major use category for both communities, with Yucca Valley far surpassing Morongo Valley in acreage developed. Several small tract and subdivided lots have been attractive residential sites for the construction of recreational and permanent dwellings. In both communities many subdivided lots remain undeveloped.

In the two communities the pattern of commercially used land is similar in that most commercial development has been along the state highway where it transects subdivided areas. However, Yucca Valley far exceeds Morongo Valley in acreage developed and types of establishments. In each area industrial land use is minimal; only a few acres are currently developed in Yucca Valley, and

none in Morongo Valley.

The availability of large parcels of land seems to have been one of the most important factors in the spatial differentiation of present settlement and land use patterns in the two communities. Developers were able to obtain many more parcels of land in Yucca Valley than in Morongo Valley. However, they subdivided these in both communities and put them on the land market at a time when people were being attracted by the small tract lots. This was also a time when early retirement, affluence and technological advancements made land ownership and a second home available to a growing population.

Thus, the decisions involved in and the manner of selection of public land through the provisions of the various public land acts in the two communities seems to explain, in part, their present differences in settlement and land use patterns. Other factors have influenced the development of each community, but these have not been considered in detail in this study because of data and time limitations. The impact of land acquisitions in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley under the public land acts points to the necessity of more historical research into the impact of public land laws on the formation of settlement and land use patterns in other areas.

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