



# HALESWORTH RESEARCH LIBRARY, INC.

303 Halesworth, Santa Ana, California 92701

P.O.Box 1837..Santa Ana..92702

August 5, 1966

Orange County Genealogical Society

President  
Mr. Rolland S. Thomas.

It gives us great pleasure to present this binder to the Orange County Genealogical Society (California) however, should the Society want a positive of the actual document, that can be arranged, even to a container to preserve it. (As we presented on a scholarship to the College student who made it by hand..and which Bernardo Yorba has in his study).. I leave you with this thought:-

"No nation will long endure, content to rest on the glory of it's past..  
LET US HONOR THE PAST, SERVE THE PRESENT AND THUS INSURE THE FUTURE"..."Patriotism" by Rt.Rev.Aloysius C.Dinneen.Roman Catholic Church of St.Agnes..New York City, New York....

NOTE:- A few months ago, on a trip coast to coast, on my way to Grand central station and my train for Washington,D.C.I noticed this hand lettered plaque on the front of a small Church..and copied it.

"Mrs. M. "

August..1966

SOMETHING ABOUT THE HALESWORTH RESEARCH LIBRARY.

Founded:- December 27, 1958

312 Halesworth, Santa Ana, California

Incorporated: November 4, 1963 became a California non-profit Corporation.

Presentation: November 6, 1963, the Board of Supervisors of Orange County presented the Library with a hand-lettered, framed plaque as an official resolution of commendation. Personally signed by the entire Board.

Copyright: Copyright granted on "CALIFORNIA, IT'S ORIGIN AND GROWTH"..#A-790107..Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. The copyright also covers slides, gloss prints, newspaper releases, taped interviews, our method "Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow" and our entire format which originated with us.

FEDERAL EXEMPTION:- Exemption granted by Department of Internal Revenue..under classified "Education-literary" code 501-c-3. Any money willed to the Library is inheritance tax free. Donors help to support it. Our exemption was granted July 21, 1965. The Los Angeles office, of the department handled it. Mr. James F. Smith processed it.

ORIGINAL BY-LAWS:- Outline a Spanish section, Mexican, Indian, Oriental and Anglo-Saxon. We will be starting on our Spanish section, to be located in Anaheim. We will also have a printing program..mostly pictorial on major subjects..these to be mailed out to Boards of Education, State Chambers of Commerce, State Libraries, State archives, Newspapers and publications, Libraries having to do with Industry, service clubs, Church groups, radio, T.V. and the moving picture Industry..a drama-speech section to present (as the story of Romana) spectacular events..



THE HALESWORTH RESEARCH LIBRARY, INC.

312 Halesworth (Our original home from 1958-1964)  
Santa Ana, California.

1966..303 Halesworth, P.O.Box 1837..Santa Ana..92702.

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The Halesworth Research Library, Inc. is a California, non-profit Corporation dedicated to the actual documents and original material historical events throughout the entire State of California, and county by county.

However, the compiling of such data, is prompted by current needs, such as the year of 1964 marks the seventy fifth year Orange county has been established. It was on March 11, 1889, that the late Governor Robert Waterman signed the bill creating the County of Orange and at the same time, detaching the land known as the "Ten Leagues" from the County of Los Angeles. Therefore during the year of 1964, The Halesworth Research Library, Inc. has paid tribute each month to some fact or event related to the year of 1964, but requiring attention to the origin of the fact or event.

In scanning the original land grants, as they occurred in 1834 in favor of the family of Don Bernardo Yorba, we found the present Bernardo Yorba, residing on some of the original land in Orange county, and presented him with copies of the original documents. We feel the State of California has grown so rapidly, they really have not had time or taken time to preserve or present original documents, and relate it to the immediate day, month or year. Many descendants of the early families reside on the original land, and as this Library pays tribute to the Spanish, Mexican families whose land and colorful history built the dramatic foundation of this Golden State, and whose influence in architecture, art, music, dancing, writing, spiritual understanding, and patience, is something to very thoroughly verify and preserve. This therefore is the very humble beginning, a project this library plans on spending at least a year on exclusively, and which we trust will be a definite inspiration to the living descendants of the first California families, the Yorba's, The Figueroas, The Sepulvadas and others as well as the early explorers and men of courage and hard faith whose combined effort gave us this land of sunshine and flowers...rich in historical lore...however being sure it is not only preserved but brought alive in modern methods of audio-visual to make it an awarding event.

April 30, 1964

Data pertaining to early land grants..

Authoritive material compiled from "HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA" by A.A.Gray,M.A. Pub.by D.C.Heath,and Co.

LAND MEASUREMENT "VARAS" ( as described in Yorba titles)  
50 Varas..equals...137½ feet.

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Page 181.....THOMAS YORBA.

Daughter of Thomas Yorba (who owned 60,000 acres of Rancho Santa Ana) had suits (Thomas Yorba) costing over a thousand dollars each. The daughter had over 150 dresses made of finest satin and silk,each a distinct oattern. "Low shoes with silver buckles,rbight sashes,belts of brilliant colors, and a rebozo which was worn over the head and shoulders, with elaborate jewelry to match"

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U.S. RECOGNITION OF ALL LAND TITLES: When California became a part of the United States, our government was obliged to recognize all private property, held in good faith, in the new territory. THIS PRINCIPAL IS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL LAW. In the treaty with Mexico, concluded February 2, 1848, the United States promised that the property rights of those owning property in California would not be distrubed and that they would be protected just as if they belonged to citizens of the United States. THIS SITPULATION COVERED ONLY PROPERTY WHICH HAD BEEN ACQUIRED IN CALIFORNIA BEFORE JULY 7, 1846. (The Yorba large rancho was granted in July,1834).. In 1851 a land commission was appointed to determine legality of early grant.

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Squatters and gold seekers poured into California and became a very serious problem to land owners. "The newcomer did not hesitate to set up a small tent or rough cabin on any piece of land..In the mining regions the miner was free to stake a claim,but this was not true of fertile land in the agricultural valleys and with the land on which were started many of the early towns. SOME OF THESE LANDS ERE GRANTS MADE TO INVIDIUALS BY THE SPANISH AND MEXICAN GOVERNMENTS BEFORE THE COUNTRY BECAME UNITED STATES TERRITORY AND WERE,THEREFORE PRIVATE PROPERTY. These private grants often covered many square miles. The emigrant refused to believe that any single person could own so much land. There were no fixed boundaries and no fences. The Land commission failed,and expired in 1856 scarcely one-half of the Land claims had been satisfactorily settled.

April 30, 1964

RESUME

Treaty with Mexico concluded..February 2,1848

FLAGS..... Spain....1542 - 1822  
Mexico...1822 - 1846  
Calif.Republic..1846.  
California entered Union..1850 Sept.9.  
English falg..1579  
Russian American Co..1809 to 1841.  
Buenos Aires..1818.

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POPULATION...1841.

Adult male... 2,000.  
Americans..300  
English.... 82  
Irish..... 27

January 1843, 40 Americans in Los Angeles.  
1843 to 1846 no less than 1,500 from United States.

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The Jesuits: The enduring work which the Jesuits had carried on in loower California came to an abrupt end in 1767. In that year the King of Spain issued a decree expelling from the Spanish possessions all the missionaries of this order. For seventy years they had toiled among the heathen on the California peninsula and succeeded where the civil and military authorities had failed. Gaspar de Portola was sent to the Peninsula to take charge of all the missions. Every move was kept a secret and the Jesuits did not know they were to be removed until Portola arrived with a few soldiers in October,1767. By the following February, all the priests numbering about twenty,appeared in Loreto, and after a solemn church service they were placed on a boat and taken to the mainland. Wearily they trudged across Mexico and embarked at Vera Cruz for Spain.

After the expulsions of the Jesuits from Loower California, the Franciscans were assigned to this field. On March,1768, some twenty missionaries of this order left Mexico and two weeks later landed at Loreto, Portola, who officially sent the Jesuits out of the penix ula was at the port to welcome the members of the new order. With fitting ceremony he read them a decree from The king in which they were to take over all M'ssions. With the Franciscans, there were three men destined to play an important part,Junipero Serra,Francisco Palou and Juan Crespi.



## INTRODUCTION

APRIL 30, 1964

At a dinner, in The Yorba Room, of Buffums Santa Ana, the certified copies of original documents, taken from the State archives, directed by the State Historian, Dr. W.N. Davis, Jr. who heads the archives in Sacramento for the purpose of presenting to Mr. and Mrs. Bernardo Yorba of Anaheim, California the attached copies covering early titles to the Rancho Santa Ana, held by the Yorba family, under title of 1834.

Attending the dinner, honoring Mr. and Mrs. Bernardo Yorba, Mrs. W.H. Spurgeon, Jr. of Santa Ana, Jack George, Mrs. Fred Mioloia, Bob Geier, Helen Boyd, Mrs. Ron Hoge, Dennis Schloeder, Dr. Sandaval, Cruz Borrious, and Mrs. H. Thaddeus Manning.

Table decorations were beautifully done by Buffums director of display, Art Schroeder. Dinner was courtesy of Buffums, and the documents were courtesy of Halesworth Research Library, Inc. honoring the event of The Year of the Diamond Jubilee in Orange County.. as the April activity in tribute to historical events in California.

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The negatives of the documents are in the files of The Halesworth Research Library, Inc. 312 Halesworth, Santa Ana, California. A copy was made for Bernardo Yorba, including the State certification and seal. The mimeographed document is imperfect and names are in many cases not correct. The handwritten documents, very ancient, were often hard to decipher if the word or name was unusual or unfamiliar to the typist. However, we will consider it merely a draft, with the files available to anyone wishing to correct their copy of this documented issue.

The press was represented by Jim Cooper, ed. of Santa Ana Independent whose pictures and story appears in the May 14 edition (attached). The publisher of Orange County Industrial News of life and business.. Mr. W. Worth Bernard. Colored slides were taken, and black and white for the picture files of the Halesworth Research Library, Inc.

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There is also included a brief outline, explaining the early land grants and their function. The Yorba land covered about 62,000 acres. An adobe dwelling originally on the land, was the first dwelling to be built in what is now Orange county. It was torn down, but there are photographs of it and perhaps someday it will be rebuilt.. as a museum and landmark to be preserved in proper fashion.

The library is open, phone Kimberly 7-9842 for anyone wishing to further pursue the early land grants and the particular Yorba holdings.  
Halesworth Research Library, Inc.



# Yorba Room



APRIL 30, 1964

Yorba room, Buffums'  
Santa Ana, California.

Presenting to the Yorba family of Anaheim, the copies of original land grants giving title in 1834 to Don Bernardo Yorba the "ten leagues" which is roughly most of Orange County.

Through courtesy of Dr. W.N. Davis, Jr. State Historian, the documents were from the State Archives, certified and bearing the State seal.

Halesworth Research Library, Inc. is a non-profit, California Corporation dedicated to presenting for Educational purposes and for preservation copies of actual documents having to do with the origin and growth of the State of California.

This presentation was the official activity for the month of April, having to do with the Year of 1964.. honoring the 75th. year of Orange county.



Jim Cooper...Editor

1966...Jim Cooper now heads the KNXT--TV  
"big news" for Orange County. He is  
on 6:00 to 7:30 and 11:00 P.M.



**PAGES OF HISTORY** — Copies of the original documents from state archives on land grants to Don Bernardo Yorba and Yorba family in 1803, are presented to decendents of famed Orange County pioneer in the "Yorba Room" at Buffums of Santa Ana. Mrs. M. E. Pelley, direc-

tor of social activities for Halesworth Research Library, makes presentation as an observance for 75th birthday year of Orange County. Receiving documents are Mr. and Mrs. Bernardo Yorba. Shown on horse on mural is original Yorba, great grandfather of Mr. Yorba.





## Yorba Decendant Is Feted at Luncheon

There was a Catalonian military man who traveled with the Spaniard Don Gaspar de Portola on his first visit to Orange County in July 1769.

His name was Jose Antonio Yorba, who with his nephew, Pablo Paralta, was deeded a "Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana."

The colorful "golden era of the Orange County ranches" was emulated in the Rancho Canon de Santa Ana granted to Don Bernardo Yorba, third son of the pioneer soldier.

The story is very much a part of Orange County today as the county observes its 75th birthday.

Last week a part of history was "re-lived" when copies of all the original documents of the Rancho were presented by the Halesworth Research Library to the great grandson of Yorba, Mr. Bernardo Yorba.

The event was one of a series of events that has marked the county's historical "diamond jubilee" celebration this year.

The presentation took place at a luncheon hosted by Buffums' of Santa Ana — appropriately in the Yorba Room.

At the rear of the room is a large "sgraffito" mural depicting the visit of the soldier Yorba, mounted on

horseback, as he came to Orange County with Father Juniper Serra, missionary.

Receiving the copies of the original "Rancho" grant were Mr. and Mrs. Bernardo Yorba, of Anaheim, direct descendants of the pioneer Yorba and his colorful family.

The Yorba's are the parents of 10 youngsters — all sixth generation descendants of the original Yorba family.

Mrs. M. E. Pelley, social director for the Halesworth Library made the presentation.

SANTA ANA  
INDEPENDENT

MAY 14, 1964

Jim Cooper  
Editor.

JIM COOPER...1966  
now, Orange County  
newsman...for  
KNXT T.V.  
ORANGE COUNTY...

(Jim is on the "big news" 6 to 7:30 and at 11:00 P.M.)

## Buffums' Yorba Room Mural

Designed and executed by the California artist, Joseph Donat, the mural dominates a space 14 feet square against the north wall of Buffums' Yorba Room. It is a composite picture of the early days in the history of Orange County.

In 1810, Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, comprising "10 square leagues," or what is roughly most of Orange County, was granted by Don Pedro Fages, California Military Governor, to Jose Antonio Yorba and his nephew, Pablo Peralta. Yorba was one of Fages' original Catalonian volunteers in the occupancy of Alta California, which began in 1769.

On the mural, Yorba, whose fifth and sixth generation direct descendants still occupy a vestige in Santa Ana Canyon of the original land concession, is portrayed as a principal figure on horseback.

Fra Junipero Serra, first president of the California Missions, was given military support by such men as Yorba.

Fra Serra is seen on the mural as a robed figure in the center against a wall of the Mission San Juan Capistrano founded in 1776. An orange tree beside Fra Serra represents an original one brought from Spain by the missionaries. A large figure of a dancing Indian in a primitive ceremony is evidence of an earlier California culture.

The mural is executed in an ancient method of architectural decoration known as "sgraffito," a scratching technique found as far back as the Stone Age in artifacts and cave decoration. Sgraffito was also used by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The method reached its flowering in Renaissance Italy.

YEAR 1834

PROCEEDINGS.

In relation to the place named CANON de SANTA ANA, petitioned for by Don Bernardo Yorba.

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TO THE SUPERIOR POLITICAL CHIEF.

I, Bernardo Yorba, a resident of, and established upon the Rancho of Santa Ana, pertaining to the Pueblo of the Jurisdiction of Los Angeles, before Your Honor in due form of law, present myself and say; that, having had by my first marriage, three children, named Raymond, Ines and Romana; on my second marriage, on account of the death of my first wife, having determined to settle upon my three children, some property, that belonged to me legitimately, and which I still possess, and it being necessary, necessary to remove said property or stock, from the small tract of land, that we four occupy, I find myself under the necessity of asking Your Honor, to grant, for the benefit of the three children referred to, the land they occupy, in the place named Canon de Santa Ana, bounded by the Rancho of this name; that of Santa Gertrudis, and the Mission of San Gabriel; which tract of land is very broken, and is only adapted to grazing purposes; its extent from North to South, is seven thousand varas, and thirteen thousand two hundred and fifty from East to West, containing three small springs; it does not belong to any one, nor is it comprehended within the twenty leagues, bordering on a foreign territory, nor within the ten leagues bordering on the sea coast, set forth in the law. I herewith present a map of the land petitioned for, in order to give Your Honor an exact idea of the same, as also to prove what I have stated. Wherefore I pray Your Honor, to be pleased to grant my petition after the necessary proceedings have been had, for which favor I will be grateful, being pleased to admit this on common paper, since there is no sealed paper in this place.

PUEBLO OF LOS ANGELES FEBRUARY 15, 1834  
Bernardo Yorba

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Pueblo of Los Angeles, February 26th. 1834.

In conformity with the laws in relation to the matter, let the Illustrious Ayuntamiento of the Pueblo of Los Angeles report; if the petitioner herein, possesses such requisites, as under the law, entitles him to be heard in his position; if the land petitioned for, is included within the twenty leagues bordering on a foreign territory, or the ten leagues bordering on the Sea shore, mentioned in the law of the 18th. of August, 1824; if it is irrigable, or dependent upon the seasons for agriculture, or only adapted to grazing purposes; if it pertains to the property of any individual, Corporation or Pueblo, with every thing else that may serve to throw light upon the matter, and when this shall have been done, let the Espediente be forwarded, to the



Father Minister of the Mission of San Gabriel, in order, that he may report upon the same. The Senor Don Irse Figueroa, Brigadier General, Commandant General, Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territor of Alta, California, thus ordered, decreed and signed, which I attest.

Figueroa.

Bernardo Navarreti  
in the absence of the Secretary.

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Pueblo of Los Angeles, March 6th. 1834.

In obedience to the foregoing decree, of the Political Chief of the Territory, this Illustrious Ayntamiento, reports; that the citizen Bernardo Yorba, is a man of honorable character; that he possess all the requisites, which under the law entitled him to receive the favor which he asks; that the land petitioned for, is not included within the twenty leagues bordering on a foreign territory, nor within the ten leagues bordering on the sea shore, mentioned in the law of the 18th. of August, 1824; that said land is only suitable for grazing purposes; that it contains three small springs; that it is considered as vacant, there being no domestic stock upon it, and only a small number of wild cattle and horses, which are all common property. It is bounded by the Ranchos of Santa Ana, Santa Gertrudis and the Mission of San Gabriel. This is all that this Aynento- miento can report in relation to the matter.

Jose Perez

Vicente Moraga.

Secy.

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Mission of San Gabriel, March 17th. 1834.

In view of the report, asked of this Mission, in relation to the place, known by the name of Canon de Santa Ana, bounded by the Ranchoes of Santa Ana, Santa Gertrudis and the Mission, I have to report, that the land petitioned for, by Don Bernardo Yorba, has been, and is, occupied, by the property of the Mission, since the time, the Senor Yorbas, owned no stock, up to the present date, according to the unanimous testimony, of all the Neophytes in charge of the Rancho of Santa Ana; it is true, that on account of the continual running of horses, has somewhat driven the cattle to the hills, and other places, as the petitioner himself knows, and can affirm, that when the Neophytes have made their rodeo of this Mission, the Senor Yorbas, have separated their stock there from, the stock of the Mission remaining, from the river of Santa Ana, in this direction, the Mission has always

been in peaceable possession of the land; and besides, the citizen Francisco Feliz, was directed by Father Jose Sanchez, before his death, to make an examination of said place, for the purpose of establishing a new Ranch at that place, the said, Francisco Feliz, to occupy the position of Mayordomo thereof, for the purpose of taking care of the large number of cattle, on the Rancho of Santa Ana, with a view, to avoid in part, the great damage, suffered by the Mission, on account of the continual slaughtering of cattle, at that place, and its neighborhood. Father Jose Sanchez died, and the project was not carried out, I am of the opinion, that the granting of said land, would be to invite ruin of the Rancho Santa Ana. This is all that I have to report upon the matter.

Fr. Thomas Estenaga.

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Pueblo of Los Angeles April 7th. 1834.

The Illustrious Ayuntamiento of this Pueblo, in view of the foregoing report of the Reverend Father Thomas Estenaga, Minister of the Mission of San Gabriel, apposing, the report made by this corporation, on the 6th. day of March last, have resolved to set forth, in vindication of their honor, and of the integrity, with which they have proceeded in this matter, the following facts. That the land petitioned for, by the citizen Bernardo Yorba, is in the condition, as set forth, by this corporation, on the 6th. March last, and in testimony of the truth of the same, this corporation states, that in the year 1824, when the said Father Jose Sanchez, was minister of said Mission, the Mayordomo Francisco Feliz, attempted, it is true, by the order of said Father, to destroy a corral built on said place, by the citizen Inan Peralta, and that it being proved to the Mission, that said land did not belong to the said Mission, Peralta was indemnified, for the losses he sustained, and the said Mayordomo, for the performance of this arbitrary act, received such correction as his conduct merited. This occurrence, with other proofs, which could be advanced, if necessary, prove conclusively, that the Reverend Father is mistaken, in the opinion that he has formed, in relation to this land, and which he has set forth in his report.

Jose Perez.

Vicente Moraga.

Monterey May 10th. 1834.

Let this be forwarded to the Alcaldia of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, before whom the petitioner, Bernardo Yorba, will produce three competent witnesses who will be interrogated upon the following points. 1st. If the petitioner is a Mexican by birth; if he is married and has children, and if he is a man of good character. 2nd. If the land petitioned for pertains to the property of any individual Mission, Pueblo or Corporation; if it is irrigable, or dependent upon the seasons for agriculture, or only adapted to grazing purposes, and what may be its extent. 3rd. If the petitioner has stock sufficient to establish



said Rancho, or the means of acquiring the same. When these proceedings shall have been taken, let the Expediente be returned for the resolution of the same, The Senor Don Jose Figueroa, Brigadier General, Commandant General, Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territory of Alta California, thus ordered, decreed and signed which I attest.

Jose Gigueroa.

Agustub V. Zamorons.

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Pueblo of Los Angeles, June 9th. 1834.

This expediente being received, the proceedings required, by decree of the 10th. of last month, will be taken and when the same have been concluded, the Expediente will be returned to the Political Chief, for the end that may be necessary, Jose Perez, Constitutional Alcalde of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, thus ordered, decreed and signed, with the assisting witnesses, according to law.

Jose Perez.

Asst.

Manual Ariaga

Asst.

Vicente Moraga.

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On the same day, month and year, the citizen Jose Seferino Reyes, of this vicinity, being present, made oath in due form of law, by God and the sign of the Cross, under which he promised to speak the truth, in answer to such questions as might be asked him, and being asked the questions set forth in the foregoing decess, which was read to him. He replied; that he knew the citizen Bernardo Yorba; that he is a native of Santa Ana of this Territory; that he has been twice married, and has six children, three sons and three duaghters, and his conduct is irreproachable; that the land named Canon, is vacant, and does not pertain to the property of anyone; that the place can be irrigated by the river of Santa Ana, that it is some three or four leagues in length, and a league and a half in width a little more or less; that he has sufficient stock in cattle and horses to establish said Rancho; that what he has stated is the truth, under the oath that he has taken; which he affirmed and ratified, after his declaration was read to him, stating that he was more than thirty years of age, and a native of this pueblo, not signing, because he could not write, and I signed with the atesting witness, according to law.

Jose Perez.

Asst.

Manuel Ariaga

Asst.

Vicente Moraga.

At the same date, Inan Peras being personally present, made oath in due form of law, by God our Lord and the sign of the Cross, under which he promised to speak the truth, in answer to such questions as might be asked him, and being asked the questions set forth in the decree of the Political Chief of the 10th. of last month, he answered; that Don Bernardo Yorba, was a man of good character and reputation; that he is married in Santa Ana, his native place, that he has three sons and three daughters; that the place named Canon does not belong to the property of anyone; that the said Yorba cultivates the same, and irrigates the land by means of the river Santa Ana; that the tract of land may be four leagues in length and one league in width; that he has sufficient stock, since no one in Santa Ana has more than the said Yorba " that what he has stated is the truth under the oath he has made; which he affirmed and ratified after his declaration was read to him; declaring that he was more than thirty five years of age, and a native of this Pueblo, not signing because he would not write, and I signed with the atesting witness with whom I act, according to the law.

Jose Perez

Asst.  
Manuel Ariaga

Asst.  
Vicente Moraga

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On the same day, month and year, Don Silveris Ruiz being personally present, in this office under my charge, he made oath, in due form of law, by God our Lord and the sign of the Cross, under which he offered to speak the truth, in answer to such questions as might be asked him, and being asked the questions set forth in the decree ordering these proceedings, he replied, that he knew Don Bernardo Yorba, that he was a native of Santa Ana, a man of good character and in good circumstances; that he has been twice married, and that he has six children, sons and daughters, that the land does not belong to the property of any individual that he cultivates and irrigates the same, by water taken from the river Santa Ana; that it is from four leagues or more in length, and one and a half leagues in width; that said Yorba, has an abundance of stock, cattle and horses; that this is the truth, under the oath that he has made, which he affirmed and ratified after his declaration was read to him, stating that he was thirty eight years of age and a native of Santa Ana, signing with me and the atesting witness according to the law.

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Jose Perez.    | Swlbweio Rios  |
| asst.          | Asst.          |
| Manuel Ariaga. | Vicente Moraga |

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The foregoing testimony being concluded let the same be transmitted to the Superior Political Chief, as ordered by decree of the 10th. of last month, for the ends that may be necessary, Jose Peres, Constitutional Alcade of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, this ordered decree and signed, with



the assisting witnesses, according to law.

Jose Peres.

Asst.  
Manuel Arzarga

Asst.  
Vicente Moraga

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These proceedings are written on common paper, there being no other kind in this place.

Jose Peres.

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Monterey, July 30, th. 1834.

In view of the petition, with which these proceedings commence; the report of the municipal authority of the Pueblo of Los Angeles; that of the Minister of the Mission of San Gabriel; the testimony of witnesses, with all other matters necessary to be considered; in conformity with the laws and regulations upon the subject, the citizen Bernardo Yorba, is declared owner in property of the place named Canon de Santa Ana; bounded by the Mission San Gabriel, and the Ranchos of Santa Ana and Santa Gertrudis, under the condition to be stipulated. Let this Espediente be directed to the most Excellent Deputation, for the approval thereof, The Senor Don Jose Figuerou, Brigadier General, Commandant General, Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territory of Alta California, thus ordered decreed and signed which I attest.

Jose Figueroa.

Agustub V. Zamorano.

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Monterey, July 30th. 1834.

In the session of today, the Excellent Deputation ordered this Espediente to be referred to the Committee on Colonization and vacant lands.

Figueria.

Jose Maria Waldonado

Secy.

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Most Excellent Sir

The joint Committies on colonization and vacant lands, to which was referred, the Espedicutto, upon the petition of the citizen Bernardo Yorba, for the place named Canon de Santa Ana, having examined the same, find no objection thereto, the same being in all things, in accordance with the law of the 18th. of August, 1824, and article 5th. of the regulations of the 21st. of November, 1828, offer for the deliberation of the most Excellent Deputation, the following proposition. That the grant made to the citizen Bernardo Yorba, of the place named Canon de Santa Ana, be approved.

Monterey, July 31, 1834.

Jose T. Ortega.

Jose A. Estudillo.

Carlos Ant. Carrillo.

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Monterey, February 31st. 1834.

In the session of today, the foregoing report was submitted to the Excellent Deputation, which body approved the same in the following words; "The grant made to the citizen Bernardo Yorba of the place named Canon de Santa Ana, is approved. Wherefore, the Espediente is returned to the Political Chief, for the necessary proceedings thereon.

Monterey, July 31s .1834.

Jose Figueroa

Jose Maria Maldenado.

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Monterey, August 1st. 1834.

In view of the resolution of the most Excellent Territorial Deputation, of the 31st. of July last, in confirmation of the grant of the Canon of Santa Ana, petitioned for by the citizen Bernardo Yorba, let the inspector title issue; let registry be made thereof in the corresponding book, and let it be delivered to the interested party, for his security and further ends. The Senor Don Jose Figuereaa, Brigadier General, Commandant General, Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territory of Alta California, thus ordered decreed and signed, which I attest.

Jose Figurtoa.

Agustin V. Zamorans.

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Jose Figueroa, Brigadier General of the Mexican Republic, Commandant General, Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territory of Alta California.

Whereas, the citizen Bernardo Yorba, has petitioned for his personal benefit, and that of his family, the land known by the name Canon de Santa Ana, bounded by the Mission of San Gabriel, and the Ranchos of Santa Ana and Santa Gertrudis; the necessary proceedings having been taken, and the investigations made, as required by the laws and regulations, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me, and in conformity with the resolution of the most Excellent Territorial Deputation, approving the grant of said land of Canon de Santa Ana, made by decree of the 30th. of said month, to the citizen Bernardo Yorba, I have determined in the name of the Mexican Nation, to confer upon him said land, declaring to him the ownership thereof by these presents, subject to the following conditions.

1st. That it shall be subject to the regulations, to be formed, for the distribution of vacant lands; and that in the meanwhile, neither the beneficiary, nor his heirs, shall be able to divide, or alimiate that which is ad judicated to him; impose upon it rent, entail, bond, or mortgage, nor any other encumbrances, although it should be for pious purposes, nor convey it in Mortainaires.

2nd. He may enclose it, without prejudice, to the cropings, roads and servitudes, he shall enjoy it freely and exclusively, devoting it to the use or outtivation, that may most convenient, but within one year, he shall build a house upon the land, which shall be inhabited.

3rd. He shall solicit the respective Judge, to give him periodical possession by virtue of this title, by which the boundaries shall be marked out, on the limits of which, shall be placed, beside the land marks, some fruit trees, or useful forest trees.

4th. The land of which mention is made, is of the extent of three square leagues, a little more or less, as shown by the map forming a part of the Expediente. The Judge who may give the possession, will cause the same to be measured in accordance with the ordinance, for the marking of boundaries, the surplus that may result, to remain to the use of the Nation.

5th. If he violate these conditions, he shall loose his right to the land, and it will be denouncable by another. In consequence whereof, I order; that this title being held as firm and valid, be registered in the corresponding book, and that it be delivered to the interested party for his security. .and further ends. Given in Monterey on the 1st. day of August, 1834.

Jose Figuerea

Agustin V. Zamorano,  
Secy.

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Espediente

Of Don Bernardo Yorba in relation to the Rancho of San Antonio del Canyon, Year 1834.

First Seal Six Dollars

Provisionally authorized by the administration of the Maritime Custom House of Monterey, for the years one thousand eight hundred and thirty four, and one thousand eight hundred and thirty five.

Figurtoa.

Rafail Gonzalez.

L.S.

Jose Figueroa, Brigadier General of the Mexican Republic, Commandant General Inspector and Superior Political Chief of the Territory of California.

Whereas, the citizen Bernardo Yorba, a Mexican by birth, has petitioned for his personal benefit, and thay of his family, the land known by the name of Canon de Santa Ana, bounded by the Mission of San Gabriel, and the Ranchos of Santa Ana, and Santa Gertrudis, the necessary proceedings having been taken, and the investigations made, as required by the laws and regulations, by virtue of the authorities conferred upon me, and in conformity with the resolution of the most Excellent Territorial Deputation of the 31st. of July, approving the grant to the Canon de Santa Ana, made on the 30th. of the same month, to the said citizen Bernardo Yorba. I have determined, in the name of the Mexican Nation, to confer upon him, the said land, declaring to him the ownership thereof, by these presents, subject to the following regulations.

1st. He shall be subject to the regulations to be formed, for the distribution of vacant lands, and that in the meanwhile, neither the beneficiary, nor his heirs, shall be able to divide, or aliminate, that which is adjudicated to him; impose upon it rent, entail, bond or mortgage, nor any other incumbrances, although it should be for pious purposes, nor convey it in Montmain.

2nd. He may enclose it, without prejudice, to the cropings, roads and servitudes, he shall enjoy it freely and exclusively devoting it to the use or cultivation that may be most convenient, but within one year, he shall build a house upon this land which shall be inhabited.

3rd. He shall solicit the respective Judge, to give him periodical possession by virtue of this title, by which the boundaries shall be



marked out, on the limits of which shall be placed beside the land marks some fruit tree, or useful forest trees.

4th. The land of which mention is made, is of the extent of three square leagues, as shown by the map, forming a part of the Expediente. The Judge who may have the possession, will cause the same to be measured in accordance with the ordinances for the marking of boundaries; the surplus that may result, to remain to the use of the Nation.

5th. If he violate these conditions, he shall loose his right to the land, and it will be denouncable by another. In consequence whereof, I order, that this title being held as firm and valid, be registered in the corresponding book and that it be delivered to the interested party for his security and further ends, given in Monterey, on the 1st. of August, one thousand eight hundred and thirty four.

Jose Figueroa

Agustine V. Zamorano  
Secy.

-----

This title remains registered, in the book of adjudications of vacant lands, on leaf 45, which entry is numbered 43, as the same remains on file in the office under my charge. Monterey, August 3, 1834.

Zamorano.

In the Pueblo of Our Lady of Los Angeles of Alta, California. On the 10th. of December, one thousand eight hundred and thirty four, before me Jose Perez, Constitutional Alcalde of this Jurisdiction. Whereas, Don Bernardo Yorba, has manifested to me, the necessity that he has, of obtaining juridical possession of the land granted to him, as required, by the third condition of the title, that he obtained from the Political Chief of this Territory. I proceeded in Company with the assisting witness, to the said place, called Canon de Santa Ana; the subscribing Judge there ordered, decreed and signed which I attest.

Jose Peres.

Asst.  
Manuel Arzaga

Asst.  
Vicente Moraga

-----

On the Rancho, named Canon de Santa Ana, on the 11th. day of December 1834, in order to proceed to the measurement of said land, for the purpose of giving juridical possession of the three square leagues that belong to the interested party, I appointed Don Abel Stearns, as surveyor

and the citizens and the assisting witness, that they would faithfully and legally, discharge their duties, as such measures; where upon the surveyor, signed with me, before the assisting witness, the measurer not signing, because they could not write.

Jose Feres.

Asst.  
Manuel Arzaga

Asst.  
Vicente Moraga

-----

On the said Rancho, on the same day, month and year, in continuation of these proceedings, I caused a cord to be taken, with sticks attached to each end thereof, and being on the bank of the river, a line was run, East 16' South, and there were measured and counted fifteen thousand varas, at which point I ordered a land mark to be placed; from this point a line was run North 5' West and there were measured and counted five thousand five hundred varas; from this point the line was run East 16' north and there were measured and counted fourteen thousand varas; from this point the line was run South 40' East, as far as the river, counting five thousand two hundred varas, leaving some surplus on the Eastern side and placing the corresponding land marks. This act being concluded, it was signed before me on common paper, there being no other kind.

Jose Peres

Asst.  
Manuel Arzaga

Abel Stearns  
Asst  
Vicente Moraga

On the said Rancho, on the same day, month and year, in continuation of these proceedings, I caused a cord to be taken, with sticks attached to each end thereof, and being on the bank of the river, a line was run, East 16'. South, and there were measured and counted fifteen thousand varas, at which point I ordered a land mark to be placed; from this point a line was run, North 5' West, and there were measured and counted five thousand five hundred varas; from this point the line was run East 16' North, and there were measured and counted fourteen thousand varas; from this point the line was run South 40'. East, as far as the river, counting five thousand two hundred varas, leaving some surplus on the Eastern side, and placing the corresponding land marks. This act being concluded, it was signed before me on common paper, there being no other kind.

Jose Peres

Asst.  
Manuel Arzaga

Abel Stearns  
Asst.  
Vicente Moraga

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Note:Documents as sent.

Page 1--A.

Book..page 175  
State archives

may determine what is before

God preserve your life many years.

San Diego, April 1, 1794

,Antonio Grafera

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TO THE GOVERNOR DON DIEGO BONEA

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In compliance with repeated petitions made to Your Honor through me, by the Luitanant Don Pablo Gryvalva, asking for the place on which to put his stock and build a house and corral, by virtue of the authority which Your Honor has seen proper to confer on me, I have assigned to him the plan of the Arroyo of Santiago, situated in the neighborhood of the Missions of San Juan Capistrano, and San Gabriel, some eighteen leagues distant therefrom, being therefore nine leagues distant from each Mission.

There is no Rancho near the place of Santiago, wherefore I consider that in place of being prejudiced, the granting of said place will be beneficial, since more of the Missions have any right to the law.

If your Honor should think proper to make said concession to the Gonfalva, giving him said place on which to put his stock, which he has in the neighborhood of the Rancho of Manuel Neto, with whom he has had some disputes. Your Honor will be pleased to order the corresponding title to be issued to him for the place of the Arroyo of Santiago, extending to the North as far as the Sierra, and on the East as far as the Beach, being crossed by the Vega del Rio of Santa Ana, distant from the Arroyo of Santiago, a little less than a league and a half; and on the South as far as the place named "Las Ranchas" which is distant about a league and a half; Your Honor will determine which is proper in the premises.

May God preserve your life many years.

San Diego, September 11, 1801

Manuel Rodenguez.

To The Governor Don Joseph Irasun de Arrillega.

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P-3. Antonio Yorba  
Santa Ana

TO THE SENOR GOVERNOR

I, Antonio Yorba, a retired Sergeant of the Presdial Company of San Diego, before Your Honor, respectfully report: That being established on the place, named Santa Ana, in Company with my nephew Jean Peralta, to whom the same was decreed by the predessor of Your Honor, Colonel Don Jose Iriquim de Appallaga, on a petition which we together made, I cannot do less than set forth the motives which induce me to make this application to you, that the principal one being that my nephew Iran Peralta, forgetting the obligations of respect that he owes me; and also neglecting the labor that the place requires for the support of his family, and being also given to the vice of drunkenness, so much so that sometimes he mistreats me, carrying matters so far that at times as to draw his sword on me, I feel myself obliged to apply to Your Honor in the matter, omitting other things that I might say, which may possibly have reached your notice.

Your Honor will be able to understand my petition and will determine the matter in accordance with justice, and will intimate ti the said Peralta that he must be subject to me, since I am more entitled to the place than him, and also, that he owed me respect and obedience, in consideration of my age; others have observed his conduct toward me, while it is public and notorious; and in ordation to my conduct, I offer to furnish the necessary people to satisfy you in relation thereto; Knowing how my patience has been tried for a year and a half by the conduct of the said Peralto, and as I have stated, as his conduct is notorious against tranquility, I ask you to be pleased to grant my petition in the present.

Santa Ana December 31, 1814

At the request of my father

Antonio Yorba  
Thomas Yorba

-----  
SANTA BARBARA, JANUARY 17th. 1815

Let this petition be passed to the Lieutenant Don Francisco Alla Brinz, Comandante of the Presidio of San Diego, that he may cause to appear before him Juan Paralta, to whom shall be made known the want of respect with which he is charged, toward his Uncle Antonio Yorba, counseling him to moderate his conduct he shall be punished, and removed from the place of Santa Ana. Returning this document to me, with the corresponding report thereon. ANQUELLA



SAN DIEGO, JANUARY 30, 1815

In observabce to the foregoing Superior decree the Commissioner dante of San Diego reports; that the place of Santiago was granted by the late Senor, Governor to Don Pablo Porjaloa alone and that after the death of the said Gonjabra, Yorba made a representation to the special Chief on the 9th.of November, 1809 .. asking him to include it on his Pelitz. Since he had formerly been in Company with Goyoliva in the place of Santiago, and the Governor requiring a report from me, I reported in favor of said Yorba, by the consent of his motherinlaw, Dona Dolores, and in view of this, the said Chief granted to Yorba permission to place his stock on said place, and circulate the same but with the understanding that Yorba should place a married son in company with Perlata . These facts are shown in the titles of the Rancho. The Comandante will now report in relative to the troubles of the Sergeant Yorba. It is time that Yorba and Perlato have had some disagreements which sometimes reached the notice of the Injudo, but I have found that they were both to blame, since if Perlata has been wanting in respect to Yorba, he Yorba has manifested but little patience toward Perlata, Since although it is notorious that Yorba is a worthy man, it is also well known that he gets angry on the slightest occasion, and then results the little respect paid him by his nephew and this want of patience in the Uncle is the cause of much trouble to the images. Yorba should be required to associate with Peralta, the married son as he promised to do in his first petition, and only to observe the conduct of both, without interfering with their affairs unless it should be absolutely necessary.

Thomasco Ma Rinz.

-----  
No 4...Francesco Reyes

Lands at the Mission of la Punsiona

TO THE SENOR GOVERNOR

I, Francisco Reyes, a resident of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, wich the respect represent to Your Honor; that finding it impossible to take care of my stock where I am at present in the Pueblo

x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x    x

Note: The remaining portion of this decree arw torn and defaced in the original and so consequently illegible.

Santa Barbara May 4, 1803

It is notorious that this individual has much stock and also the other inhabitants of the Pueblo, from which much confusion and trouble results among the inhabitants, and even with the Missions of San Fernando Rey, it may be because the place formerly belonged to the Regent and that the stock belonging to them were left there.

I am informed that the distance described by Reyes in the place which they select are certain that the house and coral is situated at the distance of ten leagues from the High road, and five from the Mission of La Ponsima, and these being no other place suitable for the amount of stock that he had, I find no objection making him a grant of Sara place if the Governor should think proper to do so.

Raymondo Carrillo



NOTE:-See Expediente No.142, Ojay claimed by Fernando Yies, recorded in Book No.2 of this Series.

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No. 189..Thomas A. Yorva  
Addition to Santa Ana.

To His Exel. the Governor of the Department.

I, the citizen Thomas Antonio Yorva, before your Excellency with due respect appear and say; that having in my hands the five representations I made at different times to the Government of California, I have the honor to submit them for Your Excellency's Superior Cognizance, for in them there appear some proceedings, dates, and Superior decrees, whereby Your Excellency will know the strong reasons I have for my allegations.

In the first and second, which appear in leaves tito 16, I asked before any other one, the additional extent to the tract of land of Santa Ana, on its boundaries toward the Marsh, and when I thought there was no obstacle my application was not only disregarded but the tract was granted to Don Jose Sepulvedo. If this was the only thing, I would at once submit to this bad luck, but it happened that in the possession which was given to said Senor Sepulvedo, there was given him a great portion of land belonging to our property. Against this I made a remonstrance to the Judge who gave possession, but he, disregarding the justice of my claim, continued his measurements and the application of the portion of the land taken from us, the heirs of the Rancho of Santa Ana and Las Rana. I protested forthwith, and carried my claim before the Departmental Government, as Your Excellency will see by the three last representations contained from leaves 17 to 27. Your Execl. will see that I did not omit any step, for reason and justice dictated it so, but the result did never save my claim, and, I was under the necessity of reserving it until the time should come. This day, when the upright justice of Your Excel. opens the way of my hopes in my just allegations. I have the honor to address you, enclosing said representations, and I have no doubt that when informed of their contents, Your Excellency will order a decree in my favor.

But I ought not to omit to remind Your Exely. for a better explanation that on the 23rd. of July, 1839, I respectfully presented for the Superior Cognizance of The Excellent the Departmental Board, a representation in addition to the subject, together with some details, annexing a copy of the decree of the .....26th. September, 1839 inscribed to the petition, at leaf 24, which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to communicate to me and my brothers...a letter from the Reverend Father Fray Jose Made Galvidea, stating at what time the Government ordered the live stock of the Mission of San Juan Capistrano to be taken away from the land I claim, and the

to be taken away from the land I claim, and the most correct map that could be made for the purpose of showing with all clearness what I claimed, and removed any doubt if there should be a desire to know the situation of the land. All of which ought to be on file in the office of the Secretary of the Excellent the Departmental Board and under any event I have the satisfaction of respectfully enclosing another certificate of the said Rev. Father Fray Jose Made Galvidea, marked with the letter. A. in relation to the matter, in order the better to corroborate the foundation for my reclamation with the right to which I consider myself entitled, in virtue of which,

I humbly pray Your Excellency that when information of all the particulars, you will declare as null the possession of the portion of Land which was unjustly included in that which was given Don Jose Sepulevda, which as I say to your Exely. I opportunely protested against.

I swear that this is not done in malice making the necessary declarations I E - I trust Your Excel. will be pleased to admit the present on common paper, there being none of the corresponding stamp.

Santa Ana September 2, 1843  
Thomas A. Yorva.

-----

Monteray, Feb. 20th. 1844.

In view of the antecedents, the Secretary of State will be pleased to make a report hereon in accordance with justice.

Michall

-----

Let the letter and original record spoken of be annexed hereto.

Michell

-----

.A.

I certify that in the year 1829, when I was minister of the Mission of San Juan Capistrano, I received an order through an official communication from General Don Jose Maria de Echeamdea, for the withdrawal of all the live stock belonging to said Mission, from a place contiguous to the Rancho of Santa Ana, NAMED La Sienega, both of them belonging to the property of the Senors Yorba according to the claim set up by Don Thomas Yorba and as about that time It was very necessary that said stock

should not be removed from the said place, because there was no other tract suitable, the stock remained on the same part thereof, and at the request of the foresaid, the same as the present, the former of which having been mislaid I give him the present at the Mission of San Louis Rey on the 19th.day of the month of July,1843

Fray Jose Made Galvidea

-----

No 190: Timothy Murphy  
Orchard of San Raaael

FOURTH SEAL TWO REALES

Provisonally authorized by the Maritime customhouse of the Port of Monterey, in the Department of the California for the year 1845 and 1846.

Pablo de la Gueroa

Nichellorena.

L.S.

-----  
TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Timothy Murphy, a resident within the jurisdiction of Sonoma, before Your Excellency with due submission and respect present myself and say. That for the last three years I have been in possession of an orchard and vineyard formerly belonging to the ExMission of San Rafael, and conceded to me by Don Guadalupe Vallejo on the 24th.of October,1831, as a place that was vacant and abandoned, consisting when I received it, of only six or eight apple trees, and about an equal number of pear trees, together with twelve hundred vine stocks, about twenty to twenty five years old, and as I am desirous of holding said land for my use and in part payment of what is due me by this Government, on account of salary as administrator of the said Ex.Mission of San Rafael, I pray your Excellency to grant me the said land as shown by the map hereto annexed.

Wherefore I pray your excellency to accede to my petition of it,is necessary,whereby I shall receive a favor and grace, swearing.

Monteray,Dec.13,1844.

Timothy Murphy.



Deaths

## Paul Yorba, Descendant Of Spanish Pioneers; 75

Paul Yorba, retired businessman and a descendant of Spanish pioneers in the San Juan Valley, is dead at the age of 75.

A direct descendent of Don Jose Antonio Yorba, who came to California in 1769 as a member of the Serra-Portola expedition, Yorba was born in San Juan Capistrano in 1904 to Miguel and Teresa Pryor Yorba.

He attended San Juan Elementary School, and when his family moved to the historic Pryor adobe in Capistrano Beach he went to Serra School. He began high school in Santa Ana, and when Capistrano Union High School was built he completed his schooling there.

As a young man he took up farming, a career his ancestors followed since their arrival in California. Later he became a successful building contractor, responsible for construction of many of the homes in Capistrano Beach where he lived.

In 1924 he married Bertha Wiley. In addition to his widow, he leaves four children, Gerald, Norma, Ronald and Coleen; 14 grandchildren; 11 great grandchildren; and a brother, Ben Yorba, of Fontana.

Funeral services were held at St. Edwards Catholic Church in Dana Point Monday. Burial was at Ascension Cemetery in El Toro.



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LEONARD ORTIZ/The Orange County Register

**SAVED:** Albert Muckenthaler built this 7,600-square-foot house on his Fullerton ranch in 1923. It was deeded to the city in 1964.

*The Orange Co. Register  
1-24-2000*

## House full of history

Muckenthalers donated it to Fullerton for cultural purposes

### HELPING THE COMMUNITY

**A**lbert Muckenthaler built an impressive house for his new Fullerton ranch in 1923: 7,600 square feet of Mediterranean style costing \$34,000. It was a house meant to last, so the Muckenthaler family deeded it to the city in 1964 for a cultural center. Renovated in the early 1980s, an amphitheater and hospitality center have since been added.



**HAROLD MUCKENTHALER,**  
77  
GRANDSON  
OF  
ALBERT MUCKENTHALER

### THE REFLECTION

*Harold Muckenthaler is Albert's grandson. His father, Walter, served on the Fullerton City Council for 12 years. His mother was Adella Kraemer, whose roots extend back to the pioneering Yorba family.*

My grandfather bought an 8.5-acre lemon grove, and built a home in 1924. My father later bought another 85 acres of oranges. He quit his civil-engineering job with the city of Fullerton to become a rancher.

We began developing the land into housing after World War II, but we kept the ranch house and the lemon

grove. After my father died in 1958, my mother wanted to save the house from being torn down. We decided to give it to the city of Fullerton as a cultural center in 1964. The lemon grove became like a park, with an outdoor theater, avocados and other deciduous trees.

The city ran it at first, then it was turned over to a foundation, and it's done very well over the last 10 years. They've got over 200 classes, children's art exhibits and an annual auto show of classic cars.

— Interview by  
John Westcott



### ABOUT THIS FEATURE...

Millennium Moments is a daily look at the history of Orange County. This month, we

look at people whose dreams made a difference in our county. View specially selected Millennium Moments on KABC-TV/7 or listen to them on KXMX/95.9 FM.

### TUESDAY:

The Fluor family's business dynasty.

### ONLINE:

[www.discoverOC2000.com](http://www.discoverOC2000.com)







**ALBERT YORBA:** His family farmed the land over 200 years.

The Orange County Register **ORANGE COUNTY** Thursday, Sept. 23, 1993

## Albert Yorba dies at 91; belonged to O.C. pioneer family

**PEOPLE:** Rancher was born and died on his great-great-grandfather's land.

By **BRADY MacDONALD**  
The Orange County Register

**YORBA LINDA** — Papa's wine cellar was a gathering place for 50 years, and Marilyn Lasker remembers the hot summer nights when friends, relatives and fellow ranchers of her father would drink homemade wine in the cel-

lar's cool environs.

In the basement of the original ranch house, there was a table for poker, barrels where the wine never stayed long enough to age, and a bunch of rickety old chairs.

As the night passed, her father would always lean back in his seat and burst forth in song: "Ay ay ay ay, canta y no llores." The Mexican courtship song "Cielito Lindo," which means "Beautiful Sky," would echo across the ranchland.

Albert John Yorba, 91, Lasker's father and the fourth generation descendant of Orange

County pioneer Jose Antonio Yorba, died Tuesday.

Albert Yorba, a citrus rancher, was born and died on the land his great-great-grandfather received as a land grant from the Spanish government in 1769. The 62,000-acre spread, then called Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, covered what is now Santa Ana, Tustin, Orange, Villa Park, Olive and Yorba Linda.

Bernardo Yorba, Jose Yorba's son, received his own land grant in 1834 and founded the town of Yorba, now Yorba Linda.

The Yorba family farmed the

land for more than 200 years, raising grains, grapes, walnuts, oranges and other fruits, until Albert Yorba sold the property to developers in the mid-1970s.

"His life was living out what had been laid out for him," said Lasker, of Brea. "He took what was on the ranch and enriched it. That's what his father would have wanted, and he took pride in that."

Today the ranch that stretched along the Santa Ana River is gone; strings of housing subdivisions dot the land. Albert Yorba bought one of those tract homes

in Yorba Linda.

Yorba graduated from Fullerton High School and Fullerton Junior College in the 1920s.

Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday at McAulay & Wallace Mortuary, Yorba Linda. Services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at St. Martin's Church, Yorba Linda. Burial will follow at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, Orange.

He is also survived by his sisters, Ethel Del Giorgio of Anaheim Hills and Alma Gier of Fullerton, 13 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.



## Obituaries

# Albert Yorba; Member of Pioneer Family

By MYRNA OLIVER  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Albert John Yorba, fourth-generation scion of the pioneering Orange County Yorba family, has died in Placentia at age 91.

He died Tuesday at Placentia Linda Hospital.

A lifelong resident of Orange County, Yorba raised citrus and walnuts and served on the board of directors of the Placentia Mutual Orange Growers and Packers Assn.

The Yorba Cemetery in Yorba Linda, designated an official Orange County Historic Site in 1976, was given to the Catholic Church by Yorba's great-grandfather, Don Bernardo Yorba in 1858. The church later gave it to the county, which has restored the 400 or so gravestones bearing such historic names as Sepulveda, Castillo, Peralta and De Los Reyes.

Now surrounded by homes and long closed to additional burials, it is the oldest private cemetery in

Orange County and one of the oldest in California.

"This is a big day for all of us," Yorba said, speaking for his family when the cemetery was designated a historic site. Orange County supervisors praised him for recovering headstones stolen by vandals and for working to preserve the acre of history.

Yorba is descended from Jose Antonio Yorba, who arrived in Orange County with Father Junipero Serra in 1769. Along with another soldier, Juan Peralta, Jose Yorba received a vast Spanish land grant of 62,000 acres. The resulting Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana covered what is now the cities of Santa Ana, Tustin, Orange, Olive, Villa Park and Costa Mesa.

Jose Yorba's son and Yorba's great-grandfather, Don Bernardo Yorba, received his own Mexican land grant of 15,000 acres north of the Santa Ana River in 1834 and built a sprawling 50-room, two-story adobe hacienda, La Casa de San

Antonio, considered one of the finest in the state. Yorbas occupied the hacienda until the 1890s. It later fell into ruin and was razed in 1927.

Yorba grew up in Santa Ana Canyon.

"I used to hunt rabbits, doves and quail down there," he told The Times when he was in his mid-70s, pointing to the teeming Riverside Freeway. "I'd like to see things like they were, but it's impossible."

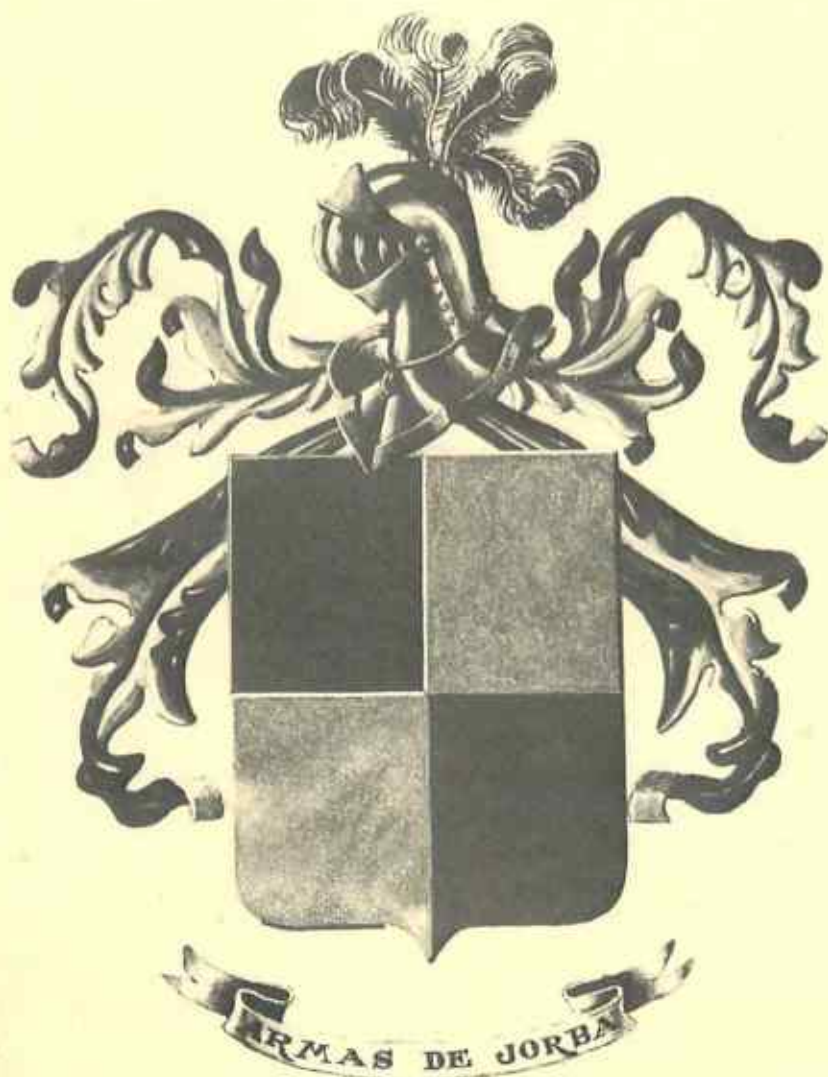
Yorba is survived by a daughter, Marilyn Lasker of Brea; two sisters, Ethel del Giorgio of Anaheim Hills and Alma Cier of Fullerton; 13 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Matilda, and two other daughters.

Visitation is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday at the McAulay & Wallace Mortuary, 18311 Lemon Drive, Yorba Linda. Funeral Mass will be Monday at 11 a.m. at St. Martin's Catholic Church, Yorba Linda, with burial at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Orange.

# José Antonio Yorba I

by

Arnold O. Dominguez



JOSÉ ANTONIO YORBA I



# Jose' Antonio Yorba I

by

Arnold O. Dominguez

Orange County Historical Society

1967

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**M**EMBERS OF THE YORBA FAMILY of California are now to be counted in the thousands. Moreover, the number of Yorba descendants who no longer carry the surname far exceed the number who do. All Yorbas, however, have this in common: all are direct descendants of José Antonio Yorba I, the first Yorba to settle in the Golden State and in what is now Orange County.

The Yorba name is derived from the village and castle of Yorba in the district of Barcelona. Barcelona is one of the four provinces of Catalonia in northeastern Spain. (The name, "Yorba", in Catalonia is spelled "Jorba", the Catalan dialect being closer to Provençal than Castilian.) Although through the centuries, the land of the Catalans has been occupied by the Romans, the Goths, the Alani, the Moors, and the French, the people of this region are aggressive and industrious. At times they have wanted independence from the rest of Spain.

Over two centuries ago, José Antonio Yorba was born in the village of San Sadurni de Noya, near the ancestral village of Yorba. The exact date of his birth is not recorded, but it was shortly



before July 20, 1746, the day he was baptized. In Book 4, page 110, of Baptisms of the local church appears this entry:

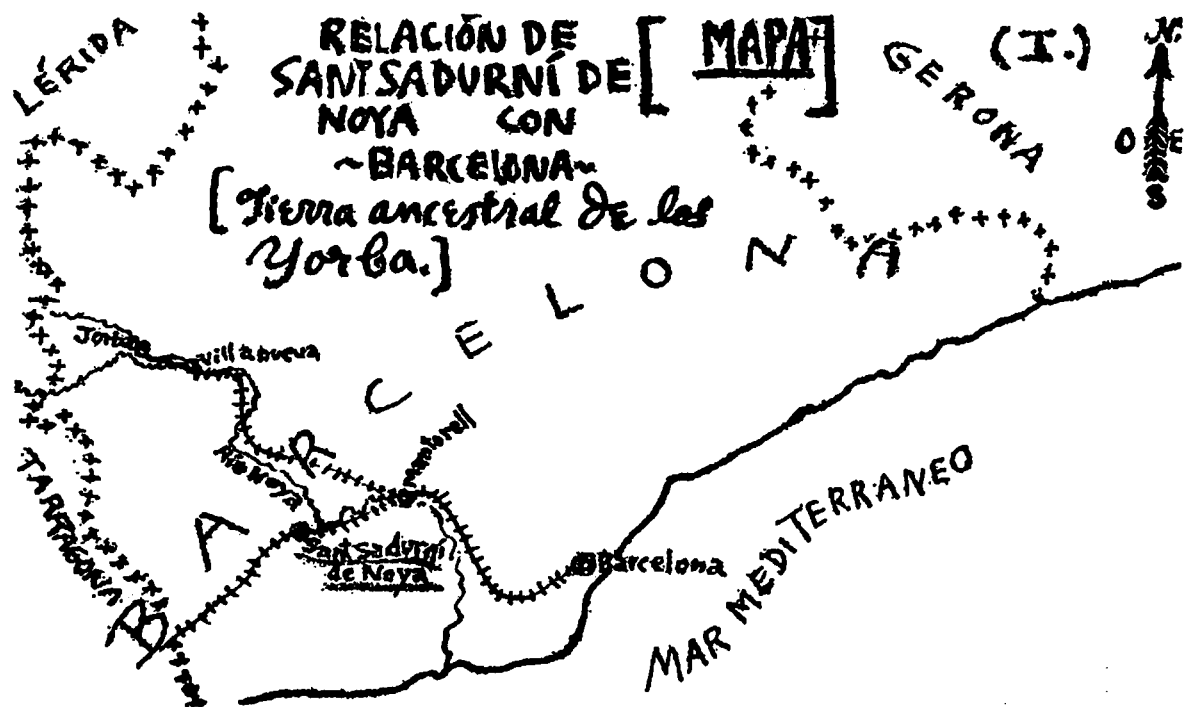
“On the 20th of July of 1746 by me, Dr. Juan Coroleu, priest and pastor of the parochial church of San Sadurni de Subirats, bishopric of Barcelona, was baptized at its baptismal font, Antonio José Francisco, son of Pablo Yorba, glazier, and of Rosa Ferran, husband and wife. Godparents were Antonio Ferran, maker of hempen shoes, and María Carbo y Yofre, wife of José Carbo, farmer, all of said parish of San Sadurni.

Dr. Ioannes Coroleu”

(On August 15, 1925, a true copy of this record of baptism was translated from the Catalan and certified to be correct by the Rev. Fr. Juan E. Salvans, then priest of the church. It was obtained at that time by Mrs. Alonzo Yorba, nee Juanita Tuffree, who had a great interest in the history of the Yorba family.)

Little is known about José Antonio's childhood. As a young man he enlisted in the Spanish army and as a member of the Royal Catalan Volunteers he came to New Spain in 1767. It was a propitious time. José de Gálvez, *visitador general* to new Spain, was making plans for the settlement of Alta California. There were to be four expeditions, two by land and two by sea. The naval operation would involve two ships under the command of Don Vicente Vila. (A third ship, the *San José*, left on June 16, 1769, but was lost at sea.)

Yorba was stationed in Sonora when orders were received by the local comandante, Col. Domingo Elizondo, to detach a company of twenty-five Catalan soldiers for service in Alta California. He was among those selected for this duty. Under the command of Lt. Pedro Fages, he and his comrades marched to La Paz where great preparations were being made. The little *San Carlos*, of two hundred tons burden, the flag ship of the expedition, was being thoroughly overhauled under the watchful eye of Gálvez who personally labored on the craft.



Map showing Jorba and San Sadurni de Noya in the Province of Barcelona, Spain, drawn years ago by Bruce Condé, now Brigadier General, the Prince of Condé, of Yemen.

Supplies of all kinds necessary for missions were stowed aboard. Fathers Junípero Serra and Fernando Parrón (the latter the chaplain of the *San Carlos*) packed and loaded vestments and church furnishings.

On January 9, 1769, the *San Carlos* set sail for San Diego Bay. On board were sixty-two men. Among them was young José Antonio Yorba. The voyage was a very rough one. On January 22 it was discovered that the casks carrying drinking water were leaking, caused by "the violence of the constant pitching" of the ship. The tiller broke and was replaced. The *San Carlos* anchored off the Island of Cedros where several of Fages' men went ashore and obtained water which was not only unpalatable, but made many of the men sick. According to Miguel Costansó, a military engineer, who was aboard, the *San Carlos* "encountered such great opposition of winds and calms that it was driven to sea more than 200 leagues from the coast . . ."

In the meantime scurvy was taking its toll. There are several versions of the extent of the inroads of the disease, but the account of Costansó, who was always conservative in his statements, should be considered the most reliable. In his *Narrative* he states, "Scurvy had attacked all without exception, so that by the time they entered the port of San Diego, two men had died of this disease while the majority of the crew and half of the soldiers were confined to their beds. Only four seamen remained on their feet, and they, assisted by the soldiers, had to trim and furl the sails and work the ship."

The *San Carlos* entered San Diego Bay on April 29, 1769. The voyage had taken 110 days. (The *San Antonio*, which had sailed more than a month later, was already in port.) José Antonio Yorba was one of the few Catalans who was physically fit to make the overland march in search of the Bay of Monterey.

This important expedition was under the leadership of Gaspar de Portolá, governor of both Baja and Alta California. Besides him, many other members of the expedition are important names in California history: Pedro Fages, first comandante of California

and governor from 1782-1790; Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, comandante of California from 1773 to 1777, and killed in the Yuma revolt in 1781; José Francisco de Ortega, who first glimpsed San Francisco Bay and served as comandante of the presidios of San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and was founder of the Presidio of Santa Barbara; Miguel Costansó, cosmographer; Father Juan Crespi, close friend of Father Serra, who now sleeps beside him at Mission *Carmel*; José Raimundo Carrillo, comandante of the presidios of Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. There were others, but historically, the most important to Orange County was José Antonio Yorba I.

The Portolá Expedition started from San Diego on July 14, 1769. Thirteen days later the explorers came to "an arroyo of running water." It was given the name of *Santiago* in honor of the Patron Saint of Spain. Fr. Crespi noted, "It has willows, grapevines, brambles and other bushes. It comes down from the mountains and shows that it must have plenty of water in the rainy season." Costansó noted that the Santiago was "A stream of very good running water," and observed that, "Its banks are very luxuriant."

On July 28, Portolá and his explorers reached the place where the town of Olive now stands. They were the first white men to gaze upon the Santa Ana River which Crespi described as having "a bed of running water about ten varas [28 feet] wide and a half vara [17 inches] deep. . . *It has a great deal of good land which can easily be irrigated.*" Costansó praised the stream as "a beautiful river," and commented, "This place has many groves of willows and very good soil all of which can be irrigated for a great distance."

Fr. Crespi recorded, "I called this place the sweet name of Jesus de los Temblores [Jesus of the Earthquakes], because we experienced here a horrifying earthquake, which was repeated four times during the day. . . This river is known to the soldiers as the Santa Ana." It was at this location that José Antonio Yorba ultimately made his home. For many years it was known as *Santa*



*Ana*, and frequently was called *Santa Ana of the Yorbas*. It was part of the great rancho of which Yorba would become co-grantee, a grant appropriately named *Santiago de Santa Ana* for the two streams that gave it life.

The expedition made its way northward and discovered San Francisco Bay. The return trip involved considerable hardship, but all of the explorers returned safely to San Diego on January 24, 1770. José Antonio Yorba had participated in the initial and very important step of California's occupation and settlement by Spain.

In the years that followed Yorba served at various presidios and missions. He was assigned to the San Francisco Company in 1777 and transferred to Monterey in 1782.

On May 17, 1782, he married María Josefa Grijalva at Mission San Francisco. His bride was the daughter of Juan Pablo Grijalva and his wife, María Dolores Valencia. Before coming to California Grijalva had gained considerable renown as an Indian fighter in Mexico. He was in command of the third division of Anza's group of soldiers and colonists that arrived at San Gabriel on January 4, 1776. His family accompanied him. Grijalva retired from the Spanish army in 1796 with the rank of lieutenant.

Yorba was assigned to the San Diego Presidial Company in 1789 and remained there until his retirement as a sergeant in 1797 by reason of physical disability.

It is apparent that shortly after Grijalva and Yorba retired, they occupied a portion of what became Rancho *Santiago de Santa Ana*. No doubt they had had these lands in mind for a considerable time. They were not the first to look upon them with an approving eye. Back in 1771 Father Serra and Comandante Fages had deemed the Olive area suitable for the establishment of Mission San Gabriel. Two padres, Fray Pedro Benito Cambon and Fray Angel Somera, were directed to examine the site. For some reason they deemed the place unsuitable for a mission.

By a petition, dated December 8, 1801, and filed with Lt. Manuel Rodríguez, comandante at San Diego, Grijalva asked "for a tract of land of the Arroyo de Santiago to place there his cattle and horses." A map filed with the petition shows three houses on the land requested. One of these was on Hoyt Hill, between El Modena and Villa Park, and is believed to be the first house built in Orange County outside of San Juan Capistrano. According to tradition it was occupied for a short time by Grijalva. It is probable that at an early date it was also used by the Yorbas, as Grijalva spent most of his retirement years in San Diego. The map also shows an adobe belonging to Yorba and located near what is now Olive, and another west of present day Orange. Rodríguez recommended the granting of the petition, but there seems to be no record of its disposition.

The next petition for the land was made by José Antonio Yorba himself, his father-in-law having died in 1806. This instrument was dated November 24, 1809, and was addressed to the Spanish Governor José Joaquín de Arrillaga at Monterey. By it he requested on behalf of himself and his nephew, Juan Pablo Peralta, the lands which became known as *Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana*, bounded on the west by the Santa Ana River. The petition was referred to Don Francisco María Ruiz, comandante at San Diego, for investigation and recommendation. Ruiz reported that Grijalva's widow, Doña Dolores Valencia, had no objection, and he recommended the petition be granted. Accordingly, on July 1, 1810, Governor Arrillaga approved the grant.

It should be pointed out that grants were rare during the Spanish regime, less than thirty being made. Most, if not all, were given as reward for faithful military service. *Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana* was the only Spanish grant made of Orange County lands. All other grants in the area occurred later during the Mexican period.

José Antonio Yorba lived on the Rancho until his death in 1825. His family consisted of thirteen children, nine of whom lived past infancy: (1) José Antonio II, who married María

Antonia Verdugo. After her death he wed her sister, María Catarina Verdugo. He was juez de campo, auxiliary alcalde at Santa Ana Abajo, and regidor at Los Angeles in 1847. (2) Tomás Antonio, who married Vicenta Sepulveda. Vicenta was prominent in her own right, being the owner of Rancho *La Sierra* (Sepulveda) and at one time owner of Warner's Ranch. She was mentioned very favorably by William Heath Davis in his book. Tomás served as *suplente* to the territorial *diputacion* (alternate to the provincial assembly) and as an auxiliary alcalde at Santa Ana. (3) Isabel, who married José Joaquín Maitorena, an alferez in the Spanish army. She was the grantee of Rancho *Quadalasca* in Ventura County. (4) Presentacion, who married Leandro Serrano, the first white settler in Riverside County and grantee of Rancho *Temescal*. (5) Raymunda, who married Juan Bautista Alvarado, a relative of California Governor Alvarado. (6) Francisca, who married Francisco Ortega. (7) Bernardo, who married María Jesus Alvarado. After her death he married Felipa Domínguez and upon her demise he wed Andrea Elizalde. Bernardo was the grantee of Rancho *Cañon de Santa Ana* in northeastern Orange County and of Rancho *La Sierra* (Yorba) in western Riverside County. He was the owner of Rancho *El Rincon*, which he obtained from Isaac Williams. He was honored by numerous elections to the office of juez de campo, whose main duty was to supervise rodeos. (8) Teodocio, who married María Antonia Lugo of the famed Lugo family, and after her death he married Inocencia Reyes. Teodocio was the grantee of Rancho *Lomas de Santiago*, the northern part of the present Irvine Ranch, and of Rancho *Arroyo Seco* in the Sacramento Valley. He served as an auxiliary alcalde. (9) Andrea, who married José María Ávila.

By the time of his death on January 16, 1825, José Antonio had a large number of cattle, sheep, and oxen. There was also a large orchard and vineyard. In addition to his house on Rancho *Santiago de Santa Ana*, he retained a house near the presidio at San Diego.

José Antonio Yorba was a devout Christian who walked humbly before God. In his Last Will and Testament, executed at Mission San Juan Capistrano on July 24, 1824, he stated:

"I commend my soul to God who created it and by the merits of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who redeemed it — I beg and ask a general pardon of the offences that I have committed against Him, in order that when it leaves this miserable body it may go to praise Him with the blessed in Heaven; and it is my will that my body be given up to the earth from which it came, remaining in deposit for the day of judgment, and that it be shrouded in the holy habit of the sacred religion of the Seraphic Patriarch Saint Francis and be buried in the Church of the Mission San Juan Capistrano, under the baptismal font, that in this way I may be trod upon by everyone."

Early in 1825, Don José Antonio experienced his last illness. The Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Extreme Unction were administered to him. He died on January 16, 1825, at his home on Rancho *Santiago de Santa Ana*. Two days later Father Gerónimo Boscana gave him ecclesiastical burial at Mission San Juan Capistrano. It is not known whether his wish to be buried under the baptismal font was complied with. Probably not. In the records of the Mission Church, Father Boscana recorded that he was buried in "el Cementerio de la Yglesia de esta Misión de S. Juan Capistrano" (the cemetery of the church of this Mission of San Juan Capistrano).

A few years ago, a great, great, great granddaughter of Don José Antonio, Miss Lorraine Martin, and her committee, with the cooperation of various Yorba descendants, placed a marker in the Mission cemetery in memory of the great pioneer. A Requiem Mass was said for him, and the eulogy was delivered by Monsignor Vincent Lloyd-Russell, pastor of the Mission Church.



José Antonio Yorba was nearly seventy-nine years old when he died. He had lived in Alta California from the time it was occupied by the Spanish Crown until the commencement of the Mexican regime. He had lived a useful life. He was Orange County's first ranchero.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Arnold O. Dominguez is particularly well qualified to write the biography of José Antonio Yorba, not only because of his formal academic education, but also because of his intimate knowledge of the lives of many of the rancheros of the Pastoral Period.

He was born in Anaheim, California, and received his A.B. and M.A. degrees from the University of Southern California, majoring in history. His Master's Thesis is entitled, "A Historical Study of Rancho *San Juan Cajon de Santa Ana* and its Owners until 1857."

Mr. Dominguez is a direct descendant of both José Antonio Yorba I and Juan Pablo Peralta, co-grantees of Rancho *Santiago de Santa Ana*, which of course makes him a scion of Lt. Juan Pablo Grijalva, distinguished soldier of the early Spanish period in California. He traces his ancestry to Don José Antonio Yorba through his son, Don Bernardo, through three lines: Don Bernardo's eldest son, Raymundo, full brother of Ramona, who married Benjamin D. Wilson; Don Bernardo's daughter, María de Jesus, wife of Anastacio Botiller; and Don Bernardo's son, Prudencio, who married Dolores Ontiveros, daughter of Don Juan Pacifico Ontiveros, grantee of Rancho *San Juan Cajon de Santa Ana*. His ancestor, Mariano Domínguez, a Los Angeles merchant of the 1830s, lost his life in the Pauma Valley Indian massacre.

He is a descendant of Petra Ávila, who was born in Los Angeles in 1809, who married Don José Antonio Serrano, grantee of Rancho *Cañada de los Alisos*. Doña Petra was a sister of Don Juan Ávila, grantee of Rancho *Niguel*, and of Francisca Ávila, wife of Don José Andrés Sepulveda, grantee of Rancho *San Joaquín*.

Mr. Dominguez is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, honorary history fraternity, and served several terms as a director of the Orange County Historical Society. — L.J.F.

# ILLUSTRATION ON THE COVER

On the cover appears the Yorba coat of arms. In Catalonia, Spain, *Yorba* is spelled *Jorba*.



PATENT.

BOOK 1 Page 434.

United States of America,

Recorded November 16th,

TO

1874, at 8.10 A.M.

Ramon Yorba, Domingo Yorba,  
Soledad Yorba de Avila, wife  
of Juan Avila, Dolores Yorba de  
Aguilar, wife of Christoval  
Aguilar and Julian Chaves.

Request of Wells, Fargo

Have given and granted, and by these presents does  
give and grant unto the said Ramon Yorba et al, and to  
their heirs and assigns the undivided one-half of the  
tract of land, called the Los Bolsas, embraced and descri-  
bed in the foregoing survey, but with the stipulation  
that under virtue of the 15th section of the said Act,  
the within confirmation, nor the patent shall effect the  
interest of third persons.

To have and to hold the one undivided one-half of  
said tract of Los Bolsas, with the appurtenances, unto the  
said Ramon Yorba, et al, their heirs and assigns forever,  
with the stipulation aforesaid.

Signed, Ulyses.S.Grant,

President of the United States.

Dated, June 19th, 1874.

Independence of the United States 98th, (Seal)

L.D.Williamson, Secretary,

L.S. Lippincott, Recorder of

General Land Office.

Recorded, Volume 9 Page 165 to 286 inclusive.



Said Patent recites the Act of Congress of March 3rd 1851, entitled an Act to ascertain and settle private land claims in the State of California.

Recites that said claimants filed petition October 20th, 1852, with commissioners under said Act, sitting as a board in the City of Los Angeles, in which petition they claim confirmation of their title to the undivided one-half of the tract of land, containing seven square leagues of land, more or less, known as the Los Bolsas, situated in the County of Los Angeles, State aforesaid, in which they claim three-fourths of the entire tract called Los Bolsas, heretofore described in the original petition, and filed January 24th, 1853..

Said land being described as follows--Bounded by the Los Alamitos, Los Coyotes, a straight line from the south-east corner of the Coyotes to the River Santa Ana, the said river on the coast. The said claim being founded under a Spanish grant to Don Manuel Nieto, made on or about the year 1784, by the Governor Don Pedro Fegas, and re-granted to Catalina Ruiz, wife of Don Antonio Nieto, made in the name of the Mexican nation on the 22nd day of May, 1834, by Jose Figueroa, then Superior Political Chief of the territory of Upper California.

Recites a decree of said commission of September 7th, 1857, of confirmation, to Ramon Yorba et al to three undivided fourths part of the place called Los Bolsas, in Los Angeles County, formerly occupied by Catalina

*varas*  
*Mexican measure of length*  
*about 33 inches*

Ruiz, containing seven square leagues of land, a little more or less, and described as follows—

Commencing at the sea shore at a large hill, where a cross was placed in giving judicial possession to said land, and running thence toward the north thirty degrees east, and passes through some nutritious spots of ground and dividing the point of the Songo, where there are two willow trees of the same size standing alone, 9450 varas, terminating at pricked pear tree on the same hill, where a post of elder was placed as a land mark, thence taking a direction on the east of line 5400 varas terminating at a live elder tree with live green shoots, which elder tree is the land mark of boundary of Los Angeles and Coyotes, with the lands occupied by the heirs of descendants of Petricio Ontiveras, thence in a direct line east two degrees south 4160 varas to the old bed of the River Santa Ana, at an elm tree with branches broken off and destroyed as a land mark, thence south by the old bed of the river Santa Ana 14250 varas to the sea shore; thence along the length of the sea shore 19000 varas to the place of beginning.

The interest confirmed is as follows—

To Ramon Yorba ten thirty-two parts; to Dolores Yorba and Julian Chaves, four thirty-two parts each, Domingo and Soledad Yorba, three thirty-two parts each, making in all three equal undivided four parts of the premises above described.

The aforesaid decree was appealed to the district

Court of the United States of California, on the 18th day of February, 1857, in the cause entitled, Ramon Yorba et al, appellants Ads The United States, appellees, Los Bolsas transcript 402.

Recites the proceedings on appeal to said Court.

Recites the proceedings in the District Court.

The survey of the Attorney General, and that the title of said petitioners is confirmed in and to the undivided one-half of said Rancho, and that the decision is modified in that respect.

(Here follows a description of said Rancho by metes and bounds. Said description is omitted by request, and a map and notes omitted by request)

## Yorba and Thorburn Troth Told

LA. TIMES 1-10-65

The betrothal of Miss Carole Joan Thorburn to Ernest Stephen Yorba, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest John Yorba of Glendale, has been announced by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Thorburn of Glendale.

Miss Thorburn is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Leue, Mrs. John M. Thorburn and the late Mr. Thorburn.

Her fiance, a sixth generation Californian, is the grandson of Mrs. Ernesto T. Yorba, the late Mr. Yorba and the late Mr. and Mrs. Esteban R. Higuera.

The couple attended Glendale College.



## The Third Son of Yorba

By Doris Lee



ALMOST DAILY DON Bernardo Yorba would ride to the top of the highest hill behind his corrals and gaze out at the spread of his hacienda. Wheat fields, vineyards and pastures rolled along the north side of the Santa Ana River and disappeared with it into the canyon. His cattle grazed on the hillsides and lounged under the sycamores on the riverbank. Below him stood his two-story casa, and scattered around were the adobes of his sons.

Bernardo Yorba, married three times and father of twenty-one children, was not only a successful ranche-ro but a devoted family man as well. His dream was to provide a permanent place for his children in this fertile valley.

In the fall of 1858 Bernardo fell ill. A few days before he died he made his will. To the Catholic Church he deeded a small square of land "on the hill where are the corrals, called La Mesita," for a family cemetery. The church also received a partially constructed adobe chapel and the funds for completing it. All the rest he gave to his family "to take and enjoy and possess the said property forever, with the blessings of God and my own," he added romantically.

But "forever" was to be only 120 years. Today, 145 years after the first herd of cattle was set free on the hills, Don Bernardo Yorba's Rancho Cañón de Santa Ana is breaking up. His children are all leaving the canyon, reluctantly, driven out by soaring land values and high taxes. The flourishing

orange groves that long ago replaced the vineyards are coming down one by one to make way for "groves" of houses.

Even so, Bernardo would have been consoled to know that his descendants hold the record for having had the oldest continuously operated family farm in California. And the ranch is believed to be the only existing land grant still farmed by descendants of the original Spanish grantee.

As it makes a quiet exit, the ranch takes with it other distinctions besides its longevity. It was the third wealthiest Spanish rancho in Southern California in its day; it was first in the state to irrigate with river water drawn by gravity into ditches; it had the first church, the first cemetery and the first school off mission grounds in Orange County, and was so complete a settlement that other rancheros came to it for imported supplies and goods.

One of these distinctions is still visible today. As you drive along the Riverside Freeway out of Orange County, look to your left across the river, now encased in a concrete channel. On the hillside, barely visible among new rooftops, springs a clump of pepper trees spreading branches over something hidden from view.

It's the Yorba Cemetery, now a county historic site and situated in the middle of a neighborhood park. A trim hedge with an arched gate encloses it. Grass ripples over the graves and around the scattered markers. And in the center, the largest tombstone, crowned with a cross, stands over Bernardo's bones.

Bernardo was the third son of California's first Yorba—Jose Antonio—who came through Orange County with Portolá's trail-making expedition in 1769, and who later became Orange County's first ranche-ro in a partnership with a nephew, Juan Pablo Peralta. Their gigantic Spanish grant

followed the river from the mountains to the sea.

Bernardo was considered the business head of the family. Born in 1801 in San Diego and educated by the mission fathers there, he became manager of his father's holdings, headquartered near present-day Anaheim, and lived there for the first twelve years of his married life.

When the mission lands were broken up, Bernardo applied for land of his own for his growing family. His first wife, Maria, had died giving birth to their fifth child, and his second wife, Felipa, had just presented him with her third. On August 1, 1834, he received a Mexican grant of 13,328 acres across the river from the Peralta share of his father's rancho, near what is now Yorba Linda. There he proceeded to become, through quiet industry, one of the most outstanding men of his day.

Nearly self-sustaining, his rancho had its own gristmill, tannery, soap vats, distillery, winery, metal shops and store, employing some thirty artisans and skilled hands—from saddle-makers and woolcombers to cooks, seamstresses and jewelers—even a schoolmaster who taught his many children in schoolrooms in the casa, and later in the county's first public schoolhouse down by the river.

In addition, more than a hundred laborers were employed, most of them hired from the Indian village on the nearby riverbank.

The wealthy ranche-ro was primarily a stock raiser—his 8,000 head of cattle roamed the hills in a thirty-mile radius—but he was also considered to be "one of the most extensive cultivators of the land in this section of the country," as one contemporary put it. His fields bristled with wheat and corn alongside his vineyards and fruit trees, all irrigated by his unique ditches, a method later passed on to the founders of Anaheim.

*Doris Lee is a former reporter with Orange County's Daily News Tribune and a frequent contributor to WESTWAYS.*





LEFT FROM TOP  
DON BERNARDINO YZURA AS  
PAINTED IN 1900 BY  
FRIEND ARTIST DON  
JESUS BERNARDO YZURA  
JR.

RIGHT FROM TOP DON  
BERNARDINO YZURA AS  
PAINTED IN 1900 BY  
FRIEND ARTIST DON  
JESUS BERNARDO YZURA  
JR.

What he couldn't breed, grow or make he imported. Tallow and hides were traded for such luxuries as fine cloth, china and fancy candies.

His two-story house, one of the largest in California, was a comparative rarity in those days of simple adobes with dirt floors. It was finished with wood floors and beamed ceilings and was expanded, as the family grew, to fifty rooms, including chapel, schoolrooms, workshops and servants' quarters. He called it San Antonio for his favorite saint.

Family stories relate that Bernardo never slept away from home. When business called him to Los Angeles, he always rode in early enough to make it back the same day. Tradition also depicts him sitting on the veranda of his casa every morning, wearing his ever-present black headscarf, affectionately greeting his children one by one and giving them advice and instructions for the day.

In 1852 Felipa died giving birth to her twelfth baby, Felipe, and shortly after, Bernardo found a new wife to

help raise his large family. She was a young woman from Los Angeles named Andrea Elisalde, who at first wouldn't hear of marrying "that old man with all those children" (Bernardo was fifty-one), but the wealthy Spaniard won her over and they were married in a most unusual manner for those times of weeklong wedding celebrations.

While he remained on his rancho, his son-in-law stood in for him in a proxy ceremony in the Plaza Church in Los Angeles. His family later described the tender scene that took place when the bride arrived at San Antonio after the ceremony. Bernardo waited on the veranda with two of his youngest children and when her carriage appeared down the road, he took little Zenobia by the hand and, carrying Felipe, met his new wife at the gate. He kissed her in welcome, placed the baby in her arms and together they entered the house. Andrea bore him four more children.

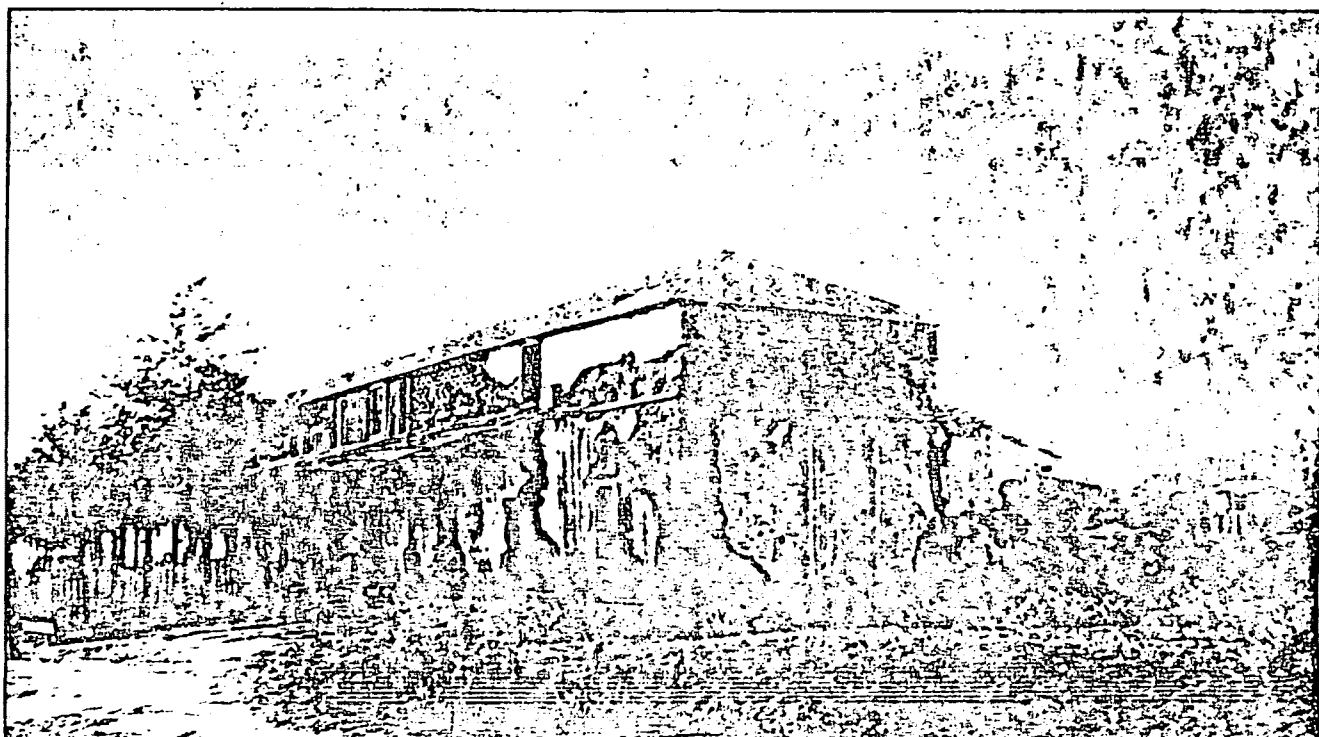
Life on the rancho was typical of early California. The hospitable don's

hacienda vibrated with the sounds of rodeos, weddings and christenings. Travelers making their way through Santa Ana Canyon stopped to rest, eat and buy homemade brandy. The level-headed Bernardo usually acted as *jefe de campo* for the annual cattle round-ups. He also served several terms as auxiliary alcalde for Los Angeles. He seems to have kept out of war and politics, however, pouring his energies instead into his holdings and growing richer by the year. The coming of the Americans and the Gold Rush created a demand for beef which undoubtedly enhanced his position.

He bought two more ranchos—in Riverside and San Bernardino counties—as time went on, and an additional share of his father's property besides his own inheritance. As his children reached adulthood each received a parcel of land, some stock and a brand. Title remained in their father's name, an arrangement accepted without question.

His shrewdness paid off: when the U.S. Land Commission required

*Bernardo's two-story adobe as it looked about turn of the century*



Spaniards to prove their titles, Bernardo was one of the few emerging with ownership firmly in hand. At the end of his life he owned more than 45,000 acres and was negotiating for yet another rancho.

When the esteemed Californio died, November 20, 1858, too soon to be buried in his own cemetery, his body was carried to Calvary Cemetery in Los Angeles by his faithful Indian and Mexican retainers, who wept all the way as they took turns carrying his coffin and leading his white riding horse, saddled and riderless. They all left the rancho after his death, apparently unable to cope with their loss.

It took fifteen years for his will to get through probate. After that his heirs began to sell out for various reasons; some had died, some had moved away. Andrea had remarried and moved out of the big casa into a smaller adobe nearby. Most of the original land grant around his palatial home remained in the family, however, and eventually the children and grandchildren of one son, Prudencio, became principal

owners. These are the last Yorbas (under various surnames—Dominguez, Kraemer, Travis) to leave the canyon.

One parcel left to Andrea and her two youngest sons was sold in 1875 to John W. Bixby of the sheepherding, land-acquiring Bixbys of nineteenth-century California. This 3,300-acre citrus ranch, owned by a descendant, is also earmarked for development.

In 1923 Los Angeles expansion crowded out Calvary Cemetery and, sixty-five years after his departure, Bernardo's body was brought back and laid among his family in the Yorba Cemetery. Many changes had taken place. Orange trees had replaced the vineyards. His casa stood in ruins, the veranda gone and the once-gleaming whitewash siding hanging in patches. Three years later, after an unsuccessful attempt to have it restored, it was torn down.

The smaller adobes of his sons were melting back into the ground, too. And San Antonio Chapel, finished two years after his death, was crumbling behind a newer, wooden church.

A railroad track ran past his front door parallel with the old dirt road named Esperanza for a granddaughter who had died young.

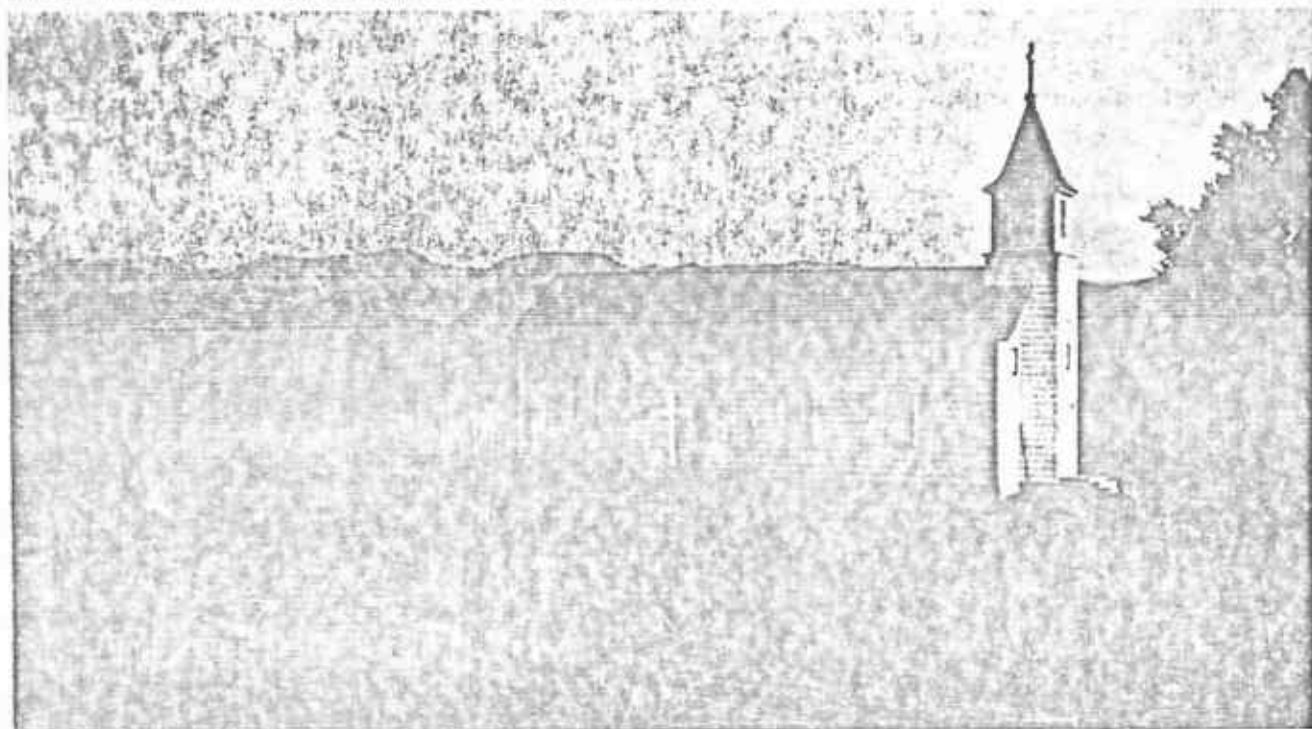
But it wasn't quite over. His hacienda, informally called Yorba now, thrived under the inherited skills of his grandchildren. Barley and other crops grew in abundance along with the citrus groves, cows could still be seen here and there, and red wine flowed from a small winery built by Prudencio many decades before. And the laughter of Bernardo's great-grandchildren, their destiny as yet an unknown factor, rang on the hillsides.

It was still possible "to take and enjoy," at least for awhile longer.

As the years went by more Yorbas joined him in the cemetery on La Mesita. Services were held in the church below, and the funeral procession up the hill was made on foot, pallbearers leading the way with the coffin. The cemetery was expanded to accommodate the growing numbers, and Prudencio's sons were caretakers.

*Continued on page 84*

*San Antonio Chapel with ruins of the original adobe chapel behind it, 1924*



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY ERIN M. ADAMS



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## THE THIRD SON OF YORBA

*Continued from page 27*

When it could no longer hold another Yorba the processions up the hill stopped, sometime in the Forties, and the graveyard, now isolated, fell prey to vandals who broke markers or carried them off. A chain link fence with a padlocked gate was erected in a futile effort to protect it.

In the 1960s the canyon came under the scheming eye of developers who envisioned planned communities where the orange groves steadily yielded up their fruit. Land values began climbing and the Yorbas began feeling the pinch of taxes.

Bernardo's dream began to crumble. Parcels here and there were annexed to Yorba Linda. Tract houses suddenly appeared. The county stepped in with a plan to preserve the canyon's natural beauty with a "scenic corridor." Two regional parks were built along the river, and Yorba Linda, in whose sphere of influence the property lay, pledged low density zoning and lots of greenbelts.

By the 1970s there was little evidence of the once-vibrant hacienda. Bernardo's hill had sprouted oil pumps and power lines. Water districts were ensconced on large chunks of grazing land. Even the wide, cool river had all but vanished into a concrete corral in the name of flood control. A small corner of Prudencio's adobe clung for awhile on the knoll it had occupied since the 1850s, and then it, too, went down and the knoll was leveled for apartment houses.

The cemetery, swallowed up by housing tracts, continued to deteriorate and finally, with the family's approval, it was turned over to the county with the stipulation that it be preserved as an historic site. The county patched the remaining markers, planted new grass, built a new entrance and put Woodgate Park around it. It was dedicated in 1976.

Later that year the 450-acre Dominguez Ranch (shared by descendants of Prudencio's daughter) was annexed to the city and sold to developers, followed shortly after by the 800-acre Kraemer Ranch (through another daughter) which included the site of

Bernardo's two-story adobe. These two large transactions heralded the end for the rancho.

In 1976 also, the California Farm Bureau conducted a search for the oldest continuously operated, family-held farm in the state. Bernardo's great-grandson, Alberto J. Yorba, still harvesting oranges for Sunkist, represented the family in accepting the honor. In 1978, Alberto, too, sold his share and moved out. Model homes now stand on the site of his father's stately home. And he watched with a wrench one day as his grandfather's winery, which had been still producing under his own expert hand, went under the bulldozer.

Today the view from Bernardo's hill is different. Picnic tables dot the bright green of Yorba Regional Park. Esperanza Road is blacktopped and wider. The hills have been carved into level tables to hold houses. The river no longer rushes through the canyon; only the freeway traffic does.

In the cemetery, the vandals still occasionally knock over a tombstone. Now and then a visitor of Spanish blood comes to look for the grave of a grandparent. And the legendary "pink lady," the ghost of a young Yorba woman who met with a tragic accident, floats among the tombstones at midnight every other spring.

A variety of surnames tells the story of intermarriages, including those with non-Spaniards. Here and there a Cooper, or a Wilson or a Rowland crops up on a headstone among the Carillos, Sepulvedas, Peraltas and Yorbas. In one corner is the grave of Vicenta de Los Reyes, a midwife who delivered "practically everybody in the cemetery," a popular family story goes. Of Bernardo's twenty-one children only seven are buried here.

Don Bernardo Yorba's dream of a permanent place for his children melted away with the adobes on the hills. Only his cemetery endures. Here is Felipa, his second wife who gave him twelve children, including Prudencio. Here is Andrea, the young wife who wouldn't hear of marrying "that old man." Here is Prudencio, the son whose grandchildren are the last to leave Rancho Cañon de Santa Ana.

And here—forever—is Bernardo. W



Bernardo  
Yorba



# The YORBA LEGACY

By JOHN O'DELL

It all began in 1810 when Jose Antonio Yorba settled on 62,516 acres along the Santa Ana River—a grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Although the land had all but passed out of family ownership by the late 1800s, one of Yorba's sons, Bernardo, established his own rancho, Canon de Santa Ana, in what now is Yorba Linda. From his line come the Yorba landowners of today. Bernardo reputedly was a shrewd businessman referred to by contemporaries as the 'Spanish Yankee.' He drilled into his heirs the importance of clinging to the land, and his lesson apparently took.

*David Belardes lives with his wife, two sons and mother-in-law in a buff-colored tract house in San Juan Capistrano, just west of Trabuco Creek. From their family room, the Belardeses have a view of both the old and new church spires at Mission San Juan Capistrano, where many of their ancestors are buried.*

*The Belardeses' home is on a street named Via Belardes in the bottomlands of what once was the Belardes ranch.*

*The only land that David and Gloria Belardes own is the small plot on which their house sits. They are not wealthy. She works at the mission, and he is a groundskeeper for the city school district.*

*It was their great-great-great-grandfather who was one of the biggest land owners in what now is Orange County.*

THE BELARDESSES ARE descendants—through lines in each of their families—of Jose Antonio Yorba, the Spanish soldier who came to California with the Gaspar de Portola expedition in 1769 and who, in 1810, was granted title to 62,516 acres along the Santa Ana River—a grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana.

Although the original Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana acreage had all but passed out of family ownership by the late 1800s, one of Yorba's sons, Bernardo, established his own rancho, Canon de Santa Ana, on the north side of the Santa Ana River in what now is Yorba Linda. From his line come the Yorba landowners of today.

Bernardo, the most prosperous of his father's sons, reputedly was a shrewd businessman and was referred to by contemporaries as the "Spanish Yankee." He drilled into his heirs the importance of clinging to the land, and that lesson apparently took.

Bernardo M. Yorba, great-grandson of his namesake and a member of the board of trustees of Orange County Centennial Inc., today lives on Yorba land in Santa Ana Canyon that he inherited. And, like his ancestors, he makes his living from the land—but as a developer rather than a rancher.

Another Yorba descendant whose family still holds land that can be traced to the 1834 Mexican grant that established Rancho Canon de Santa Ana is Gilbert Kraemer.

His grandfather, Samuel Kraemer, married Angelina Yorba—granddaughter of Bernardo—in 1886. The union combined her land with Kraemer's adjacent ranch in the hills above Yorba Linda to form a 1,600-acre parcel.

The Kraemer heirs also received acreage in

placencia, the remnants of a farm settled by great-grandfather Daniel Kraemer when he came to Orange County from Illinois in 1865.

Samuel Kraemer and his seven brothers and sisters left their Placencia land to their descendants in individual parcels, Gil Kraemer recalls, while the combined Kraemer-Yorba land in Yorba Linda was handed down intact, each descendant receiving an interest in the undivided property.

The land—in both places—was farmed for years, Kraemer says, "until we saw the advent of urbanization" of the Placencia-Yorba Linda area in the early 1960s. Then family members met and resolved to combine their holdings once again and operate the property under a family-run board of directors.

Initially, two separate companies with overlapping boards were formed. In 1979, however, the two companies were merged, and Founders K Corp.—now FKC Partners—began overseeing development of the properties. About 700 acres remain, the rest having been sold for residential development.

Gilbert Kraemer cannot talk long about his family without a love for the land showing through. He is proudest, he says, of the fact that after so many generations, the family still is bound together by its land. "So many times, it is all gone by the third or fourth generation. . . . We have a lot of pride in what

we've done. . . ."

Despite the family's huge landholdings in the 1800s, few of the current generation in Orange County are major landowners. Those who trace their ancestry through Yorba's third-eldest surviving son, Bernardo.

And as the Yorba lineage enters its eighth generation, the Yorba name is a minority one in a family in which surnames like Belardes, Dominguez, Kraemer, Simmons, Avila, Muckenthaler, Serrano, Raitt, Sepulveda, Richards, Rimpau, Burrue, Travis, Carrillo, Callahan, Peralta, Rowland and Sanchez predominate.

JOSE ANTONIO FRANCISCO YORBA, patriarch of the family, was born in July, 1746, near Barcelona. There appears to be nothing recorded about Yorba's childhood, but it is known that he enlisted in the Spanish army as a member of the Royal Catalan Volunteers sometime in his late teens. In 1767, the Catalans—from the provinces of Catalonia—were ordered to duty in New Spain, later to be called Mexico.

Yorba was stationed in Sonora the next year when his lieutenant received orders to select men for a mission, under Capt. Gaspar de Portola, to explore Alta California. Yorba was one of 61 soldiers and sailors who, accompanied by a chaplain, set sail for Upper California on Jan. 9, 1769. Yorba survived the

scurvy that struck down most of the ship's complement during the 110-day voyage from La Paz, and when his ship, the San Carlos, anchored in San Diego Bay on April 29, 1769, he and the few other healthy soldiers on board joined their comrades from the expedition's second ship, the San Antonio.

After weeks of outfitting and training, the Portola expedition left San Diego on July 14. On July 23, the Portola party arrived at a hill about two miles above what later became the site for Mission San Juan Capistrano. The next two days, July 24 and 25, the party camped on the Trabuco Mesa—so named because it was there that one of the soldiers lost his blunderbuss, *trabuco* in Spanish. The explorers slept near what now is El Toro on the 26th, and on the 27th, they clambered down from the hills into the mouth of a large valley, where they camped near a small, clear creek the soldiers called Santiago in honor of St. James, the patron saint of Spain.

The next day, July 28, 1769, the party trudged across a flat plain, through waist-high wild mustard. The men topped a small rise about midday and looked out over a placid, 100-yard-wide river.

Yorba thus became one of the first Europeans to gaze upon the Santa Ana River—although the name first bestowed on it was *Dulcísimo Nombre de Jesus de los Temblores*, the river / *Continued*

## A ROSTER OF THE RANCHOS



Vast rangeland was opened to private ownership when the newly formed Mexican Republic passed the Secularization Act in 1833. Mission property was confiscated, and any eligible Mexican citizen (native or naturalized) could petition Mexican governors for large grants of land. In addition to being a Catholic, an applicant had to show an ability to raise crops or cattle and to occupy the property. Of 700 grants made or reconfirmed throughout California between 1833 and 1846, 20 were either all or partly within today's Orange County borders. They were:

### 1. Rancho Boca de la Playa

"Mouth of the beach," the most southerly rancho in the county, was granted to Emigdio Vejar by Mexican Gov. Pio Pico in 1846. Vejar, who had been a "judge of the plains" (authorized to dispense justice in rural areas) in the Los Angeles area in 1838, was justice of the peace in San Juan Capistrano in 1844 and 1845. In 1869, he sold the 6,607-acre rancho to Juan / *Continued*

PHOTOGRAPH: JIM SLEEPER COLLECTION / CARTOGRAPHY: LEAVETT BILES

# YORBA LEGACY *Continued*

of the Sweetest Name of Jesus of the Earthquakes.

Father Juan Crespi, expedition chaplain, wrote in his diary that he chose that name because the soldiers were shaken by "a horrifying earthquake, which was repeated four times during the day."

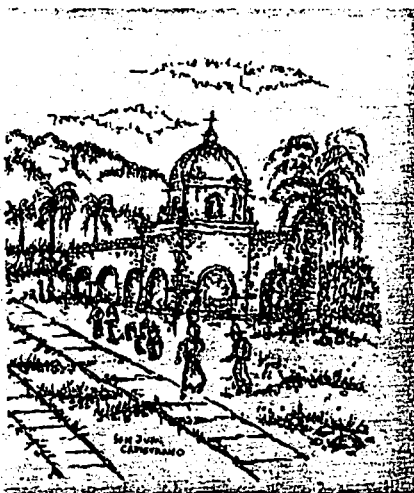
But for all of Crespi's eloquence, the soldiers called the river Santa Ana, and that is the name that stuck.

No one knows what the 23-year-old Yorba thought of the river, the surrounding land—which Crespi described as "good land which can be easily irrigated"—or the earthquakes.

But his impression must have been favorable, because about 30 years later, retired from the army as a sergeant because of a disability and accompanied by his second wife and several children, Yorba took up residence on land near the Santa Ana River where his father-in-

law, former army lieutenant Juan Pablo Grijalva, had settled.

WHEN JOSE ANTONIO YORBA CAME to the Santa Ana Valley, he appar-



ently left behind in San Francisco two grown sons by his first wife, Indian convert Maria Gracia Feliz, whom he married in 1773 while stationed in Monterey and who died in 1781 after bearing him three sons.

One of those sons died in early childhood, and history appears to have lost track of the other two, who were not mentioned in Yorba's will. Arnold O. Dominguez, a local historian and Yorba descendant, says that both are believed to have died—childless—before the death of Jose Antonio.

In November, 1782, Yorba, then 36, married 15-year-old Maria Josefa Grijalva. By the time her father retired in 1796 and took up residence along the Santa Ana River, she had given Yorba two sons: Jose Antonio II, born in 1785, and Tomas Antonio, born in 1787. In all, they had 13 children together.

## A ROSTER OF THE RANCHOS *Continued*

Avila. It eventually was acquired by Juan Forster, an Englishman who became a Mexican citizen and a major regional landowner, second only to Abel Stearns.

### 2. Rancho Bolsa Chica

The 8,107-acre "little pocket" or "bay" was granted to Joaquin Ruiz in 1841 by Mexican Gov. Juan B. Alvarado. Formerly part of Rancho Las Bolsas, Rancho Bolsa Chica eventually was bought by Abel Stearns, a Massachusetts native who became a naturalized citizen in Mexico before coming to Los Angeles as a trader in 1829. Through marriage and land purchase, Stearns became the largest landowner in Southern California.

### 3. Rancho Canada de los Alisos

Bounded by mountains on the northeast, the "glen of the alders" was granted in 1842 to Jose Serrano by Gov. Alvarado. Supplemented by a later grant from Gov. Pico in 1846, the Serrano property swelled to 10,668 acres. Serrano had been a judge of the plains in Los Angeles in 1835. Dwight Whiting acquired most of the rancho in the 1880s, and it became the Whiting Ranch.

### 4. Rancho Canon de Santa Ana (sometimes called Canada de Santa Ana)

Taking its name from the Santa Ana River, the 13,328-acre rancho was granted in 1834 to Bernardo Yorba by Mexican Gov. Jose Figueroa. Yorba was one of four sons of Jose Antonio Yorba, a soldier in the Gaspar de Portola expedition that set out from San Diego in 1769 in search of Monterey Bay. Bernardo Yorba eventually acquired land that extended his holdings from Riverside County to Newport Bay.

### 5. Rancho La Habra

This rancho, whose name meant *low pass in the mountains or valley* (possibly derived from a low pass through the Puente Hills crossed by the Portola expedition), was partly in what is now Los Angeles County. It was granted in 1839 to Mariano R. Roldan by Manuel Jimeno on behalf of the Mexican nation. The acreage is not known. Roldan had been an auxiliary

alcalde, or judge, in the Los Angeles district in 1836 and later had served as a judge of the plains. Andres Pico acquired the land, and it was later sold to Stearns.

### 6. Rancho La Puente

Only a small portion of "the bridge" was within what is now Orange County. The 48,790-acre rancho was granted in 1845 by Gov. Pico to John Rowland and William Workman—trappers who had brought a party of Americans to California from New Mexico in 1841.

### 7. Rancho Las Bolsas

This rancho was part of a vast Spanish concession given to former soldier Manuel Nieto in 1784 by Spanish Gov. Pedro Fages. Las Bolsas was created when Nieto heirs asked for a partition of the larger grant. Gov. Figueroa gave the land in 1834 to Catarina Ruiz, the widow of one of the Nietos. By the time the United States Land Commission was formed in 1851 to consider the claims of rancho owners, Las Bolsas ownership was in dispute. Ramon Yorba and Jose Justo Morillo each claimed a half-interest. Stearns later became full owner. The acreage of the rancho is not known.

### 8. Rancho Lomas de Santiago

The 47,266-acre "hills of St. James" was granted in 1846 by Gov. Pico to Teodocio Yorba, son of Jose Antonio Yorba. It later was acquired by James Irvine Sr. in deeds dated 1868 and 1876.

### 9. Rancho Los Alamitos

"Little cottonwoods" (or willows) was part of the larger 1784 Manuel Nieto concession. Los Alamitos was created during the partitioning and in 1834 was granted by Gov. Figueroa to Juan Jose Nieto. The acreage is not known. It was later acquired by Stearns.

### 10. Rancho Los Coyotes

Rancho Los Coyotes also was created during the breakup of the Manuel Nieto concession and was given to Juan Jose Nieto in 1834. Stearns later added it to his holdings. Its acreage is not known.

When Grijalva filed a petition for a grant to the land in 1801, his papers said that he already had been grazing cattle and sheep there for some time and that Yorba also had a house on the rancho. The grant was never awarded, but the boundaries spelled out in the petition approximated those requested successfully nine years later by Yorba and Juan Pedro Peralta—Grijalva's grandson.

Yorba and Peralta jointly applied in November, 1809, for grazing rights on what they called Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana—the petition written on their behalf by 22-year-old Tomas Yorba.

On July 1, 1810, the two received the formal grant. Today, the cities of Orange, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa, Tustin and Villa Park are all or partly located on land carved out of the rancho.

WHEN YORBA DIED ON JAN. 16, 1825, he left a will that has served

through the years as an account of his success. In the will the 78-year-old patriarch listed among his possessions his adobe house at Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, a 30-acre vineyard there (walled to keep the cattle out), an orchard, 800 head of cattle, 32 oxen, 250 sheep, 19 pack mules and their saddles and a second house near the presidio at San Diego.

By early California standards, Yorba was rich. And some of his heirs were destined to become even wealthier.

But what gave the illiterate, retired army sergeant the wherewithal to make Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana a prosperous rural kingdom was the fruit of an earlier, illicit venture—selling sea otter furs to Yankee traders in violation of a ban on commerce with anyone but authorized Spanish traders.

The Americans, however, paid a lot

more for the pelts than did the Spaniards, and the accounts of the Mercury, a ship out of Boston, show that on Sept. 24, 1806, Yorba sold \$1,268 worth of otter pelts, receiving \$631.50 cash and the rest in trade goods. And on July 29, 1807, according to historian Wayne Dell Gibson, Yorba again sold a load of pelts to the Mercury's captain, this time for \$1,070 in trade goods. In those days, \$1,000 was a good 10 years' wages for the average California ranch hand.

The cash and goods that Yorba received in those transactions, and in others that went unrecorded, doubtless helped set him up as a ranchero, Gibson suggests.

When Yorba died, his principal heirs—as was customary at the time—were his widow, Maria Josefa, and his four surviving sons: Jose Antonio II, Tomas, Ber- / *Continued on Page 42*

#### 11. *Rancho Mission Vieja or La Paz*

The 46,435-acre rancho was granted to Antonio Estudillo in 1841 by Gov. Pico under the name Rancho La Paz ("the peace"), but Estudillo failed to meet conditions of ownership set by Mexican law. He sold it to Augustin Olvera in 1845, who sold it to Forster two days after the title was confirmed. The rancho's name was changed to Rancho Mission Vieja ("old mission").

#### 12. *Rancho Niguel*

Rancho Niguel was granted to Juan Avila in 1842 by Gov. Alvarado. Avila was a judge of the plains and later justice of the peace in San Juan Capistrano. Lewis F. Moulton acquired the 13,316-acre rancho in the 1890s, and it became Moulton Ranch.

#### 13. *Rancho Potrero los Pinos*

This was one of three small pastures in what is now Cleveland National Forest called the "Potreritos of San Juan Capistrano," granted in 1845 to Forster by Gov. Pico. The other two *potreritos* are now in Riverside County. The size of the three in an 1866 title was 1,167 acres.

#### 14. *Rancho Rincon de la Brea*

Only a small portion of "corner of the tar" extends into Orange County from the north. The rancho was first owned by Gil Ybarra of Los Angeles, a former town council member who received the grant in 1841 from Gov. Alvarado. Its size is not known.

#### 15. *Rios Tract*

This seven-acre parcel of land was within the boundaries of Rancho Boca de la Playa. It was granted to Santiago Rios by Mexican Gov. Manuel Micheltoarena in 1843. Rios was justice of the peace at San Juan Capistrano in 1842 and 1843.

#### 16. *Rancho San Joaquin and Rancho La Cienega de las Ranas*

Given to Jose Andres Sepulveda in two grants by Gov. Alvarado in 1837 and 1842, the title for the two ranchos gave the combined size as 48,803 acres. The ranchos were named

"pocket of the St. Joaquin" (an early name for Upper Newport Bay) and "swamp of the frogs," an area of marshlands that once extended from Newport Bay to Red Hill. Sepulveda reportedly had been involved in politics, but became known as a hospitable rancher who owned fast horses. His ranchos later were joined with Lomas de Santiago and a portion of Rancho de Santa Ana to form the Irvine Ranch.

#### 17. *Rancho San Juan Cajon de Santa Ana*

The 35,970-acre "St. John's Canyon of Santa Ana" was granted in 1837 to Juan Pacifico Ontiveros by Alvarado. Ontiveros was an early-day resident of Los Angeles who had served in the Spanish army.

#### 18. *Rancho Santa Gertrudes*

Only the northeasterly tip of the rancho is within Orange County. It was part of the 1784 Nieto concession. Nieto lived on this rancho southwest of what is now Whittier. After the breakup of the concession, Figuero granted the rancho to Josefa Cota de Nieto.

#### 19. *Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana*

The rancho took its name from two Portola expedition campsites that were named for two saint's days, St. James (Santiago) and St. Anne (Santa Ana). Jose Antonio Yorba, a retired sergeant of the presidio in San Diego, who had been a Portola party corporal, was granted the ranch land in 1810.

#### 20. *Rancho Trabuco*

Named for a blunderbuss lost by a soldier in the Portola expedition. A third of the rancho was granted in 1841 to Santiago Arguello by Gov. Alvarado. Arguello, who had held several public offices in San Juan Capistrano, San Diego and Los Angeles, sold his interest to Forster two years later, and Forster obtained the additional two-thirds of the rancho from Gov. Pico, giving him a total of 22,000 acres.

*Source: The Title Insurance and Trust Co. of Los Angeles, incorporated in 1893, now known as Titor Title Insurance Co. of California. Compiled by Nancy Reed.*



# YORBA LEGACY

*Continued from Page 35*

nardo, born in 1801, and Teodocio, born in 1805. His five surviving daughters—Isabel, Presentacion, Raymunda, Francisca and Andrea—were barely mentioned in the will.

But Maria Josefa broke with tradition and, in what appears to have been an early stand for women's rights, forced a decision to give Jose Antonio's heirs joint possession of the huge rancho.

They held only undivided interests in the rancho, however, and that hastened the undoing of the great estate as the family grew larger and more diverse. Because interest in the property was shared equally by all, the only way a descendant could cash in on his or her legacy was to sell to another family member or, as happened several times, sue for partition of the land.

Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana survived the Mexican War of Independence and the war between the United States and Mexico that ended in 1848 with the United States annexing what now are the states of California, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, Utah and New Mexico. It also survived the U.S. Lands Commission, formed in 1850 to rule on the validity of some 800 Spanish and Mexican land grants in California.

But it did not survive the financial needs of the ever-growing Yorba clan, exacerbated by the drought of 1863-64, which saddled many Southern California rancheros with immense debt and decimated their cattle herds.

Already, some of the heirs had sold out for what now appear to have been meager sums. Isabel Yorba, for example, sold her interest in the rancho to her brother, Teodocio, for \$200 in 1853. Domingo Yorba—Jose Antonio's grandson and David Belardes' great-grandfather—sold his share to Jose Sepulveda in 1854 for \$6,000, 150 head of cattle and 50 horses.

Finally, in 1866, Abel Stearns, the nearly bankrupt owner of neighboring Rancho Los Alamitos and a claimant to some of the Yorba lands, brought suit on behalf of himself and a large number of Yorba and Peralta descendants to partition and dissolve Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana.

And on Feb. 24, 1868, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Pablo de la Guerra ruled in Stearns' favor and named a three-member commission to divide the 62,516-acre rancho among the more than 100 claimants.

That task, according to historian Robert Glass Cleland, took six months. And

a lot of the land went, in lieu of cash fees, to the attorneys who represented the various Yorba and Peralta relatives in the lengthy proceedings. The city of Orange, for instance, was founded on Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana land that attorneys A. B. Chapman and Andrew Glassell obtained as their fee.

Within a few more years, almost all of the rancho was in the hands of Yankee land developers.

WHILE JOSE ANTONIO YORBA'S eldest sons, Jose Antonio II and Tomas Yorba, were working the original rancho (Tomas even established the area's first general store at the original ranch headquarters in Olive), Bernardo and Teodocio Yorba struck out on their own.

Bernardo obtained the 13,378-acre Rancho Canon de Santa Ana grant in 1834 and later secured a second grant, also of about 13,000 acres, for Rancho la Sierra in what now is Riverside County. He also purchased a smaller rancho, El Rincon, in San Bernardino County. All three had contiguous boundaries near the site of the Prado Dam, and one historian wrote that Yorba could ride all day long in almost any direction and not leave his land.

Don Bernardo, as he came to be called, was the most prosperous of the second generation of Yorbas, and an 1836 census shows that his Canon de Santa Ana had 46 residents, 11,000 head of cattle, 1,500 horses and 800 sheep. The late Terry Stephenson, a historian and early county official, wrote that Yorba in the late 1830s installed what is believed to be California's first gravity-fed irrigation system—a series of trenches cut through to the Santa Ana River.

Don Bernardo built a huge adobe, San Antonio, with wood floors, extensive tile work and 30 rooms, and in it installed each of his three successive wives. It was home to his 20 children.

WHILE THERE IS A WEALTH OF documentation on the property and genealogy of the Yorbas, little has been written or handed down that shows what the early rancheros were like as human beings.

But Tomas Yorba's 54 existing letters, compiled by Gibson in his 1976 book about the second of Jose Antonio's sons by Maria Josefa, show that he was a loving father, a businessman occasionally plagued by money worries, a lover of chocolate and, in the mid-1830s, a man fearful of attacks by / *Continued*

## YORBA LEGACY

### *Continued*

the Indians and Sonoran bandits who roamed the ranchos, stealing livestock.

Arnold Dominguez recalls one story his grandmother, Felipe Yorba Dominguez, told about Don Bernardo—her grandfather.

"Don Bernardo was married three times," Dominguez says, "and this was when he was married to his third wife. She apparently didn't like the relatives from the earlier wives, and my grandmother told me a story once of how she was visiting Don Bernardo when his wife said something to hurt her feelings. She started crying, and Don Bernardo picked her up and hugged her. She said she remembers that he was warm and had a rosary around his neck. He asked her what was wrong and she said that grandma didn't love her. And she said that Don Bernardo looked at her and said, 'Well, that's all right, I love you.'"

Bernardo Yorba died in 1858 at the age of 57. His body was carried by relays of vaqueros and Indian workers to Calvary Cemetery in Los Angeles, where it was interred until 1923. Then it was removed to the Yorba family cemetery in Yorba Linda, which had not been completed when the don died.

Bernardo's younger brother, Teodocio, lived on the Santiago de Santa Ana until 1846, when he received a grant from California's last Mexican governor, Pio Pico, a gambling and horse-racing crony. The grant was for "four leagues, more or less" just to the west of the upper portion of Santiago de Santa Ana.

That grant, the Rancho Lomas de Santiago, later became the top half of the giant Irvine Ranch.

Teodocio ran up a lot of debt and, according to papers that his great-great-granddaughter, Mildred Yorba MacArthur Serrano, left to the Sherman Research Library in Corona del Mar, mortgaged his land in 1859 to settler and trapper William Wolfskill for \$7,000. A year later, he deeded over the land to avoid paying the debt.

Yorba apparently still occupied the land, however, and, according to the Serrano papers, in 1861 petitioned the U.S. government for legal title. That petition resulted in a survey that inexplicably showed Lomas de Santiago to be 11 square leagues, or about 47,000 acres—despite the Pico grant's definition of its size as 13,000 acres. Teodocio Yorba died in 1863, without receiving the title he'd claimed. In 1866, Wolfskill sold the land—all 47,000 acres—for \$7,000, about 15 cents an acre, to/ *Continued*

## YORBA LEGACY

### *Continued*

Benjamin and Thomas Flint and Llewellyn Bixby—partners of a rancher named James Irvine. Two years later, Irvine's name showed up on a deed as half owner, and in 1876, he bought out his partners and became sole owner of what came to be called the Irvine Ranch—made up of the Lomas de Santiago and parts of two other ranchos.

In 1964, the Irvine Co.'s ownership of the property was attacked by Teodocio Yorba's descendants, who claimed that because the 1859 mortgage to Wolfskill described the property as "four leagues, more or less," all Wolfskill—and later the Irvine Ranch—had claim to was 13,000 acres. Teodocio Yorba's heirs, the suit claimed, were entitled to the remaining 34,000 acres. The case was dismissed in Superior Court in Los Angeles, and the heirs lost subsequent appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court.

FOR HISTORIANS, THE YORBA story ended with the dissolution of Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana in 1868. The family from that point on simply was too large and diverse to track with any consistency. But Yorbas did continue to be actively involved in the life of the county—Don Bernardo's heirs on their Santa Ana Canyon citrus and avocado ranches, others as ranch hands, storekeepers, farmers, mechanics, lawyers, teachers and land developers.

So diverse, in fact, is the family that several descendants interviewed for this account said they had heard there was a Yorba branch in San Juan Capistrano, but professed ignorance of anyone connected with it.

The Yorbas, says Arnold Dominguez, are not given to family reunions, and the various branches rarely socialize.

David Belardes, one of the San Juan Capistrano Yorbas, isn't surprised that distant relatives in Tustin and Anaheim and Placentia don't know much about his branch of the family.

Belardes is an avid amateur historian who keeps a family tree tracing his and his wife's lineage back to Jose Antonio I on a family-room table that's piled high with a growing collection of Yorba family documents and portraits stretching back to the mid-1800s. He ruefully admits that he has little firsthand knowledge of his Yorba ancestry because, in his family and others, "all of the older people seem to be going to their graves with all this history still in their heads instead of written down."

*O'Dell is a Times business writer.*