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# JOSEFA

by Mary Stewart

From San Diego Magazine July, 1969  
Pictures: San Diego Historical Society  
and Dr. Ben Grant.



For Orange Co. Genealogical Society Library  
from Mary Stewart

# JOSEFA

by Mary Stewart



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She was born at San Diego on December 29, 1810. Her baptismal name was Doña María Antonia Natalia Eljia Carrillo. But at the font her madrina (godmother), the Señora Doña Josefa Sal del Mercado, in what probably was a premeditated lapse of memory, conferred her own first name upon the baby. And it is as Josefa that her name has been carried down to us by her descendants, although some have deep-frozen it to Josephine.

The parents of Josefa Carrillo were Don Joaquín Carrillo and Doña María Ignacio del Candelaria López, daughter of Don Juan Francisco López and María Felici-ana Arbilla de Gutiérrez. The family traced to the Carrillos of Albornoz, back to 1260 A.D. As actor/rancher Leo Car-

rillo patiently explained, "The name is pronounced 'Cay-reel-yo,' with a liquid Castilian double 'l.' It is *not* pronounced 'Care-reeyo,' with the 'y' for double 'l' as in Mexico. The Mexican adaptation of Spanish is a beautiful variation in itself, but we of the Castilian lineage prefer the original liquid sound for the double 'l.' It is a part of our heritage."

Josefa grew to be tall. She had brilliant hazel eyes, black hair and incredibly white skin. When Don Juan Bandini presented his guest, Governor José María Echeandía, to the radiant girl, her gleaming hair was banded with Loreto pearls. The visiting dignitary became smitten with both Josefa and the delightful San Diego climate. Echeandía immediately determined to change the capital from Monterey to

*"The Elopement," above, is an oil by Charles Nahl (1819-1878); the picture is believed to depict Josefa's impulsive dash with her cousin Pio Pico to the shore where her betrothed, Captain Henry Fitch, eagerly waited. Since Josefa Fitch did not pass away until 1893, we know that the painting was executed during her lifetime. It hangs in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.*



San Diego, and to marry the Carrillos' most beautiful daughter.

Leo Carrillo claimed that the Governor was runty and pompous, an object of ridicule because of his lisping Castilian accent—an affectation which had escaped the early Hispanic settlers of the New World. (It is to this late actor-rancher and to Mrs. Fremont Older that we owe most of the details of Josefa's courtship.) All agreed that Echeandía and his administration eventually endeared themselves to no one. But the Governor visited San Diego soon after his appointment, and his new constituents were hopeful. Most hopeful of all were the parents of Josefa, who had noticed the swaggering little official yearning after their proud young beauty. They fancied the prospect of so distinguished a son-in-law.

According to one source, even before the Bandini tertulia in the Governor's honor, Josefa already had met Captain Henry Delano Fitch, who by this time was in the process of making a record round trip to Boston and was waxing impatient for the sight of her when the fiery Echeandía first hove into San Diego Bay. As Don Leo and Mrs. Older told it, Josefa's father sent her to buy new finery so she might appear even more irresistible in the Governor's sight, and it was at that time she met the prepossessing Yankee merchant captain.

Josefa was accompanied by her cousin Pio Pico, who although a decade older was the eighteen-year-old girl's good friend and companion. The two put out to the *Maria Esther* (most Californians, who depended on such vessels for all

*Above: Josefa Carrillo de Fitch is seated in the front row of this group portrait, at extreme right. It is unfortunate that all surviving photographs of Josefa show her heavy with late middle age and obviously marked by all the cares of widowhood complicated by a large family. The child at left is John D. Grant, Jr., on the lap of John D. Grant. The little boy standing next to them is Ben E. Grant and the little girl is Effa Grant De Gues. The central figure, seated, is the lovely Anita Fitch de Grant, mother of the brood. In the back row stand Charles Grant: an unidentified young girl; Henry Grant, stepson of Anita and son of John D. Grant and Anita's deceased sister, Ysabella; the last boy is unidentified.*

luxuries and many necessities, referred to such craft as the Boston Ships, no matter how they were rigged). Josefa had climbed 'he ship's ladder and had bent to wipe the salt spray from her silver-buckled slippers when she looked up into the compelling blue-grey-violet eyes of Fitch. She was accustomed to the usually not over-tall Spaniards of the nineteenth century. Towering above her was a well-favored, six-foot, two-inches tall seafarer who enhanced his height with a broad-brimmed California-style hat shoved toward the back of his head, and a serape hanging vertically from one shoulder.

It was the era when Yankee merchant ships ruled the seas, and Fitch was every inch the master of such a ship. With courtly manners and great aplomb he took much time to display for Josefa's benefit his array of splendid wares. This was not the usual fawning attention of a mere Yankee trader. She was aware of his apparent personal interest in her, and becoming color began to rise in her flawless ivory skin. Flustered in her pleasure and embarrassment, Josefa scarcely saw the young captain theatrically unfurled, the dainty shoes he brought forth to suit her tiny feet. But at last he produced a hair comb so gorgeous that she quite forgot his presence. She was caught up in the fascinating perfection of the object itself. Josefa took the tortoise comb in both hands, held it up so that the rich gold banding glittered in the summer sun, and then secured the exquisite piece of hair jewelry in her own dark, lustrous tresses. The young Captain thought her more captivating than ever. Josefa knew full well how the hair ornament flattered her. When he told her the price—six hundred hides—her mood grew wistful as she returned the comb. Fitch urged her to take it home, to let her parents see how fully it complemented her ripe Spanish beauty.

Josefa showed the comb to Don Joaquín, who exploded. He regarded it as a ploy by an over-shrewd merchant to force a sale. A ploy it was indeed: to give Captain Fitch opportunity to call at the Carrillo home. Josefa's father surmised Fitch's intent when the commanding figure of the young sea captain was ushered before him. All Don Joaquín's instinctive parental suspicions were aroused. Right you were, Don Joaquín Carrillo. The little pueblo of San Diego quickly was scandalized by Josefa's disregard of her parents' wishes, her disdain for the Governor's attentions and by the ardent suit of Henry Fitch.

**H**enry Delano Fitch, who traced his lineage to John Alden of the *Mayflower*, was born at Nantucket, Massachusetts, May 1, 1799. He was said to have been graduated from Harvard. On September 2, 1815 when he was certified as an American citizen and seaman, he was described as having "dark hair, grey eyes and a dark complexion." A Congregationalist by faith, for Josefa he became a Roman Catholic and a Mexican citizen, to overcome all religious and civil barriers.

He persisted until at last the marriage was arranged. On the wedding day, Josefa was arrayed in shimmering white satin,

with orange blossoms. Lustrous Loreto pearls were about her throat. An altar had been prepared at the Carrillo home; clad in his vestments, Father Antonio Menéndez began the ceremony, with Captain Richard Barry of the *Vulture* serving as best man. Abruptly, Josefa's uncle\* stepped between, stating that an order from the Governor prohibited foreigners from marrying in California without a special license.

Fitch was not to be put off. "Tell the Governor we shall be married in spite of him, for Josefa's parents have given consent!"

Josefa wept for her disgrace before all her relatives and friends. But through her tears she murmured. "Enrique, why don't you carry me off?"

While appearing to bless the couple, Padre Menéndez said between closed teeth, as men in prison speak, "There are other countries where you can be married with fewer restrictions." But now we



know that later in the day a Spanish-California version of *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II Scene V, was played. The courageous priest, but newly arrived in San Diego, wed the couple in a secret ceremony.\*\*

Now the romantic figure of Pío Pico (later to be the last Mexican governor of California) assumes importance in the drama. Pío advised Enrique Fitch to go aboard his ship and haul anchor. Then, when night was near, to send a small boat for Josefa. Fitch complied and at the indicated hour was there with a good boat at the appointed spot. Meanwhile, Pío Pico went to his dear cousin Josefa. He spoke persuasively to her of her love for the young captain, and easily induced her to

\*Domingo Carrillo, who was an aide to Governor Echeandía.

\*\*For this act, the record simply states, "Father Menéndez was removed with cause, October 16, 1829." Out of loyalty and gratitude for the priest's great-hearted assistance, Josefa never publicly referred to this marriage (which would have cleared her reputation, according to the rigid mores of the last century); she did not even allude to it in the comprehensive deposition which she dictated at Healdsburg, November 26, 1875, to an amanuensis of H.H. Bancroft.



Left: This portrait of Capt. Beriah Fitch (1771-1825) which hung in the "Maria Ester", ship of his son, Capt. Henry Delano Fitch, was presented to San Diego Historical Society by Woodley Fitch, who descends from Carlos, eighth child (b.1842) of H.D.F. and Josefa Carrillo, his wife. Among the Fitch ancestors were: James Fitch, a founder of Yale; John Howland and John Alden who came on the *Mayflower*. Beriah Fitch married Sara Delano 22 Aug. 1793. She lived to 1847 and descended from Jonathan Delano, from whom descended Presidents U.S. Grant and F.D. Roosevelt.

Above: Anita, youngest child of Enrique and Josefa Fitch, was said most to resemble her mother. She became Anita Fitch de Grant, San Diego's first opera singer.

flee with him at once on his magnificent horse. Some say that before leaving the house she disguised herself as Pío's valet. By her own account the eloping Josefa took with her only a small case carrying petticoats and other necessities. Then Don Pío helped her onto his horse and galloped away. They dashed at full speed to the rendezvous on the beach where Fitch was waiting in readiness with a sailboat manned by six of his crew.

Pío Pico said, "Goodbye, cousin. May God bless you—and you, Cousin Enrique. Be careful that you give Josefa no reason to regret having cast her lot with you." Fitch replied, "I promise before God and man that as long as I live Josefa will be happy."

He was careful not to take his bride on his ship *Maria Esther*. Instead, to confuse possible pursuers, he directed his first mate, Mr. Hatch, to act as navigator and sail at once for Valparaíso. The eloping couple put out for the *Vulture*. They barely had arrived on board when her sails were unfurled. After seventy-four days at sea they reached Valparaíso safely. Captain Fitch immediately ordered arrangements made for a wedding, which was solemnized by the parish priest of Valparaíso. Captain Barry again acted as one of the three witnesses.

The load of hides and tallow which the *Vulture* carried was sold at Valparaíso. A good offer having been received for the ship herself, she was sold in that port and shortly afterward Fitch purchased the frigate *Leonora*. Then the Yankee captain

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and his lovely California bride set sail for Boston, where Josefa was received with pride by the Fitches, Delanos and Gorchams.

On the return voyage of the *Leonora*, Fitch resolved to fly the Mexican flag along the coast of Latin America and to enter at Acapulco. From Acapulco he sailed directly to San Diego, where he cleared customs under the authority of Juan Bandini, who then was collector of the port.

When the *Leonora* lay at anchor in the bay, women friends and the female members of Josefa's family came to welcome her. But her mother brought Josefa the warning that her father had sworn to kill her.

Josefa felt she could not bear to live in enmity with "the author of her days." She resolved to brave the danger and to go to him at once. Determinedly, accompanied by family and friends, she went ashore. Turning over to her sister the baby she carried in her arms, the young wife approached the half-open doorway of her girlhood home. Her eyes fell at once upon the form of her father sitting inside at some distance. She saw that he was armed. Nevertheless, she did not desist. "Father, I have returned to San Diego to ask your pardon for leaving your house."

If Don Joaquin heard, he gave no indication. "A storm agitated his soul." He remained seated at his writing desk, indicating his scorn of her.

Thereupon Josefa knelt in the doorway and once more humbly begged his pardon. She explained that she had fled only because of the hateful tyranny of a governor who set himself above civil and ecclesiastical law. Josefa entreated, but her father remained silent and immobile. His attention, she saw, was not on the firearms, and she took courage. Still imploring forgiveness, she dragged herself toward him on her knees.\*

At length, Don Joaquin relented. He went toward her and gathered her in his arms. "I forgive you. It is not your fault if our governors are tyrants." With affection and relief, Josefa then went to the doorway and announced to all who awaited the joyous news of reconciliation between father and daughter.

Afterward, she said, that tempestuous day ended with a great dance with "illumination," and the house was not big enough for all the congratulatory gifts which the women of San Diego brought for her.

A few days later, with spirits as high as the wind in the *Leonora's* sails, the young Fitches cast away and pointed the ship toward Monterey. But their misfortunes had not ended. No sooner had they

\*The often-told story that Josefa crawled blocks in the dirt to ask her father's pardon is without foundation. In her narration, she specifically said that she knelt at the door of the room and then dragged herself on her knees to the middle of the sala until she was within about six varas from where he sat. A vara is 2.8 feet.

cast anchor at Monterey than a Mexican official clambered aboard the *Leonora* with an order for Captain Fitch's arrest. Manfully, he left without delay to face the charges. There followed terrible months in which Fitch was imprisoned, kept from his wife and child while Josefa herself was under quasi-arrest. After persecution by both church and state, the couple at last were ordered to go through yet another marriage ceremony. Some accounts say that, at the conclusion of this rite, as part of their penance the Fitches were forced to hold three-foot candles. Through the night, friends and relatives sat with them in the church waiting for the enormous tapers to burn down, as they finally did, scorching the hands that held them.

It is an established fact that as a final penance Captain Enrique Fitch was required to donate a bell to the Catholic church at Los Angeles.

The rock which Enrique Fitch hid behind while waiting for Pío Pico to spirit away Josefa is called Fitch's Rock, to this day. The Captain made the first survey map of the Pueblo, and it is called Fitch's map. In the North, Fitch Mountain was named for him. In 1841 he was grantee of the Sotoyome Rancho. In 1845-46 he was Receptor in San Diego. The San Diego *Union* for July 13, 1876 lists the first Ayuntamiento or Town Council, with Juan María Osuna as Mayor and Henry Fitch as Síndico Procurator. Bancroft says: "Captain Fitch was one of the earliest, most prominent and most popular of the early pioneers, straightforward in his dealings, generous in disposition, frank and cheerful in manner; in physique a very tall man inclined to corpulency."

Judge Benjamin Hayes wrote: "Henry Domingo Fitch...died January 13, 1849, at four o'clock and twenty minutes in the afternoon. He died at the old Fitch house on Fitch [or Calhoun] Street. He was the last white person buried on Presidio Hill. He was several times alcalde [unproved], was over six feet high and very corpulent. He died of fever after a brief illness." To this his grandson, the late John D. Grant, adds in his handwriting: "He contributed \$50,000 to the American cause." Tradition in the family is that Captain Fitch met with foul play. Some say that he died in San Francisco and that he was poisoned.

Philip Crosthwaite declared that, just before the confrontation of Mexican and American forces and the end of Mexican rule in California, Pío Pico, then governor, warned his dear cousin that a Mexican military party was heading for San Diego with the intent of killing all Americans, particularly Fitch. Don Pío urged Josefa to flee for her life, to join him in Los Angeles. Torn by divided loyalties, Josefa remained staunchly faithful to her husband, sounding the alarm that alerted all San Diego. There is no doubt that Fitch was beset by powerful enemies to the end of his days. Some of them coveted his large land holdings. Others undoubtedly resented his service to the U.S. Army: Having surveyed all the area, he was able to provide gringo troops with a back-

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The San Diego Union  
12/31/69

## Col. Ben Grant, Scion Of First Settler, Dies

Services for Col. Ben Ely Grant Jr., 74, a retired Army physician and great-grandson of Capt. Henry Delano Fitch, first American settler in San Diego, will be at 2 p.m. Friday in Finley Mortuary, Portland, Ore.

Grant died Monday night in a Portland hospital. He retired in 1965 as an executive of the Veterans Administration in Portland.

A native of San Francisco, Grant was the grandson of the late Mrs. Anita Carrillo Grant, youngest daughter of Fitch and Josefa Carrillo, who eloped in 1829 to Valparaiso, Chile, over the opposition of her family and church to the marriage. Mrs. Grant was born here.

Fitch was the master of a sailing vessel who later became a merchant and community leader in Old San Diego and held a large land grant on the Russian River in Northern California. A grave opened in 1968 in Presidio Park is believed to have been his.

Grant was the first commanding officer of Barnes General Hospital in Portland. During World War II, he was the first commanding officer of the 47th General Hospital in the South Pacific.

Surviving are his widow, Anna Ray; a son, Dr. Ben E. Grant III of Bandon, Ore.; a daughter, Mrs. Don Johnson of Portland, and five grandchildren. Military interment will be at 3 p.m. Friday in Willamette National Cemetery, Portland.

## JOSEFA *continued from page 73*

cañon route into San Diego, by-passing any possible ambush by Mexicans and/or Indians.

The Fitches' fifth child, Josefa, was eleven years old at the time of her father's death. In 1906 she gave this version, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*: Enrique Fitch had established several great ranches. One was at Sotoyome, on the Russian River, near Healdsburg; another at El Valle de las Palmas, forty miles south of Ensenada; and, most important, a third was in San Francisco. This he owned in conjunction with Francisco Guerrero, and it covered three and a half square leagues, running from the Bay along Larkin Street to the old Mission, thence to a line beyond the Spring Valley Water Works [this section at the turn of the century embraced the Cliff House, Golden Gate Park and the Presidio]. Enrique Fitch attended a banquet in San Francisco with such well-known men as Commodore Stockton. While there he signed away his title to all the land which was his between Powell and Taylor Streets, O'Farrell and Post. "He had already laid out and given Union Square to the city," said Mrs. Josefa Fitch de Bailhache. "An old friend, Manuel Torres, still living...summoned Dr. Hope and Dr. McNulty to my father's assistance. All three accompanied him to San Diego. When he regained consciousness, Torres told him what he had done. My father fell back dead." His bereaved family held to the poisoning theory because Fitch did not drink, would not allow liquor in his house, and once had incurred the wrath of Richard Henry Dana by throwing the writer out of the Fitches' Old San Diego store when Dana entered in an intoxicated condition.

At the recent discovery and exhumation of Fitch's remains, James Maidhof, the San Diego State College student who showed us the opened coffin, remarked on the pronounced resemblance of those of Fitch's descendants who were present. Although they came from New York, Northern California, Mexico and San Diego, the young digger thought that they all resembled each other, and that all the women were goodlooking.

One of the few mistakes that historian H. H. Bancroft made (in the *Pioneer Register and Index*, page 143) was the statement that "The last two [of Josefa and Henry Fitch's children] died in 1850-54. Josefa became the wife of John Grant and a locally famous singer; Isabela married John Bailhache." It was daughter Josefa who married John Bailhache. Daughter Isabela (Ysabella in Henry Fitch's Bible, now in the possession of Dr. Ben Grant of Long Beach) was the first wife of John Grant. The first opera singer in San Diego was her sister Anita, who became John Grant's second wife, sometime after the demise of Ysabella on June 15, 1861. Of Anita, Dr. Grant wrote in 1948: "Grandma Grant...studied in San Francisco under a famed teacher...and sang in opera in San Francisco for several seasons. She

was an accomplished musician.... She spoke and sang in Italian, French and Spanish. She was a Spanish queen if I ever saw one."

Anita, the youngest child and the one said most to resemble her mother, in 1916 came to the beautiful garden wedding of her grandson Ben to my eldest sister, Anna Ray. From then until she passed away on February 26, 1933 we were friends. She grew roses with stems a yard long, and attributed her ageless skin to the daily siesta which she would permit nothing to disturb. Until her death she had beauty and unbending dignity. She is buried beside her mother, Josefa Carrillo Fitch, at Oak Mound Cemetery near Healdsburg. Perhaps it is fitting that another Anita (Manning) should have unearthed the bones of Henry Fitch on February 29, 1968, on Presidio Hill.

Captain Henry Fitch left his widow the 35,487.53-acre Rancho Sotoyome granted him in 1841. His last will forgave the debts of Santiago Arguëllo (one half); of Miguel Pedrorena; John Borker (requesting his wife to give Borker shoes); and Alfredo Anselino, whom he not only released from payment of debt but made "a present of my *Encyclopaedia and Practice of Medicine*." Over and over in Fitch's ledgers, debts were forgiven. Enrique Fitch also left eleven children: Enrique Eduardo, born June 23, 1830 (Henry could have arrived legitimately any time after April 9, 1830); Frederico, born June 28, 1832; Guillermo, November 7, 1834, José, March 19, 1836; Josefa, November 2, 1837; Juan, April 6, 1839; Ysabella, August 24, 1840; Carlos, September 1, 1842; Miguel, March 13, 1844; María Antonia Natalia, September 19, 1845; Anita, April 13, 1848.\*

A visitor to San Diego who attended Juan Bandini's New Year Fiesta in 1849 especially singled out Josefa, noting in his journal her "personal pulchritude and clearness of complexion." It is impressive to consider that after eleven accouchements her comeliness was outstanding even among the younger women attending Don Juan's celebration—which must have been the last gaiety Josefa was to know before widowhood came upon her scarcely a week later.

Besides looking after a large family, Josefa found time for good works. Juan Bautista Alvarado in his *Historia de California* says, "Mrs. Fitch has always been generous to the needy, the sick and to works of public utility—in fact, to all but the Church. She believed that the Padre Presidente [Padre José Sánchez of San Gabriel Mission, whose position corresponded to what one might call vicar of all the missions] prompted [Governor] Echeandía in his persecution of her husband. I have tried to convince her to the contrary, but of course it is impossible to convince an old lady that she has lived for

forty years under an erroneous impression."

Señora de Fitch did not always possess the wherewithal for the acts of charity which she was moved to perform, for she was the victim of land grabbers, and little by little sacrificed property for taxes and loans at usurers' rates of interest. But her courage never left her. Dr. Grant says that when he was a boy his uncle Bill (Guillermo) related this tale: Josefa gave her brother a load of hides to take to Tiburon to sell. He did so, receiving \$5,000 in gold. But he went to San Francisco and before returning home proceeded to gamble away all the money. Next year, Josefa could afford to take no further chances. She seated herself atop the high load of stinking, fly-ridden hides and took off with them on a two-wheeled cart, with an Indian boy on either side oiling the wheels with tallow to lessen their racket. Thus she brought back \$5,000 in gold to feed and care for her eleven children for another year.

Whatever life's vicissitudes, until her death at Healdsburg on January 26, 1893, Josefa never gave up the treasured cat's-eye necklace which Enrique Fitch had presented to her. And nothing could take away her memory of how well her husband had kept his promise to Pio Pico to cherish her. Never in her married life, she said afterward, had Enrique caused her to feel one moment of *disgusta*.#

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\*This information comes from the S.D. Historical Society, which in observance of our 200th Anniversary is making an effort to document the lineage of our oldest California families.

Thomas Delano, died Oct. 23 1798 Ret. 79.  
 Elizabeth (Delano) Died 31<sup>st</sup> May 1811 Age 79

Sally Delano Fitch Born October 26 1811

Sally D. Fitch Died October 25 1815

Josephine Fitch, Born November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1837

*Fitch Fitch*

- H. D. Fitch 1797 Mayo 7<sup>th</sup>
- Josefa Carrillo de Fitch 1818 Dec 29
- Fernando Adonardo, Kasiar 1830 June 23 7 months
- Federico " 1832 June 28 9 months
- Guillermo " 1834 Nov 7
- Jose " 1836 March 19 2 months
- Josefa " 1837 Nov 2 2 1/2 months
- Isabel " 1839 April 6 7 months
- Apollonia " 1840 Aug 2
- Isabel " 1842 Sept 1
- Isabel " 1844 March 13 3 1/2 months
- Isabel " 1846 Sept 19 6 months
- Anita " 1847 April 13 2 1/2 months

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by Mary Stewart



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rillo patiently explained, "The name is pronounced 'Cay-reel-yo,' with a liquid Castilian double 'l.' It is *not* pronounced 'Care-reeyo,' with the 'y' for double 'l' as in Mexico. The Mexican adaptation of Spanish is a beautiful variation in itself, but we of the Castilian lineage prefer the original liquid sound for the double 'l.' It is a part of our heritage."

Josefa grew to be tall. She had brilliant hazel eyes, black hair and incredibly white skin. When Don Juan Bandini presented his guest, Governor José María Echeandía, to the radiant girl, her gleaming hair was banded with Loreto pearls. The visiting dignitary became smitten with both Josefa and the delightful San Diego climate. Echeandía immediately determined to change the capital from Monterey to

*"The Elopement,"* above, is an oil by Charles Nahl (1819-1878); the picture is believed to depict Josefa's impulsive dash with her cousin Pio Pico to the shore where her betrothed, Captain Henry Fitch, eagerly waited. Since Josefa Fitch did not pass away until 1893, we know that the painting was executed during her lifetime. It hangs in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.





San Diego, and to marry the Carrillos' most beautiful daughter.

Leo Carrillo claimed that the Governor was runty and pompous, an object of ridicule because of his lisping Castilian accent—an affectation which had escaped the early Hispanic settlers of the New World. (It is to this late actor-rancher and to Mrs. Fremont Older that we owe most of the details of Josefa's courtship.) All agreed that Echeandía and his administration eventually endeared themselves to no one. But the Governor visited San Diego soon after his appointment, and his new constituents were hopeful. Most hopeful of all were the parents of Josefa, who had noticed the swaggering little official yearning after their proud young beauty. They fancied the prospect of so distinguished a son-in-law.

According to one source, even before the Bandini tertulia in the Governor's honor, Josefa already had met Captain Henry Delano Fitch, who by this time was in the process of making a record round trip to Boston and was waxing impatient for the sight of her when the fiery Echeandía first hove into San Diego Bay. As Don Leo and Mrs. Older told it, Josefa's father sent her to buy new finery so she might appear even more irresistible in the Governor's sight, and it was at that time she met the prepossessing Yankee merchant captain.

Josefa was accompanied by her cousin Pio Pico, who although a decade older was the eighteen-year-old girl's good friend and companion. The two put out to the *María Esther* (most Californians, who depended on such vessels for all

*Above: Josefa Carrillo de Fitch is seated in the front row of this group portrait, at extreme right. It is unfortunate that all surviving photographs of Josefa show her heavy with late middle age and obviously marked by all the cares of widowhood complicated by a large family. The child at left is John D. Grant, Jr., on the lap of John D. Grant. The little boy standing next to them is Ben E. Grant and the little girl is Effa Grant De Gues. The central figure, seated, is the lovely Anita Fitch de Grant, mother of the brood. In the back row stand Charles Grant; an unidentified young girl; Henry Grant, stepson of Anita and son of John D. Grant and Anita's deceased sister, Ysabella; the last boy is unidentified.*

luxuries and many necessities, referred to such craft as the Boston Ships, no matter how they were rigged). Josefa had climbed the ship's ladder and had bent to wipe the salt spray from her silver-buckled slippers when she looked up into the compelling blue-grey-violet eyes of Fitch. She was accustomed to the usually not over-tall Spaniards of the nineteenth century. Towering above her was a well-favored, six-foot, two-inches tall seafarer who enhanced his height with a broad-brimmed California-style hat shoved toward the back of his head, and a serape hanging vertically from one shoulder.

It was the era when Yankee merchant ships ruled the seas, and Fitch was every inch the master of such a ship. With courtly manners and great aplomb he took much time to display for Josefa's benefit his array of splendid wares. This was not the usual fawning attention of a mere Yankee trader. She was aware of his apparent personal interest in her, and becoming color began to rise in her flawless ivory skin. Flustered in her pleasure and embarrassment, Josefa scarcely saw the gowns and laces, the shawls that the young captain theatrically unfurled, the dainty shoes he brought forth to suit her tiny feet. But at last he produced a hair comb so gorgeous that she quite forgot his presence. She was caught up in the fascinating perfection of the object itself. Josefa took the tortoise comb in both hands, held it up so that the rich gold banding glittered in the summer sun, and then secured the exquisite piece of hair jewelry in her own dark, lustrous tresses. The young Captain thought her more captivating than ever. Josefa knew full well how the hair ornament flattered her. When he told her the price—six hundred hides—her mood grew wistful as she returned the comb. Fitch urged her to take it home, to let her parents see how fully it complemented her ripe Spanish beauty.

Josefa showed the comb to Don Joaquín, who exploded. He regarded it as a ploy by an over-shrewd merchant to force a sale. A ploy it was indeed: to give Captain Fitch opportunity to call at the Carrillo home. Josefa's father surmised Fitch's intent when the commanding figure of the young sea captain was ushered before him. All Don Joaquín's instinctive parental suspicions were aroused. Right you were, Don Joaquín Carrillo. The little pueblo of San Diego quickly was scandalized by Josefa's disregard of her parents' wishes, her disdain for the Governor's attentions and by the ardent suit of Henry Fitch.

**H**enry Delano Fitch, who traced his lineage to John Alden of the *Mayflower*, was born at Nantucket, Massachusetts, May 1, 1799. He was said to have been graduated from Harvard. On September 2, 1815 when he was certified as an American citizen and seaman, he was described as having "dark hair, grey eyes and a dark complexion." A Congregationalist by faith, for Josefa he became a Roman Catholic and a Mexican citizen, to overcome all religious and civil barriers.

He persisted until at last the marriage was arranged. On the wedding day, Josefa was arrayed in shimmering white satin,

with orange blossoms. Lustrous Loreto pearls were about her throat. An altar had been prepared at the Carrillo home; clad in his vestments, Father Antonio Menéndez began the ceremony, with Captain Richard Barry of the *Vulture* serving as best man. Abruptly, Josefa's uncle\* stepped between, stating that an order from the Governor prohibited foreigners from marrying in California without a special license.

Fitch was not to be put off. "Tell the Governor we shall be married in spite of him, for Josefa's parents have given consent!"

Josefa wept for her disgrace before all her relatives and friends. But through her tears she murmured, "Enrique, why don't you carry me off?"

While appearing to bless the couple, Padre Menéndez said between closed teeth, as men in prison speak, "There are other countries where you can be married with fewer restrictions." But now we



know that later in the day a Spanish-California version of *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II Scene V, was played. The courageous priest, but newly arrived in San Diego, wed the couple in a secret ceremony.\*\*

Now the romantic figure of Pío Pico (later to be the last Mexican governor of California) assumes importance in the drama. Pío advised Enrique Fitch to go aboard his ship and haul anchor. Then, when night was near, to send a small boat for Josefa. Fitch complied and at the indicated hour was there with a good boat at the appointed spot. Meanwhile, Pío Pico went to his dear cousin Josefa. He spoke persuasively to her of her love for the young captain, and easily induced her to

\*Domingo Carrillo, who was an aide to Governor Echeandía.

\*\*For this act, the record simply states, "Father Menéndez was removed with cause, October 16, 1829." Out of loyalty and gratitude for the priest's great-hearted assistance, Josefa never publicly referred to this marriage (which would have cleared her reputation, according to the rigid mores of the last century); she did not even allude to it in the comprehensive deposition which she dictated at Healdsburg, November 26, 1875, to an amanuensis of H.H. Bancroft.



Left: Henry Delano Fitch was handsome; six feet, two inches tall; and captain of his own ship, the *Maria Esther*, when he fell in love with Josefa Carrillo, the beauty of Old San Diego. To win her, he became a Mexican citizen, took instruction in the Catholic faith, and changed his first two names to Enrique (Henry) Domingo (for Domingo Carrillo, who was his sponsor when he embraced the Catholic religion).

Above: Anita, youngest child of Enrique and Josefa Fitch, was said most to resemble her mother. She became Anita Fitch de Grant, San Diego's first opera singer.

flee with him at once on his magnificent horse. Some say that before leaving the house she disguised herself as Pío's valet. By her own account the eloping Josefa took with her only a small case carrying petticoats and other necessities. Then Don Pío helped her onto his horse and galloped away. They dashed at full speed to the rendezvous on the beach where Fitch was waiting in readiness with a sailboat manned by six of his crew.

Pío Pico said, "Goodbye, cousin. May God bless you—and you, Cousin Enrique. Be careful that you give Josefa no reason to regret having cast her lot with you." Fitch replied, "I promise before God and man that as long as I live Josefa will be happy."

He was careful not to take his bride on his ship *Maria Esther*. Instead, to confuse possible pursuers, he directed his first mate, Mr. Hatch, to act as navigator and sail at once for Valparaíso. The eloping couple put out for the *Vulture*. They barely had arrived on board when her sails were unfurled. After seventy-four days at sea they reached Valparaíso safely. Captain Fitch immediately ordered arrangements made for a wedding, which was solemnized by the parish priest of Valparaíso. Captain Barry again acted as one of the three witnesses.

The load of hides and tallow which the *Vulture* carried was sold at Valparaíso. A good offer having been received for the ship herself, she was sold in that port and shortly afterward Fitch purchased the frigate *Leonora*. Then the Yankee captain

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## JOSEFA *continued from page 41*

and his lovely California bride set sail for Boston, where Josefa was received with pride by the Fitches, Delanos and Gorhams.

On the return voyage of the *Leonora*, Fitch resolved to fly the Mexican flag along the coast of Latin America and to enter at Acapulco. From Acapulco he sailed directly to San Diego, where he cleared customs under the authority of Juan Bandini, who then was collector of the port.

When the *Leonora* lay at anchor in the bay, women friends and the female members of Josefa's family came to welcome her. But her mother brought Josefa the warning that her father had sworn to kill her.

Josefa felt she could not bear to live in enmity with "the author of her days." She resolved to brave the danger and to go to him at once. Determinedly, accompanied by family and friends, she went ashore. Turning over to her sister the baby she carried in her arms, the young wife approached the half-open doorway of her girlhood home. Her eyes fell at once upon the form of her father sitting inside at some distance. She saw that he was armed. Nevertheless, she did not desist. "Father, I have returned to San Diego to ask your pardon for leaving your house."

If Don Joaquín heard, he gave no indication. "A storm agitated his soul." He remained seated at his writing desk, indicating his scorn of her.

Thereupon Josefa knelt in the doorway and once more humbly begged his pardon. She explained that she had fled only because of the hateful tyranny of a governor who set himself above civil and ecclesiastical law. Josefa entreated, but her father remained silent and immobile. His attention, she saw, was not on the firearms, and she took courage. Still imploring forgiveness, she dragged herself toward him on her knees.\*

At length, Don Joaquín relented. He went toward her and gathered her in his arms. "I forgive you. It is not your fault if our governors are tyrants." With affection and relief, Josefa then went to the doorway and announced to all who awaited the joyous news of reconciliation between father and daughter.

Afterward, she said, that tempestuous day ended with a great dance with "illumination," and the house was not big enough for all the congratulatory gifts which the women of San Diego brought for her.

A few days later, with spirits as high as the wind in the *Leonora's* sails, the young Fitches cast away and pointed the ship toward Monterey. But their misfortunes had not ended. No sooner had they

\*The often-told story that Josefa crawled blocks in the dirt to ask her father's pardon is without foundation. In her narration, she specifically said that she knelt at the door of the room and then dragged herself on her knees to the middle of the sala until she was within about six varas from where he sat. A vara is 2.8 feet.

cast anchor at Monterey than a Mexican official clambered aboard the *Leonora* with an order for Captain Fitch's arrest. Manfully, he left without delay to face the charges. There followed terrible months in which Fitch was imprisoned, kept from his wife and child while Josefa herself was under quasi-arrest. After persecution by both church and state, the couple at last were ordered to go through yet another marriage ceremony. Some accounts say that, at the conclusion of this rite, as part of their penance the Fitches were forced to hold three-foot candles. Through the night, friends and relatives sat with them in the church waiting for the enormous tapers to burn down, as they finally did, scorching the hands that held them.

It is an established fact that as a final penance Captain Enrique Fitch was required to donate a bell to the Catholic church at Los Angeles.

The rock which Enrique Fitch hid behind while waiting for Pío Pico to spirit away Josefa is called Fitch's Rock, to this day. The Captain made the first survey map of the Pueblo, and it is called Fitch's map. In the North, Fitch Mountain was named for him. In 1841 he was grantee of the Sotoyome Rancho. In 1845-46 he was Receptor in San Diego. The San Diego *Union* for July 13, 1876 lists the first Ayuntamiento or Town Council, with Juan María Osuna as Mayor and Henry Fitch as Síndico Procurator. Bancroft says: "Captain Fitch was one of the earliest, most prominent and most popular of the early pioneers, straightforward in his dealings, generous in disposition, frank and cheerful in manner; in physique a very tall man inclined to corpulency."

Judge Benjamin Hayes wrote: "Henry Domingo Fitch...died January 13, 1849, at four o'clock and twenty minutes in the afternoon. He died at the old Fitch house on Fitch [or Calhoun] Street. He was the last white person buried on Presidio Hill. He was several times alcalde [unproved], was over six feet high and very corpulent. He died of fever after a brief illness." To this his grandson, the late John D. Grant, adds in his handwriting: "He contributed \$50,000 to the American cause." Tradition in the family is that Captain Fitch met with foul play. Some say that he died in San Francisco and that he was poisoned.

Philip Crosthwaite declared that, just before the confrontation of Mexican and American forces and the end of Mexican rule in California, Pío Pico, then governor, warned his dear cousin that a Mexican military party was heading for San Diego with the intent of killing all Americans, particularly Fitch. Don Pío urged Josefa to flee for her life, to join him in Los Angeles. Torn by divided loyalties, Josefa remained staunchly faithful to her husband, sounding the alarm that alerted all San Diego. There is no doubt that Fitch was beset by powerful enemies to the end of his days. Some of them coveted his large land holdings. Others undoubtedly resented his service to the U.S. Army: Having surveyed all the area, he was able to provide gringo troops with a back-

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## HAROLD KEEN

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American for the district counselor's office to assure the community that Lincoln's special problems were being handled by individuals with proper background and understanding.

7) Grant greater responsibility and self-discipline to the students.

8) Establish a continuing institute for teachers at Lincoln, to prepare them for handling potentially volatile situations and to improve their understanding of problems of Black and Brown youngsters.

9) Make adjustments in the curriculum to include Negro history and literature, urban problems and more-meaningful occupational courses.

Exploring other alternatives, the teachers' report suggested consideration of closing Lincoln, integrating its one thousand students into the system's other high schools, and applying Lincoln's share of federal funds to such corollary expenses as bussing. Under such a plan, the Lincoln campus would be converted into a community center, with recreational facilities, meeting rooms, public library, welfare and public-health branch offices, and perhaps vocational training for dropouts.

This comprehensive report, presaging many of the demands of the Lincoln students a year later, was moved along by Dr. Twist to Superintendent Ralph C. Dailard with recommendations that a high-level committee of administrators collect facts and meet with southeast San Diego representatives to demonstrate that the district is sincerely interested in grappling with the Lincoln problem. At that point, the matter was stalled, and the faculty report never was made known to the Board of Education.

The following July, after Lincoln's deficiencies had been discussed repeatedly in the semi-monthly Citizens Interracial Committee dialogues at City Hall, George Stevens, local head of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) warned a CIC session that unless "drastic" changes occurred at Lincoln during the Summer (of 1968), the school might not be opening in September. This implied threat at least reflected the toughening of attitudes which was transmitted to the campus itself when the fall semester began.

Talk of a boycott started among the students last November, according to Di-Anna Toliver, newly elected student-body president, and for weeks before the actual walkout on Friday, April 11, teachers and administrators were edgy as rumors swirled around the campus. The last of the storm signals before the actual uprising was the appearance in March before the Board of Education of Reese Jarrett, then student-body president, who read a statement deploring "the inadequate education that we are presently receiving."

"There is need for a curriculum . . . that will motivate students toward college . . . that relates to Black and Brown students. Classes at Lincoln High School are geared for the below-average students. We have only one advanced class in each subject

area on each grade level. This implies that the teachers do not expect Black and Brown students to make any educational achievements. The development of a more relevant method of teaching is necessary in order to continuously motivate the student.... The elementary disciplinary methods are becoming more fatal [*sic*]. Too often students are suspended before they have a chance to discuss a problem with their counselor . . . . The students should be dealt with on a more personal basis . . . We need more Black and Brown teachers and administrators who are aware of the problems of the students. The white teachers should especially be aware of the sensitivity of the situation at hand. *Unless our requests are met, we will do whatever our collective minds will provoke us*

*to do in this situation, by whatever means necessary."* What were requests at this point, not immediately heeded by the Board, later were transformed into the twenty-two demands that accompanied the walkout. Ample warning of possible trouble through direct action had been given by Jarrett, and there still was time to establish communications with the students, but the opportunity was lost.

Some of the veteran teachers at Lincoln believe that outside influences—principally militant organizations such as Black Panthers—played a role in student revolt. It is difficult to get teachers at Lincoln to talk frankly of the situation there unless their identity is protected. Recently I met with a group of the oldest—in point of service—at the home of one

on the agreement that they be quoted anonymously. The following is a blending of their remarks:

"Last Winter there was a test run of student power. The cafeteria was boycotted for two and a half weeks in a dispute over the quality of food. (One of the twenty-two demands later was for 'Black and Brown cooks so that we can get some eatable food'). At first, the Associated Student Body government was believed responsible, but it disclaimed any knowledge of it. At any rate, it worked so well that one of the known Black leaders on campus said, 'I never thought I'd see a bunch of Blacks get this organized.'

"More outsiders were being observed on campus, including Blacks from local colleges. More Black Panthers were selling their newspaper near the campus. The so-called Central Committee that was formed to deal with the faculty representatives during the week school was closed had a militant look to it—with the boys wearing black-leather jackets or military fatigue jackets, and the girls in black-leather jackets and black capri pants or African-style dresses. The Central Committee, which was recognized by the faculty as the students' bargaining representatives, was not an arm of the duly constituted student government. The members said they were chosen at a meeting at Southcrest Park. "We know what they need," they said of the student body as a whole, "and we'll get the job done. We are the workers."

"The Central Committee concept and use of complaints of bad food in the cafeteria as a rallying point for Black Panther organizers are both outlined in mimeographed basic guidelines of instructions on how to organize Black high-school students. These guidelines appeared on the campus last December." These teachers are convinced that the faculty and the school administration are being made scapegoats, suffering the label of "racist," because of a failure by the Board of Education to relieve the tensions obviously building up at Lincoln during at least the last two years. "The result has been that a small minority, maybe about twenty-five hard-core organizers, were able to close the school," they said. "Most of the students are wonderfully polite and courteous kids, and this is amazing in view of what they've been through from elementary school on up. They're in the so-called silent majority, and they were swept along with the radicals."

DiAnna Toliver denies the student walkout was directed by outsiders. "Students simply saw the need for change, and when there was no response, they decided to boycott," she said. "The Central Committee was not a Black Panther-dominated organization. It was formed by a group of Black and Brown students who felt the regular student government was part of the Establishment, part of the administration we were trying to get rid of. We couldn't get any power through the Student Council. Now, as a result of the walkout, our new administration, and the granting of most of our twenty-two demands, and changes in the student-govern-

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## JOSEFA *continued from page 73*

cañon route into San Diego, by-passing any possible ambush by Mexicans and/or Indians.

The Fitches' fifth child, Josefa, was eleven years old at the time of her father's death. In 1906 she gave this version, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*: Enrique Fitch had established several great ranches. One was at Sotoyome, on the Russian River, near Healdsburg; another at El Valle de las Palmas, forty miles south of Ensenada; and, most important, a third was in San Francisco. This he owned in conjunction with Francisco Guerrero, and it covered three and a half square leagues, running from the Bay along Larkin Street to the old Mission, thence to a line beyond the Spring Valley Water Works [this section at the turn of the century embraced the Cliff House, Golden Gate Park and the Presidio]. Enrique Fitch attended a banquet in San Francisco with such well-known men as Commodore Stockton. While there he signed away his title to all the land which was his between Powell and Taylor Streets, O'Farrell and Post. "He had already laid out and given Union Square to the city," said Mrs. Josefa Fitch de Bailhache. "An old friend, Manuel Torres, still living...summoned Dr. Hope and Dr. McNulty to my father's assistance. All three accompanied him to San Diego. When he regained consciousness, Torres told him what he had done. My father fell back dead." His bereaved family held to the poisoning theory because Fitch did not drink, would not allow liquor in his house, and once had incurred the wrath of Richard Henry Dana by throwing the writer out of the Fitches' Old San Diego store when Dana entered in an intoxicated condition.

At the recent discovery and exhumation of Fitch's remains, James Maidhof, the San Diego State College student who showed us the opened coffin, remarked on the pronounced resemblance of those of Fitch's descendants who were present. Although they came from New York, Northern California, Mexico and San Diego, the young digger thought that they all resembled each other, and that all the women were goodlooking.

One of the few mistakes that historian H. H. Bancroft made (in the *Pioneer Register and Index*, page 143) was the statement that "The last two [of Josefa and Henry Fitch's children] died in 1850-54. Josefa became the wife of John Grant and a locally famous singer; Isabela married John Bailhache." It was daughter Josefa who married John Bailhache. Daughter Isabela (Ysabella in Henry Fitch's Bible, now in the possession of Dr. Ben Grant of Long Beach) was the first wife of John Grant. The first opera singer in San Diego was her sister Anita, who became John Grant's second wife, sometime after the demise of Ysabella on June 15, 1861. Of Anita, Dr. Grant wrote in 1948: "Grandma Grant...studied in San Francisco under a famed teacher...and sang in opera in San Francisco for several seasons. She

was an accomplished musician.... She spoke and sang in Italian, French and Spanish. She was a Spanish queen if I ever saw one."

Anita, the youngest child and the one said most to resemble her mother, in 1916 came to the beautiful garden wedding of her grandson Ben to my eldest sister, Anna Ray. From then until she passed away on February 16, 1933 we were friends. She grew roses with stems a yard long, and attributed her ageless skin to the daily siesta which she would permit nothing to disturb. Until her death she had beauty and unbending dignity. She is buried beside her mother, Josefa Carrillo Fitch, at Oak Mound Cemetery near Healdsburg. Perhaps it is fitting that another Anita (Manning) should have unearthed the bones of Henry Fitch on February 29, 1968, on Presidio Hill.

Captain Henry Fitch left his widow the 35,487.53-acre Rancho Sotoyome granted him in 1841. His last will forgave the debts of Santiago Arguëllo (one half); of Miguel Pedrorena; John Borker (requesting his wife to give Borker shoes); and Alfredo Anselino, whom he not only released from payment of debt but made "a present of my *Encyclopaedia and Practice of Medicine*." Over and over in Fitch's ledgers, debts were forgiven. Enrique Fitch also left eleven children: Enrique Eduardo, born June 23, 1830 (Henry could have arrived legitimately any time after April 9, 1930); Frederico, born June 28, 1832; Guillermo, November 7, 1834, José, March 19, 1836; Josefa, November 2, 1837; Juan, April 6, 1839; Ysabella, August 24, 1840; Carlos, September 1, 1842; Miguel, March 13, 1844; María Antonia Natalia, September 19, 1845; Anita, April 13, 1848.\*

A visitor to San Diego who attended Juan Bandini's New Year Fiesta in 1849 especially singled out Josefa, noting in his journal her "personal pulchritude and clearness of complexion." It is impressive to consider that after eleven accouchements her comeliness was outstanding even among the younger women attending Don Juan's celebration—which must have been the last gaily Josefa was to know before widowhood came upon her scarcely a week later.

Besides looking after a large family, Josefa found time for good works. Juan Bautista Alvarado in his *Historia de California* says, "Mrs. Fitch has always been generous to the needy, the sick and to works of public utility—in fact, to all but the Church. She believed that the Padre Presidente [Padre José Sánchez of San Gabriel Mission, whose position corresponded to what one might call vicar of all the missions] prompted [Governor] Echeandía in his persecution of her husband. I have tried to convince her to the contrary, but of course it is impossible to convince an old lady that she has lived for

forty years under an erroneous impression."

Señora de Fitch did not always possess the wherewithal for the acts of charity which she was moved to perform, for she was the victim of land grabbers, and little by little sacrificed property for taxes and loans at usurers' rates of interest. But her courage never left her. Dr. Grant says that when he was a boy his uncle Bill (Guillermo) related this tale: Josefa gave her brother a load of hides to take to Tiburon to sell. He did so, receiving \$5,000 in gold. But he went to San Francisco and before returning home proceeded to gamble away all the money. Next year, Josefa could afford to take no further chances. She seated herself atop the high load of stinking, fly-ridden hides and took off with them on a two-wheeled cart, with an Indian boy on either side oiling the wheels with tallow to lessen their racket. Thus she brought back \$5,000 in gold to feed and care for her eleven children for another year.

Whatever life's vicissitudes, until her death at Healdsburg on January 26, 1893, Josefa never gave up the treasured cat's-eye necklace which Enrique Fitch had presented to her. And nothing could take away her memory of how well her husband had kept his promise to Pío Pico to cherish her. Never in her married life, she said afterward, had Enrique caused her to feel one moment of *disgusta*.#

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\*This information comes from the S.D. Historical Society, which in observance of our 200th Anniversary is making an effort to document the lineage of our oldest California families.