

Historic Spots in
CALIFORNIA

THIRD EDITION

By

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Preface

"THE PURPOSE of this work is to give the public an adequate interest in the local history of California among its citizens, both by making available to them the knowledge of the historic localities available to them and by arousing a state-wide interest in the preservation of our vanishing historic landmarks. With these words, written by H. E. and E. G. Rensch and Ethel Grace Hoover, the Preface to *The Southern Counties of California* of the original edition of *Historic Spots in California*.

The second book, *Valley and Sierra Counties*, appeared the following year, 1933, with Mr. and Mrs. Hoover joining Mr. and Mrs. Rensch as authors. In 1937 the series was completed by the publication of *Counties of the Coast Range*, written by Mrs. Hoover. The series was sponsored by the California Historical Society, the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. It was a pioneer effort and occupies a unique place in California history.

Historic Spots in California was originally published in three volumes: *The Southern Counties* (1932), by H. E. and E. G. Rensch; *Valley and Sierra Counties* (1933), by H. E. and E. G. Rensch and Mildred Brooke Hoover; and *Counties of the Coast Range* (1937), by Mildred Brooke Hoover. A revised edition, in one volume, was published in 1948. The present edition, with new maps and photographs, and with a text extensively revised and expanded by William N. Abeloe, was first published in 1966.

Shortly after World War II the University of California Press placed *Historic Spots in California* in the capable hands of Ruth and Mildred Hoover. In the first year of California's centennial celebration, a new one-volume edition was published, retaining the original text and graphic divisions. This edition has been printed through five printings.

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Since 1948 tremendous changes have taken place in California. The population has increased by 1963 it surpassed that of 1937. In California the nation's most important cities have arisen; old cities have been reformed; vast rural areas have been developed; creeks and rivers have been dammed; canyons and valleys filled with industrial, rural and domestic use; a new pattern of being built from Oregon to California to the sea. All this, the historic pattern of California, unfortunately and unfortunately has been accomplished a tangible evidence of California's history.

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Ventura County

VENTURA COUNTY was organized as a county in 1872, and Ventura was made the county seat. (Ventura is a corruption of San Buenaventura, so called after Mission San Buenaventura; the name was derived from the saint whose title, Bonaventure, meaning "good fortune," is said to have been bestowed after he was healed by Saint Francis.) The city is still officially known as San

Buenaventura, although the post office has been designated Ventura since 1889. The present courthouse, completed in 1913, is beautifully situated overlooking the heart of the city. In front of it stands a statue of Father Serra, founder of the mission.

Cabrillo's Landing Place

In ancient times there were numerous Indian villages along the shore of what is now Ventura County. When Cabrillo, the discoverer of California, sailed up the coast in 1542, it is thought by some historians that he came ashore on October 10 at a place where there was a large Indian village, doubtless the one to which Cabrillo gave the name El Pueblo de las Canoas ("the Town of the Canoas"), because he was so impressed by the large, finely built boats that these tribes used. The boats carried from 15 to 20 persons, were built of boards crudely hewn by hand, and were caked with asphalt from the neighboring hills. Their boats, homes, implements, and utensils, as well as their mode of life, exhibited a skill in workmanship and a superiority of culture that placed a distinguishing mark upon the Chumash Indians of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties and of the Channel Islands. Among all the Indians of California, they were perhaps the most advanced. Being also the most friendly, as well as exceedingly numerous, they proved a rich harvest for the zealous Franciscans who followed Cabrillo some 200 years later.

Relics of this superior civilization have been found throughout the region and are preserved

in the Ventura County Pioneer Museum at 77 North California Street in Ventura. Baskets lined and covered with nat skillfully wrought bowls and mortars shaped arrowheads are among the many treasures displayed. There is a c hewn board, found in an Indian c Wheeler Springs region. It seems to f as a fleshing board, for its sharp edge that it was used to scrape the meat sic in the process of tanning.

The ancient village at which Cabrillo may have been the one located on the at the foot of what are now Figueroa streets, Ventura. In the 1870's, a kitchen was still visible very near the sea, on Street, on the lot now occupied by the Oil Company's fire-extinguishing tank is, however, some difference of opinion historians as to the location of Pueblo Canoas. Henry R. Wagner, eminent historic geographer, believed that the site was M goon, southeast of Oxnard. It was formed by some that Rincón Point was the location, but this view is no longer accepted authorities currently favor the Ventura

Cabrillo remained at the Pueblo de las until October 13, when he sailed "six leagues, passing along the shores of two lands," anchoring off Rincón Point.

The Trail of Portolá

Leaving the campsite near Castaic in Inyo County on August 10, 1769, Captain de Portolá and his men continued down the verdant valley which was later called the Clara, after a village that Fray Juan Crespi named, halting for the night on the bank of an arroyo in the vicinity of Rancho Camul near the county line. On the three successive days the tents were pitched near the Indian villages in the neighborhood of Fillmore, Paula, and Saticoy, where the friendly Indians gave the strangers gifts of seeds, acorns, and nuts of pine nuts in exchange for beads. Campments have been erected at Piru's Warring (SRL 624) and the eastern edge of Santa (SRL 727) in commemoration of Portolá's. On August 14 the party stopped near the Mission San Buenaventura, where a large chert was located. Father Crespi, who named the village La Asunción de Nuestra Señora, expressed the hope "that such a fine site, as nothing is lacking, will become a good mission. The next night found the travelers at another native town where, the father wrote, the village "disturbed us and kept us awake playing night on some doleful pipes or whistles." name bestowed upon this place by the soldiers has persisted in Pitas ("whistles") Point. On August 16, Rincón Point was rounded and camp was made at a native fishing village on Rincón Creek.

When Portolá's men twice again traversed the county in the first half of 1770, their route the shorter one along the present highway Conejo Grade and Calabasas.



in the Ventura County Pioneer Museum located at 77 North California Street in Ventura. Water baskets lined and covered with native asphalt, skillfully wrought bowls and mortars, and finely shaped arrowheads are among the many interesting treasures displayed. There is a crude hand-hewn board, found in an Indian cave in the Wheeler Springs region. It seems to have served as a fleshing board, for its sharp edge is evidence that it was used to scrape the meat side of hides in the process of tanning.

The ancient village at which Cabrillo landed may have been the one located on the seashore at the foot of what are now Figueroa and Palm streets, Ventura. In the 1870's, a kitchen midden was still visible very near the sea, on Figueroa Street, on the lot now occupied by the Associated Oil Company's fire-extinguishing tanks. There is, however, some difference of opinion among historians as to the location of Pueblo de las Canoas. Henry R. Wagner, eminent historian and geographer, believed that the site was Mugu Lagoon, southeast of Oxnard. It was formerly held by some that Rincón Point was the probable location, but this view is no longer accepted. Most authorities currently favor the Ventura location.

Cabrillo remained at the Pueblo de las Canoas until October 13, when he sailed "six or seven leagues, passing along the shores of two large islands," anchoring off Rincón Point.

The Trail of Portolá

Leaving the campsite near Castaic in Los Angeles County on August 10, 1769, Captain Gaspar de Portolá and his men continued down the verdant valley which was later called the Santa Clara, after a village that Fray Juan Crespí had named, halting for the night on the banks of an arroyo in the vicinity of Rancho Camulos very near the county line. On the three succeeding days the tents were pitched near the Indian villages in the neighborhood of Fillmore, Santa Paula, and Saticoy, where the friendly natives gave the strangers gifts of seeds, acorns, and baskets of pine nuts in exchange for beads. Monuments have been erected at Piru's Warring Park (SRL 624) and the eastern edge of Santa Paula (SRL 727) in commemoration of Portolá's visit. On August 14 the party stopped near the site of Mission San Buenaventura, where a large rancharía was located. Father Crespí, who named the village La Asunción de Nuestra Señora, expressed the hope "that such a fine site, where nothing is lacking, will become a good mission." The next night found the travelers at another native town where, the father wrote, the villagers "disturbed us and kept us awake playing all night on some doleful pipes or whistles." The name bestowed upon this place by the soldiers has persisted in Pitas ("whistles") Point. On August 16, Rincón Point was rounded and camp was made at a native fishing village on Rincón Creek.

When Portolá's men twice again traversed this county in the first half of 1770, their route was the shorter one along the present highway via Conejo Grade and Calabasas.

The Anza Trail

Juan Bautista de Anza, on April 10, 1774, traveling north on his notable overland journey from Sonora to San Francisco, camped near Triunfo (a former post office at the junction of El Camino Real and the road to Lake Sherwood) in Russell Valley west of Calabasas. "Passing among many docile heathens," the party continued their march the next day, halting for the night near San Buenaventura on the San Buenaventura River. Returning from the north a little later, Anza camped on April 29 east of Camarillo at the foot of Conejo Grade, this being his only stop in Ventura County on that trip. In 1776 Anza passed this way again as leader of the first overland emigrant train to California. Retracing his former route, he made only one halt in Ventura County. This was near El Rio, on February 23, 1776.

Mission San Buenaventura

In the midst of these populous native villages with their friendly people, halfway between San Diego on the south and Monterey on the north, Father Junípero Serra at length planted the ninth of the missions and named it San Buenaventura. It was the last one to be dedicated by the zealous founder of the California mission chain, for his death occurred just two years later, on August 28, 1784.

From the very beginning of his work in California the Padre Presidente had contemplated the founding of this halfway station in the fruitful valley of San Buenaventura. However, the Indian uprisings at San Diego and, more especially, the difficulties between the mission fathers and the civil authorities, had long delayed the fulfillment of his wish. It was 13 years after the founding of San Diego de Alcalá, the first of the missions, before Mission San Buenaventura was finally established on March 31, 1782. In the vicinity of the Indian village locally known as Mitz-Kana-Kan, Father Serra erected the first crude enramada for the celebration of the first Mass.

It was the custom, when a mission was dedicated, to erect a cross, not only as an emblem of faith but as a beacon to guide travelers to the mission. Along the coast a site was usually chosen which was visible both by land and by sea. At Ventura, the place selected was a lofty hill called La Loma de la Cruz ("the Hill of the Cross"), which rises immediately back of the mission church in the present city of Ventura.

For nearly 50 years Serra's cross (SRL 113) stood upon the hilltop above the mission. At last, however, wind and rain so weakened it that it fell. The old central timber was replaced by a new one, but the original scroll and crosspiece were retained. Thus it stood for another half-century, when in 1875 it was again blown down. After that, for 38 years, the hillside was without a cross. The scroll of the original cross, however, was saved and is now preserved in the Pioneer Museum. In 1913 a new cross was raised on the original hilltop site. It was made of Jeffrey pine

from Santa Paula Canyon, where, it is thought, the mission fathers obtained timber for the original cross. In 1933 the present cross was placed. La Loma de la Cruz is now a city park.

Very soon after the erection of the first eramada, or chapel, the first mission church was built. According to Captain George Vancouver, this was destroyed by fire. Church records indicate that if such was the case, the disaster occurred between December 9, 1791, and June 21, 1792. "Thereupon," said Engelhardt, "buildings of a superior quality were erected" in the summer of 1792. The church built at this time, he added, "could not have been more than a temporary structure."

The present mission church was begun as early as 1793 but was not completed until 1809. While it was in course of construction, a temporary chapel, called the Chapel of Santa Gertrudis, was erected for the Indian community, at the entrance to Casitas Pass, about seven miles north of the mission. This chapel was used intermittently for many years, even as late as 1868. After the earthquakes of 1812 and 1857, it was doubtless used for divine worship while the church was being restored.

Most of the Indians of the community soon settled about the Chapel of Santa Gertrudis, and the great numbers of their little willow-thatched houses gave the name Casitas ("Little Houses") to the entire region. The settlement was located at the present junction of the Ojai road and the road leading through Foster Park in Casitas Pass. The chapel was near what is now the gateway to Foster Park, on the property of the Canet Company. Nothing remains to indicate the thriving villages which once stood in the vicinity.

About a quarter of a mile from the mission church (near the southwest corner of the present Palm and Meta streets), near the ancient village of the Indians, stood the little chapel of San Miguel Arcangel. For many years, processions chanting the litanies and the rosary wended their way periodically from the church to the chapel, to the great delight of the Indians. The earthquake of 1812 damaged the building, and by 1816 it had become unserviceable and another was built on more solid ground. In 1832 it was reported that "the chapel of San Miguel, the pride of Fr. Señan, could not be saved, the floods having destroyed it entirely." The crumbling walls were still standing as late as 1873, the last vestige of the ruins being removed in the late 1870's.

Even before the dedication of the present mission structure on September 10, 1809, the mission garden had become famous. In the autumn of 1793, Vancouver, on his second visit to California, wrote in his journal about the gardens of San Buenaventura, describing them as "far exceeding anything" he had seen elsewhere in California. At a later date, Richard Henry Dana spoke of them as "the finest in the whole country." Today, nothing remains of this wonderful garden save the trunk of one palm tree.

It is said that the palms were planted by the padres when the garden was first laid out on a tract of 17 acres on what is now the south side

of Main Street. A bend in the street indicates the location of the old wall which surrounded the orchard. The historic palms have suffered much through the years from windstorms. One was blown down in 1876. For many years the Native Daughters of the Golden West cared for the last two, building a wall about them and bracing them with wire cables. One of these fell about 1940. The one remaining, which lost its top to a storm in 1961, stands on Colombo Street a half block south of Main. Beneath it is a tiny structure built from adobe bricks salvaged from the mission quadrangle when it was razed in the 1880's. The little park is city property.

The boundaries of the old walled garden began on what is now Main Street and extended westward to just beyond the southwest corner of Ventura Avenue and Main Street, thence south to a bit beyond Meta Street, thence eastward to a point that would be in line with the east line of Colombo Street, making the southeast corner of Colombo and Main streets the point of beginning.

The present mission structure (SRL 310) was built not within this walled garden but directly opposite, on what is now the north side of Main Street. During the height of its prosperity it was considered one of the richest of the missions, being especially famous for its horticulture. After the secularization of the missions, it suffered with the others. From 1840 to 1850 it was without a resident pastor, a priest from Santa Barbara coming down to hold occasional services. It was roofless for many years after the earthquake of 1857, and while in this condition it was abandoned. For how long is not known, but we do know that the Chapel of Santa Gertrudis was being used in its stead in 1868. In 1895 the present mission structure was described by J. Torrey as a "well-preserved building, its walls still bearing traces of the rude frescoing affected by the builders of that time."

In 1957 the interior of the church was restored, as nearly as possible, to its original condition, undoing the work of an earlier regrettable "restoration," which had obliterated much of its ancient charm. Ceiling and flooring were torn out to reveal the original beams and floor tiles. The crudely beautiful Indian frescoes, which had been covered up by ornate scroll work, unfortunately could not be saved, but a small section of them, which had escaped modernization, may be seen in the baptistry, where the original baptismal font is still in use. Many relics are on display in the mission museum, including part of the old wooden pulpit, carved and painted by the Indians, which had been torn out of the church in the earlier restoration, and the original confessionals, likewise showing Indian handiwork. Old records in Father Serra's handwriting and a pair of unusual wooden bells, probably used during the last three days of Holy Week and the only ones known in the California mission chain, are also to be seen there.

The water system built by the padres to irrigate their gardens and orchard was complete and well constructed in every way. The pic-

turesque old settling tank and reservoir (SRL 114), which distributed water to the establishment and to the homes of the families in the vicinity, still stands in the shape of a "horse's head," or spout, carved by the Indians, is broken, but the shape of the tank itself look as if they were never. It was used as the early cistern for the town of Ventura. It is now visible from the steps going down from the western end of Poli Street to the small reservoir building stands by the mission church.

The great water ditch or stone aqueduct was also a part of the padres' work, which was seven miles in length, and which was destroyed by the floods and landslides of the massive ruins may still be seen near the Cañada Larga, eloquent testimony of the wonderful workmanship of the missionaries and their Indian helpers. The ditch is about one-fourth mile east of the Cañada Larga Road.

The Mission Town

Standing on a slight elevation at La Loma de la Cruz, the mission church is a tiny town which grew outward to the San Buenaventura River. Regular bridle paths formed the streets of the little settlement and along these the houses were built, sometimes flat-roofed with brea, again more picturesquely occasionally, shingled. Information concerning the names of these adobes and the names of the builders has been handed down to two descendants of the old families, Juan de la Loma and E. C. Ortega, and is preserved in manuscript form in the Pioneer Museum. Only one of these old adobe homes remains today, the Ortega house.

Seventy years before the Ortega house on the east bank of the San Buenaventura River an adobe home had been erected on the site of Fillmore, 28 miles from Ventura. The unknown builders of the house were murdered by a band of Indians, leaving the house deserted until 1857, when it was remembered by Emigdio Ortega, who needed its structure for his new home. Four arduous days of travel for the journey, a bodyguard of mounted men accompanying the expedition as a protection against the Indians. The house was carried to the coveted timbers were hauled to Ventura, where they were incorporated into a new house. In 1897, E. C. Ortega, son of the original builder, had occasion to repair his home. The center beam, brought from the house 40 years before, was found to be in such condition and so solid that a 20-penny nail could not penetrate it more than a quarter of an inch.

In the flood of 1866-67, the swollen waters of the San Buenaventura swept away half of the Ortega adobe and a portion of the orchard, pear, peach, and fig trees. The remaining

turesque old settling tank and receiving reservoir (SRL 114), which distributed water to the mission establishment and to the homes of the Spanish families in the vicinity, still stands intact. The "horse's head," or spout, carved from sandstone by the Indians, is broken, but the massive walls of the tank itself look as if they would last forever. It was used as the early calaboose or jail of the town of Ventura. It is now city property and may be seen from the steps going down the hill from the western end of Poli Street. A similar small reservoir building stands behind the mission church.

The great water ditch or stone aqueduct, which was also a part of the padres' water system and which was seven miles in length, was demolished by the floods and landslides of 1866-67. The massive ruins may still be seen near the mouth of the Cañada Larga, eloquent testimonials of the wonderful workmanship of the mission fathers and their Indian helpers. The remnants are about one-fourth mile east of the Ojai road on Cañada Larga Road.

The Mission Town

Standing on a slight elevation at the foot of La Loma de la Cruz, the mission church dominated the tiny town which grew out from it westward to the San Buenaventura River. Two irregular bridle paths formed the streets of the little settlement and along these the adobe homes were built, sometimes flat-roofed and covered with brea, again more picturesquely tiled, and, occasionally, shingled. Information on the locations of these adobes and the names of their builders has been handed down to us through two descendants of the old families, Luis Arellanes and E. C. Ortega, and is preserved in manuscript form in the Pioneer Museum in Ventura. Only one of these old adobe homes remains in part today, the Ortega house.

Seventy years before the Ortega house was built on the east bank of the San Buenaventura River, an adobe home had been erected on the Rancho Sespe near the site of Fillmore, 28 miles east of Ventura. The unknown builders of this homestead were murdered by a band of Mojave Indians, leaving the house deserted and forgotten until 1857, when it was remembered by Miguel Emigdio Ortega, who needed its sturdy timbers for his new home. Four arduous days were taken for the journey, a bodyguard of mounted horsemen accompanying the expedition as a protection against the Indians. The house was dismantled and the coveted timbers were hauled back to Ventura, where they were incorporated in the new house. In 1897, E. C. Ortega, son of the original builder, had occasion to repair the old home. The center beam, brought from the Sespe house 40 years before, was found to be in perfect condition and so solid that a 20-penny spike could not penetrate it more than a quarter of an inch.

In the flood of 1866-67, the swollen waters of the San Buenaventura swept away half of the Ortega adobe and a portion of the orchard of pear, peach, and fig trees. The remaining portion

of the house is still in good condition and has been added to slightly at the eastern front end. It is owned by the city and stands at 215 West Main Street.

What remained of the Valdez adobe was razed about 1958. It originally belonged to the Valdez family and fronted on the present Main Street. Later, for many years, it belonged to an Italian called Pedro Constancia. Constancia conducted a stage station on his place, the stage office being in the Santa Clara Hotel from 1870 on. This hotel, much remodeled, is now called Poinsettia Hotel and is on the south side of Main Street directly opposite the site of the Valdez house.

In the beginning all of the lands about San Buenaventura belonged to the mission. After secularization of the missions, grants were made, and the people to whom the land was given began establishing homes and building their adobe *casas* throughout the county. These tracts, however, were very large, over 4,000 acres being included in the smaller ones. Consequently, the country homes scattered over the entire area were few, not more than a dozen all told. Of these, only a handful remain.

On what was formerly the Lower Ojai Rancho stands the López adobe, called the "Barracks" because it once defended the lower Ojai Valley from the Matilija Indians. Extensively renovated but preserving a flavor of earlier days, it is beautifully situated on the McCaleb ranch just to the left of the highway about two and one-half miles northwest of Ojai. About nine miles north of Ventura, and just east of the Ojai highway on Old Creek Road, stands the Santa Ana Rancho adobe house of Don José de Arnaz.

Frémont's Camp

Don José de Arnaz was mayordomo of San Buenaventura at the time of General Frémont's arrival at the mission in 1846. Frémont, on his way south to the reconquest of Los Angeles, wished to gain possession of Mission San Buenaventura for the United States. In order to obtain the knowledge that would enable him to carry out his plan, he arrested Arnaz and tried to get the desired information from him. Arnaz, however, claimed that he was unable to give this information and was finally released.

Until the publication in 1928 of the memoirs of Don José de Arnaz, the site of General Fré-



Arnaz Adobe, Rancho Santa Ana

mont's camp while at Ventura was unknown or forgotten. Arnaz writes that he "established his camp on the west side of the mission orchard." The boundary of the orchard was what is now the western boundary of the property at the southwest corner of Ventura Avenue and Main Street. This places the site of the camp about opposite the Cabrillo Hotel near Garden Street, in the vicinity of the city jail.

Arnaz's town house was on what is now West Main Street, midway between South Ventura Avenue and the river. In the late 1850's he moved to his Santa Ana Rancho and his old home in town became the American Hotel.

An old sycamore tree (SRL 756), passed by Frémont on his journey to Los Angeles, stands on the highway between Santa Paula and Fillmore and has been marked. It served as a "community center" for the area. In this vicinity the highway passes through the prosperous Rancho Sespe, modern counterpart of the Mexican grant of the same name.

Rancho San Miguel

Perhaps the best preserved of the historic adobes in the vicinity of Ventura is the Olivas house (SRL 115), which stands near the Santa Clara River about one and one-half miles south of East Main Street on a private road extending from Callens Road and Transport Street.

Don Raymundo Olivas, the original owner, was born in Los Angeles in 1801. In 1821 he came to the vicinity of Ventura. Twenty years later, on July 6, 1841, he received the grant of 4,693 acres which constituted Rancho San Miguel. The western half of this rancho, which formed the eastern boundary line of the present city of Ventura, was purchased later by Dixie Thompson for \$1,000 cash.

The Olivas adobe was a long two-story building with balcony and veranda overlooking a walled garden below and wide fields and marshlands beyond. There was a large family of 21 children, and many were the gay assemblages held in the great *casa*, for the Olivases were famous for their fine entertainment and generous hospitality.

Romance and adventure still cling about the old house, and its ancient adobe walls could tell fascinating stories, such as the time that Olivas was surprised and robbed by bandits. Wild ducks still come by hundreds to feed in the neighboring swamplands. The house has been restored, but the simple rural aspect of the place has been preserved. It was owned for a number of years by the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation, which donated it in 1963 to the City of San Buenaventura for eventual development as a State Historical Monument.

Rancho Camulos

About 30 miles east of Ventura, on the road to Los Angeles by way of Santa Paula and Newhall, is one of the most famous adobes in California. Located on Rancho Camulos, it was, until the mid-1920's, the home of the Del Valle family

and famous as the setting for part of the novel *Ramona*, written by Helen Hunt Jackson.

Rancho Camulos (SRL 553) was originally a part of Rancho San Francisco, granted to Antonio del Valle in 1833 and 1839. Gradually, Don Antonio purchased 2,000 acres of the Rancho Temescal, and on this he built his home in the early 1860's.

Travelers between Missions San Buenaventura and San Fernando never failed to stop at Rancho Camulos. The hospitality of the Del Valles was famous from Spanish days well down into our own time.

The Camulos adobe is probably the best preserved and most typical of all of California's old rancho houses. From Rancho Camulos, Helen Hunt Jackson drew largely for her remarkable pictures of Spanish life in early California. There she heard the stories out of which gradually grew her composite heroine, and there she saw the scenes that wove themselves into the opening threads of her tale. *Ramona*, as her creator fashioned her, was inspired, not by one real person, but by two or three, and the result was a creature of fiction and romance woven on the loom of actual life. For the stories, Mrs. Jackson was largely indebted to Señora del Valle, the widowed mistress of Camulos at the time of the author's visit there in 1881.

Second in interest only to the adobe house itself is the charming Del Valle family chapel, a separate wooden building. Here for many years Mass was offered regularly, attended by the family, employees, and Indians living in the vicinity. Mounted outside the chapel is an old Russian bell the family had acquired. Through the years Rancho Camulos has remained unchanged in most of its aspects. It was long a literary and historical shrine. The present owner, who purchased it from the Del Valles, cherishes and maintains the relics of long ago, while at the same time operating it as a modern ranch. Its gates are now closed to visitors, but a monument stands near the highway. Another plaque, commemorating the entire Rancho San Francisco, has been placed in Los Angeles County near the junction of Highways 126 and 5, about nine miles east of Camulos.

Piru, closest town to Camulos, was founded by David Cook in 1887, during the railroad, health, and real estate boom. It has as landmarks an old hotel and Cook's beautiful tree-hidden mansion, owned now for years by the Warring family, on a hill overlooking the town.

Rancho Simi

South of Camulos, but reached from Ventura by still another highway providing an enjoyable alternate route to Los Angeles, is the Simi Valley, location of old Spanish Rancho Simi, first grant in present Ventura County. Including the valley and surrounding hills to an extent of 113,009 acres (by a later United States survey) and projecting into present Los Angeles County, the huge ranch, one of California's largest, was granted in 1795 and 1821 to Patricio, Miguel,

and Francisco Javier Pico, whose int sold soon thereafter to José de la Noriega of Santa Barbara, who also part of adjoining El Conejo Rancho.

De la Guerra's adobe house on Ra built probably in the 1820's, still forms the rear portion of the Strath at 17333 Tierra Rejada Road in Sir renovation work charred timbers were, relics of Indian attempts to burn The ruins of a later adobe, guarded by trees, may be seen to the west of T several miles north of Santa Susana. of Simi and Santa Susana are children estate boom of the late nineteenth twentieth centuries, and are currently rapidly under pressure of the subdivision westward from the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Rincón Point

About 12 miles west of Ventura, cl sea, rise the jagged cliffs of Rincón Po ground of the ancient tribes of the Chadians. It is chiefly noted for its connection the Battle of San Buenaventura, fabled rival factions of Californians on March 1838, and for the dramatic poem "The Paso del Mar" (Spanish for "The Sea"), written by Bayard Taylor.

The rival factions concerned in the San Buenaventura were led by Juan Alvarado in the north and by André Pico in the south. It was a common saying the Californians that the general who Rincón Point could withstand any adverse. Alvarado, with General Castro in hastened, therefore, to take the point opponents, under Carlos Antonio Carrido so. Castro arrived at Rincón Point Carrillo did not have even a sentinel so he marched down to San Buenaventura by surprise. Only a few shots were fired and Carrillo none, but Rincón Point became famous.

When Bayard Taylor wrote "The Paso del Mar" in 1840, he had never place of which he wrote. In 1849 he visited California for the first time, and early in 1850 he saw Rincón Point. In his book written after this visit, he said:

"We touched at Santa Barbara on morning out... we ran astray in the between the Island of Santa Rosa and land, making the coast about twenty-south of the town. I did not regret this me an opportunity of seeing the point the Coast Mountains come down to forming a narrow pass... It is general as the Rincón, or Corner... I had my scene of an imaginary incident, giving of Paso del Mar—The Pass of the Spot. I was delighted to find so near a dence between its crags of black rock, it and reaches of spray-wet sand, and the picture in my imagination."

and Francisco Javier Pico, whose interests were sold soon thereafter to José de la Guerra y Noriega of Santa Barbara, who also acquired part of adjoining El Conejo Rancho.

De la Guerra's adobe house on Rancho Simi, built probably in the 1820's, still stands and forms the rear portion of the Strathearn home at 17333 Tierra Rejada Road in Simi. During renovation work charred timbers were uncovered, relics of Indian attempts to burn the house. The ruins of a later adobe, guarded by tall palm trees, may be seen to the west of Tapo Road, several miles north of Santa Susana. The towns of Simi and Santa Susana are children of the real estate boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and are currently expanding rapidly under pressure of the subdivision movement westward from the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Rincón Point

About 12 miles west of Ventura, close to the sea, rise the jagged cliffs of Rincón Point, battleground of the ancient tribes of the Chumash Indians. It is chiefly noted for its connection with the Battle of San Buenaventura, fought between rival factions of Californians on March 27-28, 1838, and for the dramatic poem "The Fight of the Paso del Mar" (Spanish for "The Pass of the Sea"), written by Bayard Taylor.

The rival factions concerned in the Battle of San Buenaventura were led by Juan Bautista Alvarado in the north and by Andrés and Pío Pico in the south. It was a common saying among the Californians that the general who held Rincón Point could withstand any adversary with ease. Alvarado, with General Castro in command, hastened, therefore, to take the point before his opponents, under Carlos Antonio Carrillo, could do so. Castro arrived at Rincón Point to find that Carrillo did not have even a sentinel there, and so he marched down to San Buenaventura, taking it by surprise. Only a few shots were fired. Alvarado lost one man and Carrillo none, but Rincón Point became famous.

When Bayard Taylor wrote "The Fight of the Paso del Mar" in 1840, he had never seen the place of which he wrote. In 1849 he visited California for the first time, and early in January 1850 he saw Rincón Point. In his book *Eldorado*, written after this visit, he said:

"We touched at Santa Barbara on the third morning out... we ran astray in the channel between the Island of Santa Rosa and the mainland, making the coast about twenty-five miles south of the town. I did not regret this as it gave me an opportunity of seeing the point where the Coast Mountains come down to the sea, forming a narrow pass... It is generally known as the Rincón, or Corner... I had made it the scene of an imaginary incident, giving the name of Paso del Mar—The Pass of the Sea—to the spot. I was delighted to find so near a correspondence between its crags of black rock, its breakers and reaches of spray-wet sand, and the previous picture in my imagination."

Taylor evidently was geographically confused in the writing of this poem, for it seems that the story it immortalizes was a Point Loma folktale connected with the days of hide droghing at La Playa, when old San Diego was the shipping point for the great ranchos of the Southwest. The story, as related in full by A. M. Loop in *The Silver Gate* (January 1900), an early San Diego magazine, seems to have been substantiated by old residents of San Diego. But although the tragic climax of this tale was in reality set at Point Loma, Taylor himself, by his reminiscence in *Eldorado*, made it also a legend of Ventura's Rincón.

Other Historic Spots

The town of Camarillo, usually associated with the nearby State Hospital and St. John's Seminary (location of the Edward L. Doheny Memorial Library), was named for Juan Camarillo, who purchased Rancho Calleguas from the heirs of the grantee, José Pedro Ruiz. Extensive rodeos, great social affairs, were held here in cattle days, but the present town did not come into existence until about the turn of the century.

About eight miles east of Camarillo, in the growing town of Newbury Park, is an attractive reminder of stagecoach days. The white two-story frame inn (*SRL 659*), built in 1876 by James Hammel, served as a stage stop until the coming of the railroad. It has since been used as a school, community center, restaurant, gift shop, and private residence. In 1966 the old building was moved to a site off Ventu Park Road, about half a mile south of its original location on Newbury Road. The area was once a part of Rancho El Conejo.

Ojai was first called Nordhoff, after Charles Nordhoff, whose book *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence* was a prime factor in the influx of population to southern California in the 1870's. The post office, established in 1874, had its name changed to Ojai (a Chumash word interpreted variously as "moon" and "the nest") in 1917, but "Nordhoff" is still to be seen on the schools and a few of the stores. The pioneer resort town, with its picturesque mission-style business buildings, is situated in the spectacularly beautiful Ojai Valley and on the old Mexican rancho of the same name.



Union Oil Co. Building, Santa Paula

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Oil is today one of Ventura County's principal industries, and fittingly the California Oil Museum is located here, in a building at Tenth and Main Streets in Santa Paula. Interesting exhibits of early-day oil machinery may be seen in this well-kept structure, in which the Union Oil Company was organized in 1890 by Lyman Stewart and Wallace L. Hardison, oil men from Pennsylvania, who consolidated their California interests with those of Thomas R. Bard, who became first president of the corporation. Although Bard had drilled the first well in the present county as early as 1865, Ventura County did not achieve real prominence in the oil industry until the 1920's, when spectacular discoveries were made near the city of Ventura.

Bard's name is remembered in the little settlement of Bardsdale, just across the Santa Clara River from Fillmore. He was also associated with the development of the Simi Valley and with Port Hueneme, once, according to Robinson, "the biggest California shipping point south of San Francisco" and, during World War II, the harbor through which was shipped "the major portion of all the supplies for our Armed Forces in the Pacific." It is the location of the Naval Construction Battalion Center, "Home of the Seabees"; the Naval Air Missile Test Center is at nearby Point Mugu. These facilities and Oxnard Air Force Base (near Camarillo) have influenced the growth of the city of Oxnard, which now exceeds Ventura in population. Oxnard was founded in 1898, home of a large beet sugar factory no longer in existence. In the vicinity are El Rio, once called New Jerusalem, and Montalvo, named for the early Spanish author who first used the word "California."

Northern Ventura County is a ruggedly beautiful area included in Los Padres National Forest

and penetrated by few roads. The Sespe Wildlife Area north of Fillmore and Piru is dedicated to the preservation of the California condor. The county also includes two of the Channel Islands—Anacapa and San Nicolás.

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Yolo County

YOLO COUNTY was one of the original 27 counties. (Yolo, or Yo-doy, was the name of a tribe of Indians, and is said to mean "a place abounding with rushes.") Fremont was the first county seat, from 1850 to 1851, when the honor was bestowed upon Washington, now Broderick. In 1857 another move was made, this time to Cacheville, but after four years, in 1861, Washington again became the county seat. In 1862, Woodland was finally chosen as the permanent seat of justice.

The Trail of the Fur Hunter

In the marshlands west of the Río de Jesús María, now the Upper Sacramento River, lived

the Yo-doy, a tribal branch of the Suisun Indians. To the south lay fertile, unbroken plains where game abounded. These plains were bounded on the north and south by Cache and Putah creeks, while on the east flowed the great river, and on the west lay a range of hills.

For hundreds of years, Indian hunters had roamed this region undisturbed, but in the year 1821 the first known white man crossed its trail. This was Luis Argüello, in command of the last expedition of the Spanish government into the river country of the Great Valley in search of mission sites. The party crossed what are now Solano and Yolo counties before reaching the

Sacramento River at a point in the Yolo County in the vicinity of Grimes

In 1828 the American explorer Jedediah Smith is thought to have hunted and followed the streams of Yolo County, following the great army of Hudson's Bay Company who found this a rich field. They caught furs along the river and smaller streams which became known as Cache Creek. Their camps, known to early settlers as Cache Camp, was situated in a grove of oak on the north bank of Cache Creek one mile east of the present town of Yolo, formerly Cacheville. In the spring and summer of 1830 a band of hunters, under Ewing Young, along the San Joaquin and Sacramento and remained for a time on Cache Creek. Years later, on his way to Oregon, Young passed through Yolo County territory, near the mouth of Cache Creek. Following the Capay Valley past Clear Lake, the party followed the coast some 75 miles north of Fort Ross they continued north as far as the Umpqua in Oregon.

Joseph Gale, who had come to California with Ewing Young in 1831, had a cattle rendezvous at Cache Creek in 1843. The need for more land in the Willamette Valley, Oregon, was incentive to a daring project begun by Gale in 1841. Undaunted by the difficulties of getting cattle to Oregon, he set to work to construct an ocean-going vessel which he proposed to take to California and there exchange for livestock. Through the intervention of Charles Wilkes, Hudson's Bay Company equipped the vessel. Gale, after passing a seaman's examination, granted a seaman's license. The schooner, *S. Oregon*, was launched on May 19, 1841, and toward the end of August 1842 Gale and his crew started down the Columbia River to the Willamette. At San Francisco, José Y. Limanto Frenchman, purchased the vessel in exchange for 350 cows.

Needing more men for the vast stock-drive over the mountains as well as for the Oregon settlement project, Gale waited until the spring of 1843 before starting north. Circumstances had been sent out describing the advantage of the Willamette Valley for settlement, and in the middle of May, 42 men, among them James P. Leese, had gathered at Cache Creek. From the tail cottonwood tree trimmed into the form of a flagstaff the Stars and Stripes floated for several weeks that spring. The expedition finally started northward on May 14, driving 1,250 head of cattle, 600 horses and mules, and 3,000 sheep, many of which were safely guided over the northern mountain barrier after a journey of 75 days.

Along the banks of historic Cache Creek the earliest settlements in the region of Yolo County were made: the Quesesosi Grant or Gordo Ranch, Knight's Landing, Rancho Río de Jesús María, Rancho Cañada de Capay, and Hutton Ranch or Travelers' Home, later known as Cacheville. The stream flowing out of Clear Lake in the mountains of Lake County furnishes a natural water supply for the irrigation today of thousands