

Will Rogers Ranch, Stables
14253 Sunset Boulevard
Pacific Palisades
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2273-C

HABS
CAL,
19-PAPA,
1-C-

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Historic American Buildings Survey
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Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILL ROGERS RANCH, STABLES

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Location: Will Rogers State Historic Park, 14253 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles County, California.

USGS Quadrangle: Topanga Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 11: 3,769,250 m North; 360,440 m East.

Significance: The frame stables, built from second-hand horse stalls joined by a dramatic new rotunda, housed the polo ponies and horses, as well as their equipage, used by Will Rogers in his leisure-time pursuit of riding and roping.

Description: Larger and more imposing than the other ranch buildings, the stables originally consisted of two rectangular wood-frame wings about 66' long, joined by a central two-story rotunda measuring 50' in diameter. Rogers later took a dislike to the height of the rotunda, and had it lowered.

The roof of the wings is a shallow-pitch gable with open eaves and a raised monitor that terminates at the rotunda; the rotunda is topped by a round cupola with louvered facets and a low-pitched conical roof; both are covered with wood shingles. The monitor walls feature eleven bays of louvered vents; the one-story northwest and southeast facades are twelve bays long, each containing a suspended nine-light wood sash. The rotunda itself features a trio of identical windows interrupted by a wide, segmentally arched, central doorway on each exterior side and on the interior leading into the wings. The exterior is painted to accentuate the modular-like braced framing construction; the interior features exposed roof trusses.

The interior wing spaces are composed of nineteen stalls, each measuring 11'-6" x 10'-3", four tackrooms, lodging for grooms, and an office, as well housing approximately thirty horses.

History: In 1928 Rogers acquired the two stable wings from J. Wooden's horse ranch in the San Fernando Valley. He then had them moved to the present site, where Lee Adamson constructed the central rotunda and modified the existing structures to Rogers' needs. The whole undertaking cost \$5,000, though little was spent on the stalls themselves. Rogers wrote to Adamson, "Don't monkey with those stalls much, there is nothing to do with them but put in some clay."

Will Rogers Jr. recalled that his father wanted the rotunda as a space in which to exercise the horses during bad weather. Both sons remember the structure being completed in 1929. The rotunda was reduced to one story because Rogers thought the lofty space resembled a capitol dome and, he said, "I sure don't want my horses mixed up in politics." The upper band of windows was removed, and carpenters removed 6" sections of supporting posts until the roof could be lowered into place.

Sources: See **Main House** (CA-2273-A).

Historian: See **Main House** (CA-2273-A).