Pioneer's descendant finds roots

GRIJALVA

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Tuscon, Ariz., but the Grijalva family history in El Toro can be traced as far back as the 18th century.

Amy's son, Eddie Grijalva, has worked to get the attention he believes his ancestors deserve.

When most people think about Orange County's early history, they think of families such as the Yorbas. Eddie Grijalva wants the public to know about the prominent role played by his distant ancestor, Juan Pablo Grijalva.

"I've been a thorn in the sides of the Yorbas," said Grijalva, 59, who now lives in Orange. He loves the land and his family's history, so much he has made it his job to find their past.

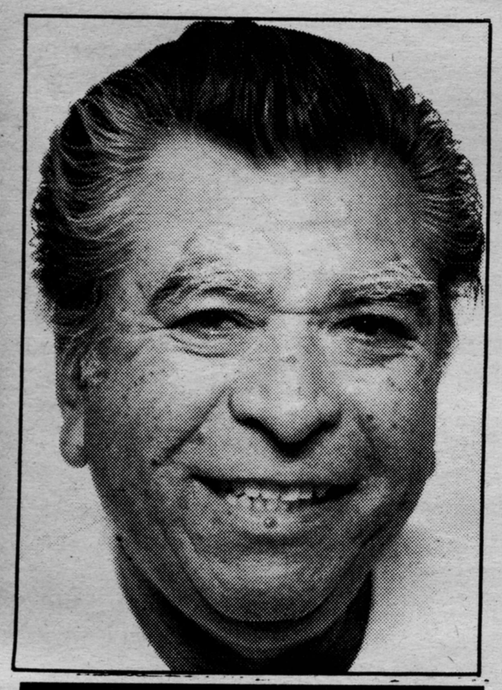
The Yorbas — as in Yorba Linda — have always been the ones people remember when they think of the Orange County pioneers, Grijalva says.

But in fact it was his cousin six generations ago, Juan Pablo Grijalva, who applied for the first Spanish land grant in what is now Orange County, he said.

Juan Pablo, an officer in the Spanish army, came to California in 1775 as military leader of the Anza expedition.

He retired as a lieutenant and applied for the land grant. He also built El Toro's first adobe home.

However, although there is record that Grijalva's petition for the land grant was received and even recommended for approval, there is no record he received the grant during his lifetime. After Juan Pablo's death in 1806, the land grant was given to Jose Antonio Yorba, the husband of Maria Josefa, Juan Pablo's daughter, who was already living on the land.



'My dad used to close the door and not lock it. There was never anything to worry about when it came to the people, you only had to worry about coyotes and other wild animals.' **Eddie Grijalva**

Records indicate Juan Pablo had a son, but there is no indication his son ever married. After the death of both father and son, the Grijalva name temporarily disappeared from Orange County.

The Grijalva family, however was still nearby. Juan Grijalva, Juan Pablo's uncle, was living and raising cattle in Arizona.

It was Luis Grijalva, one of Juan's sons, who came back to Orange County and married Maria Guadalupe Arballo, a full blooded Gabrielano Indian. Luis and Maria moved to the El Toro area and the family began to trickle back into the county. Records show the couple's son, Guillermo, acquired a house in El Toro.

Amy Arvizu met her future husband Louis Grijalva, son of Guillermo, in Santa Ana. The couple were married Sept. 7, 1923 in San Bernardino and settled in the El Toro house inherited from Guillermo.

Grijalva has made a drawing of the home (pictured below) as he remembers it from his boyhood. The house used to sit a mile north of the railroad tracks near the present intersection of Jeronimo and El Toro roads.

The home was separated into four segments, the main bedroom, the kitchen, the front room and dining room.

"My dad used to close the door and not lock it," said Grijalva. "There was never anything to worry about when it came to the people, you only had to worry about coyotes and other wild animals," he said.

Life was peaceful, but by no means easy. Amy Grijalva used to wake up at 4:30 a.m. to prepare her husbands breakfast and wake her six children and get them ready for school in a two-room school house. She used to do wash by hand and then drive the Model T, one of the few cars in the area, to buy food in Santa Ana. In the evening, everyone was in bed by 8 p.m.

In 1945 the family finally moved away from El Toro to Santa Ana.

"I hated when we moved to Santa Ana because I had to wear shoes," Grijalva said.

The house was sold to a family named Carrisoso. Now, Eddie said, there is a commercial building and and an empty lot on the site where childhood home once stood. The home was destroyed sometime in the late 50s, he said.

A custodian at Spurgeon Elementary School in Santa Ana, Grijalva became interested in geneology when he was 15. At the age of 65 his father decided to retire and applied for Social Security.

He had a baptismal certificate, but Social Security would only accept a birth certificate, which he did not have, Grijalva said,.

His father was told to go to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where they where able to give him a document in lieu of a birth certificate as proof that he was a native American.

Photo courtesy of Eddie Grijalva

Louis Philip Grijalva, Eddie's father, (right) shown here with other ranch workers, settled in El Toro in 1923 in a house inherited from his father, Guillermo Grijalva. Eddie's sketch of the house is show below.

"When I saw the document, I said 'This is important',." Grijalva said.

He has been researching the family's history ever since. Recently, Grijalva distributed a packet of materials to the Board of Education so that they would consider naming a new school after Juan Pablo.

"I'm not doing this for me. I'm doing it for my ancestors," he said.

Although the family no longer lives in El Toro, Eddie and some of his brothers and sisters still live in Orange County. Amy Grijalva lives in Monteclair with one of her daughters.

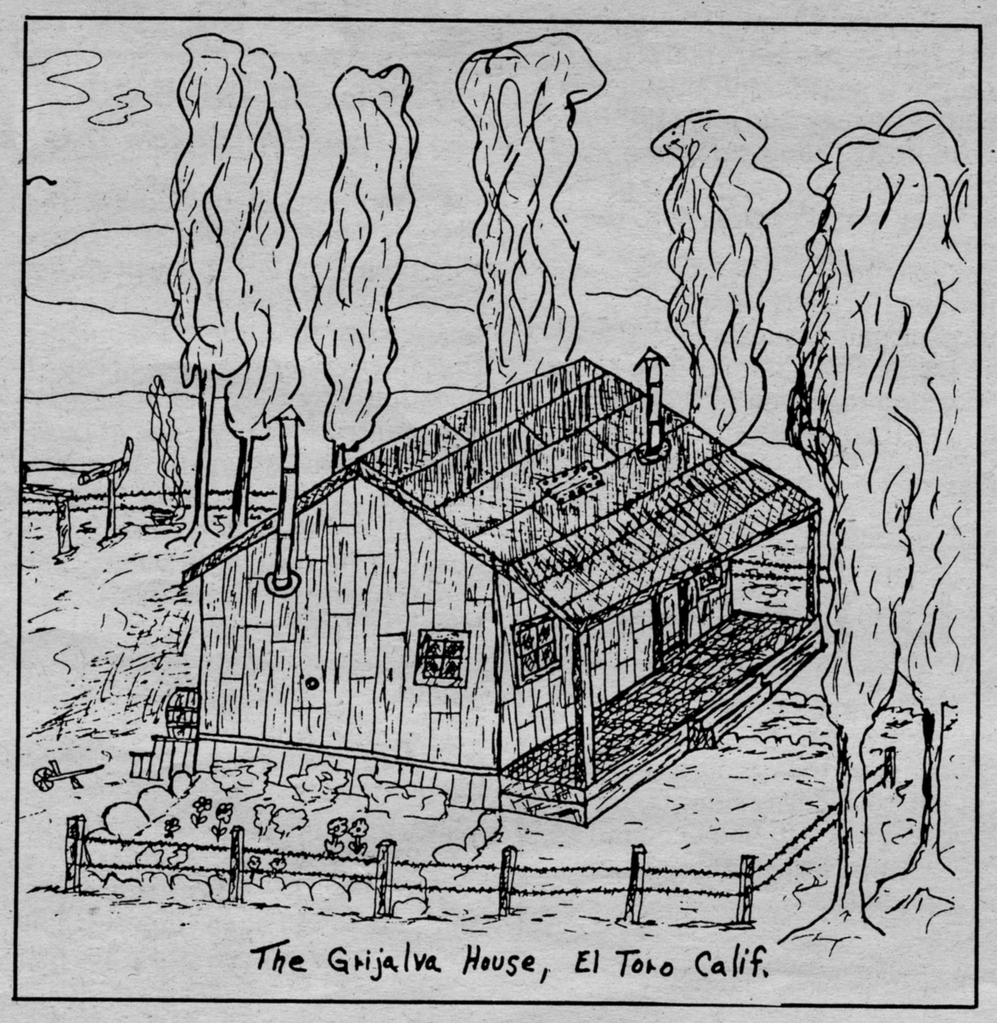
Recently, Eddie Grijalva took a trip back to the area where the adobe home was built by Juan Pablo centuries ago. The home sat on what is now Hews street in Orange. He has a piece of the rock that served as the foundation to the home. Several homes have been built in the area and the adobe foundation was all that he found was left.

He does not like what has happened to the city and he is stubborn about calling all of the area El Toro, not Lake Forest.

"Some of those people will never say Lake Forest," he said, referring the old families in the city, "but it happens. Future generations will look and never say anything but Lake Forest."

Amy Grijalva still loves El Toro, past and present. But it's the past she finds most endearing.

"To me, they are the most Beautiful days of my life."



THIS WEEK

KEY EVENTS

■ **Santa Arrives:** The Mission Viejo Activities Committee is hosting the arrival of Santa at 5 p.m. Sunday at the corner of La Paz and Chrisanta. The Trabuco Hills High School Choral Group will sing. There will also be a performance by Girl Scouts from Barcelona Hills Elementary. Santa arrives at 6 p.m. Admission is free.

■ **Freedom Village Health Center** is hosting a free caregiver workshop for people caring for elderly family members between 2:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Freedom Village Pavilion, 23442 El Toro Road Building 1, Lake Forest. Supervision is available during the workshop. For more information, call 472-4700.

■ **Santa Margarita High School** is hosting two incoming student/parent nights for all eighth graders on Tuesday and on Jan. 12, 1993. The meetings will be held from 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the school gymnasium. For more information, call 858-3350.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

■ **Lake Forest Planning Commission** meets at 7 p.m. tonight in the council chambers at 23778 Mercury Road in the Rockfield Showplace. For more information, call 707-5583.

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UPCOMING

■ **Saddleback College Board of Trustees** will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 7 28000 Marguerite Parkway, Room 105, Mission Viejo. For more information, call 582-4500.

■ **Capistrano Unified School District** meets at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7 at the district offices, 32972 Calle Perfecto, San Juan Capistrano. For more information, call 489-7900.

■ **Saddleback College continues** its film series with the showing of "The Bishop's Wife" at 7 p.m. Dec. 3 at the Edwards' Cinema on Crown Valley Parkway. Tickets are $6.50 general, $5 for students and seniors. Sponsored by the Angels, a support group for the college's performing arts, proceeds will benefit scholarships, the guest artists series, and summer stock. For more information, call 582-4656.