

THE STORY OF " LOS ENCINOS "
INTRODUCTION

Los Encinos has quite a colorful history.

In 1769 (Aug.5), the Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola and party (Father Crespi, Constanco, 63 soldiers and Indians) camped here (for 2 days and 2 nights) on their way from San Diego to Monterey. (They had been sent by Father Junipero Serra.) They had followed an old Indian trail over Sepulveda Pass and along what is now Ventura Blvd. and were attracted here by the natural spring surrounded by 200 or more friendly Indians. (Encinos' means "oaks" in Spanish.)

Years later, the Franciscan Padres also stopped here while looking for a site to establish another Mission.

Sometime later, three Indians squatted on this land; named Ramon, Roque and Francisco. For years they tried desperately to obtain a grant to the land, but with no success. Finally Ramon drifted away, and eventually the other two died, leaving their wives to carry on alone.

Then Vicente de la Osa, of Spanish origin, heard of the plight of these two women and petitioned for the land grant for them. He was successful, and obtained the grant to the 4,460 acres from Pio Pico the last governor of California under Mexican rule. Of course the women were very grateful and offered him Ramon's share; saying, "We don't know where he is, he may be dead, so you take his share." But de la Osa said, "No, I'll take his share, but I'll pay you \$100 for it." And it was well that he did, for whom should appear later but Ramon, wanting his share!

Then California joined the Union, and taxes became due. The Indian women knew nothing about taxes and had no money. Would you believe that one woman's share amounted to \$5.48 and she couldn't pay it! So de la Osa came to her rescue and paid it for her, thereby receiving her share. The following year the same thing happened and again he paid the taxes and received the

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remaining share. Now he owned the entire grant of 4,460 acres.

The grant was bounded by ^{what is now} Encino Reservoir, Sepulveda Dam, Topham St. and White Oak Ave. (approximately).

In 1849 he built this adobe. It is about 120² years old and took several years to build. The walls are 3 feet thick, the foundations are 3 feet deep. It was plastered inside and out; that is why it is in such good condition. The floor was also of adobe, originally. (Adobe is a heavy clay, mixed with water and straw, formed into blocks and let to dry hard in the sun.)
See
(Cut-away on west wall.)

There are 9 rooms, and each one is fully furnished and dedicated to show the history of Los Encinos, and the succession of ownership (especially for the school children).

69.76
1849
122

INDIAN ROOM
(Previous to 1769 - up to 1845)

This room we call the Indian Room. The Indians were Gabrielenos, a branch of the Shoshonees, and quite friendly. (They lived in bee-hive-shaped huts made of grasses and reeds; lived by hunting, and by gathering acorns, wild fruits, berries, seeds and nuts.)

Most of the artifacts on display here were unearthed on the premises by State archeologists.

Fossils of fish, bird wing and leaf; found around the lake.

Metates (grinding bowls) and manos (pestles), used to grind acorns into meal, or flour.

Finely woven baskets are Shoshone (the others are Mexican). The ground meal was placed in them (like the funnel-shaped one hanging by the window) and boiling water poured over it to take out the bitterness.

Over the fireplace; an Indian rug of special interest since it ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~flag~~ ^{flag} of the United States woven into it, relatively recent (after 1912) because it contains 48 stars. ^{Not made by our Indians, of course, but} We feel it is worthy of display.

On the mantel; busts of the three Indians, Ramon, Roque and Francisco; also of Gaspar de Portola and Father Crespi.

Palm switch by fireplace; used to beat berries and seeds from the bushes into the shallow baskets.

In bookcase; arrowheads, beads and shells

In display case; souvenirs and authentic history book of Los Encinos, on sale by the Historical Society. Proceeds are used to further the restoration of Los Encinos.

(Fireplace, built considerably later, by Amestoy.

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CHAPEL

Approximately 1783 - Franciscan Fathers came

This little chapel is dedicated to the Franciscan Padres who made this site their headquarters while they explored the Valley for a suitable place to establish another Mission. (At first they were going to locate their Mission here, but because the water was unsuited to agriculture, they decided on San Fernando and built the Mission there in 1797.

When de la Osa built this adobe, he had a little chapel here for use by the family and for the wayside padres travelling on foot along El Camino Real.

It is available to the public for small, intimate weddings of any denomination, with perhaps a reception on the lawn, for a nominal fee.

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DE LA OSA BEDCHAMBER
1849-1869

This room is dedicated to Vicente de la Osa, who built this adobe, and his wife, Rita Guillen. The oil painting is none other than he, the picture in the round frame is of Rita.

All of the furniture is authentic, typical of early California ranch houses, and much of it is original. The bed, dresser, trunks, water bottles and other incidentals were donated by two great-great grand-daughters. (The furniture was brought around the Horn, by Clipper ship, and was actually used in this house.)

Candles were the only means of light. They were hand-made.

The charcoal brazier provided the only heat.

They raised 15 children here, and two adopted children.

One of their daughters was Manuelita; picture in the square frame to the left of the dresser; and her husband was James Thompson; picture in the square frame to the right of the dresser. He was a deputy sheriff in Los Angeles.

Vicente lived here about 20 years and after his death (in 1862; he is buried in San Fernando Mission cemetery) his wife carried on for about a year then sold out to her son-in-law, James Thompson.

Thick walls made the house cool in summer and warm in winter.

Hand-carved black walnut Spanish chest; donated by the Historical Soc.

Sewing box of inlaid wood; once belonged to the Sepulveda family.

Thompson kept the ranch for about $\frac{3}{4}$ years, then sold it to the Garnier brothers.

Every room has an outside door, opening on opposite sides of the building, for cross-ventilation and easy access. This is typical Spanish construction, as are the rooms, all in a row. The doors between the rooms have been removed for showing visitors through.

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GARNIER DINEDROOM
1869-1878

The Garnier brothers, Philippe and Eugene, were French Basque sheep herders. ^{Pictures of} ~~There~~ Philippe and his wife, Marie Crovelin, beside the bed. We have no picture of Eugene, though he was important to this place.

The Garniers made extensive improvements to the ranch. They put in wooden ceilings, kerosene lighting, and wooden floors. They ~~also~~ built the two-story limestone building you saw as you entered. It is a copy of their family home in France. Downstairs, it contained a dining room and kitchen, and upstairs were living quarters for Chinese cooks. (They also built an Inn across the road, where the Smokehouse now stands, where travelers could get a meal for 25c.) They built the lake and Springhouse.

→ However, they met with considerable misfortune. Philippe became ill and returned to France, with his wife, where he died, leaving Eugene in charge of the ranch. Eugene was a bachelor, and more or less irresponsible. He made money and ~~made~~ ^{spent} money. Then came a drought which lasted three years and he had to borrow money (\$18,000) from a friend, Gaston Oxarart. When he could not repay it, or the interest, the ranch was sold at auction from the Courthouse steps. It was bought by Gaston Oxarart (the highest bidder, competing against Van Nuys and Lankersheim) for \$29,332 in U. S. Gold Currency, for the 4,460 acres and all the buildings (in 1878).

All the furnishings in this room are original, actually belonged to the Garniers, and were donated by Mrs. Edward Canet of Ventura whose sister and daughter both married a Garnier.

Notice the armoire, or wardrobe; the rocking crib.

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GASTON OXARART ROOM
1878-1886

The picture on the wall straight ahead is of Gaston Oxarart, another bachelor.

His double-barreled shotguns
His own hand-tooled, silver-mounted saddle, with his name

inscribed on the pommel (made in Los Angeles in 1871).

Ladies side-saddles

Duck hangar

Branding irons; foot warmer on window sill.

Leather gauntlets; knee guards

Lariat; woven by the Indians, of horsehair and very prickly; the story is told that such lariats were placed around the campfires at night, to keep snakes away, because the rough texture hurt their bellies.

We are told that Gaston Oxarart was something of a fancy-dandy in ^{and} that he liked elaborate Western clothing, beautiful horses; but he was also quite a successful rancher and businessman. At one time, he shipped 250,000 pounds of wool, from 32,000 head of sheep, to Belgium.

Upon his death, he willed the ranch to his nephew, Simon Glass.

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We'll return to the front entrance now, and go toward the other end of the house.

~~Note to tour conductor: While walking down the porch to the rear of the house, point out the lake and trees.~~

LAKE

~~The Gasnier brothers also built this lake, of local limestone like the two-story house. It is kept filled by the natural spring above, and is 3 to 6 feet deep. It is shaped like a guitar; you can see the outline on that far right corner. The ducks are both domestic and wild - Peasa, Muscovy, Mallard, Wood Duck.~~

SILK OAK TREES

~~These beautiful trees are Silk Oak trees (Quercus...~~

Note to tour conductor: While walking down the porch to the Glass kitchen, point out the lake and trees.

LAKE
approx. 1870

The Garnier brothers ~~built~~ built this lake of local limestone, like the two-story house. It is shaped like a Spanish guitar. You can see the outline on that far right corner. It is filled by the natural spring above, and is 3 to 6 feet deep. It overflows through a spillway at the far end, into the Rubio Creek, and down to the Los Angeles River. It has a quicksand bottom. In attempting to clean out the bottom, some years ago, the horses were almost lost in it.

The County of L.A. uses it as a breeding pond for mosquito fish. Every Friday morning between 10 and 12, a representative comes here to check on the fish and to give them to anyone who needs them for ornamental ponds and pools. The ducks are both domestic and wild; some are migrant. Domestic ones: Pekans and Muscovy. Wild ones: Mallard, Scaup, Wood Duck.

TREES
1899

These beautiful trees are Silk Oak trees (Grevillia), from Australia. They were planted by Simon Glass, Oxerart's nephew.

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GLENN'S KITCHEN

1889

This Victorian kitchen is dedicated to the Glenn Family.

Simon was no rancher and lived here only 6 months. When he had to drive all the way to Hollywood, in a horse and wagon, for a piece of ice(), he gave up. His wife was Juanita Amestoy, and he sold the ranch to his father-in-law, Domingo Amestoy, in Nov. 1889

This adobe did not originally contain a kitchen. When de la Osa built it, the kitchen was an outdoor one of the Mexican type, with an adobe oven and cooking hearth. When the Garnier brothers built the two-story building, the kitchen was contained in it.

Originally, these two rooms were guest rooms for travelers. They are completely separate from the rest of the house. The Spanish were hospitable people and travelers along the El Camino Real were always welcome, rich or poor. It was the custom to have a plate beside the bed, containing a few coins. The traveler could take a few, or leave a few, depending on his circumstances.

Kitchen furnished by the Encino Historical Society and other donors.

The exposed foundation of the Encino Roadhouse/Tavern after excavation in 1979. The archaeological excavation and survey was conducted by Scientific Resource Surveys, Inc. of Santa Ana. The total project, which cost \$100,000.00, was financed by Jack Shine and David Bock of First Financial Group of Encino the developers of Encino Towers now being built on the site.

AMESTOY PARLOR

Domingo Amestoy and Amestoy Estates
1892-1945

Domingo Amestoy lived only 12 days after buying the ranch from Simon Gless; but his son, John, managed and operated the ranch, and the family owned it for over 50 years. This Victorian parlor is dedicated to them. They raised some of the finest sheep in California, and later grew Australian white wheat.

Domingo and his wife Marie Elizabeth, portraits to left of fireplace. Simon Gless picture over organ; figure of Juanita Amestoy, and her wedding picture, beside the organ.

John and his wife, ^{Therese Marie} ~~Therese Marie~~ picture to the right of far door.

Mountain lion (rug) was shot raiding the sheep pens.

Audirons, with wine bottles. The Basque shepherders liked their wine warm.

In 1915, ^{with land values rising,} the Amestoy family sold off all but 100 acres. That was the beginning of the Town of Encino (see Encino Tract map on east wall). By this time, the whole Valley had turned into wheat and barley.

The Amestoy^s reached into the 1920's, then leased the property to some people who built a large porch across the front of the two-story building and ran a fast restaurant there during Prohibition days.

In 1944 the 100 acres were sold to Clarence Brown, a movie director.

In 1945, Brown sold to a syndicate, which planned to level the buildings, fill in the lake, and sell off the land.

A large sign appeared on the Blvd. - "THIS HISTORIC PLACE WILL BE SUB-DIVIDED!"

Then Mrs. Maria Stewart, and other Encino women formed the Encino Historical Society, to save this place. Within one month a bill was passed by Legislature for \$25,000 on a matching basis.

In 1949, the State of California purchased these five acres, the lake and buildings.

It has taken 25 years of dedicated effort, ^{primarily} on the part of Maria Stewart, to save, restore, and bring this place to its present fine level.

MEEING ROOM

Please sign register

Artifacts in glass case were unearthed on premises; scrapbooks show a little of the effort put into this place by Marie Stewart.

The pictures are of the various families

Diorama of "Loc Ecines" by Maria Stewart

Personal articles of families in glass cases.

Authentic history book, by Maria Stewart, on sale

Official documents, title papers, etc. in triple frame.

SPRING

The spring above, flows from a depth of 2,000/feet. Fact established by geologists. The water temperature is now 86-87 degrees (it was 90 degrees in 1945). (The depth is determined by the water temperature; it was estimated at 2,500/feet in 1945; both depth and temperature have since changed.)

It was walled up by the Garnier brothers in 1872; the State put the cover on top in 1960, for protection.

BLACKSMITH SHOP

This stone building is believed to have been built about 1788. At that time, Francisco Reyes, Alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles, was given permission to graze cattle on this land.

It was used as a cattleman's shelter, merely a place to get out of the rain; Then as a stercorach stop for the Butterfield Line coming from L.A. over to Santa Susana Pass; then as a shepherders hut; and lastly as a blacksmith shop. It has been restored and equipped as a blacksmith shop.

GULF-WAY ON WEST WALL

Shows adobe-block construction of house. (Second "window" from far end.)

SMALL BUILDINGS

BEHIND TWO-STORY BUILDING

Food storage houses; once had double roofs for insulation