

surroundings,⁹ but the entire estate, with its groves and vineyards, its golden fruit and waving harvests, its shaded drives and vistas of mountain peak and valley, carrying the beholder into an ideal region, calm and peaceful as the fabled realm of Rasselas, where soft vernal airs induce forgetfulness of the din and turmoil, the crowded streets and selfish intensity of city life."

PART TWO—THE PEOPLE

RANCHO SANTA ANITA

CHAIN OF TITLE

King of Spain—1771
 The Mexican Nation—1822
 Hugo Reid—1839-45
 Henry Dalton—1847
 Joseph A. Rowe—1854
 William Corbitt and Albert Dibblee—1858
 William Wolfskill—1865
 Harris Newmark—1872
 Elias Jackson ("Lucky") Baldwin—1875
 Harry Chandler—1936
 State of California—1947

King of Spain—1771

Title to the Californias, first Baja (Lower) then Alta, was vested in the King of Spain under the monopolistic Laws of the Indies. Following the establishment of Mission San Gabriel in Alta California in 1771, more than 13,000 acres, extending north of San Gabriel to the Sierra Madre mountain range, became the mission farming land known as Rancho Santa Anita. Franciscan monks administered it for many years.

Cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, grain and fruit were raised on the fertile land, the virgin soil. Water abounded, in springs, streams, and a natural lake where the enterprising *padres* built a grist mill. Besides supplying mission needs, they engaged in a flourishing "hide and tallow" trade with sea captains and "supercargoes" who sailed to the West Coast in increasing numbers from the outside world.¹⁰

The Mexican Nation—1822

Spanish rule in Alta California yielded to Mexican in 1822, after Mexico's successful revolt against Spain. Temporal power of the Church was broken, through passage of the Secularization Act of 1833. But the able administration of Rancho Santa Anita by *padres* from the San Gabriel Mission continued until secularization of all the missions was completed, in the late 1830s.

Hugo Reid—1839-45

Reid, a Cambridge classmate of Charles Darwin, was a Scot who became a Mexican citizen in 1836—after several years of trade in South America and teaching in Mexico. In '37 he married an Indian neophyte from San Gabriel Mission, and is best remembered for informed and interesting "Letters" on his wife's people. (16) He petitioned

⁹Bancroft refers to "Lucky's" elegant house built for entertaining not far from the simple old *adobe*, his real residence while on the ranch. Sharing the lake and the mountains, they still are strangely separate. Each typifies an era, as did their builders, Reid and Baldwin.

¹⁰Company agents on shipboard, like "Don Alfredo" Robinson, acting on various coastal vessels for the Boston firm of Bryant and Sturgis.

for Rancho Santa Anita in 1839, when church property was fast passing into private ownership.

Assured of eventual title, Reid built an *adobe* ranch-house, using Indian labor, and started new orchard and vineyard plantings. In '41 he received provisional title from Governor Alvarado. But not until 1845, on the very eve of Mexico's war against the United States, did the first lay owner of Rancho Santa Anita receive full title from the last Mexican governor of California, Don Pio Pico.

Henry Dalton—1847

Dalton was an English merchant who settled in Southern California in 1843, after a successful business career in Lima, Peru. A decade earlier, Hugo Reid had been his partner in a trading venture to Hermosillo, Mexico, and they renewed the old acquaintance. Like the "Scotch Paisano", the Englishman became a Mexican citizen and a Catholic in order to own land in California and marry a native daughter. Dalton's father-in-law was Don Augustin Zamorano, remembered as the first printer in the territory (11).

The newly-weds came to live near the Reid family at Rancho Azusa, adjoining Santa Anita on the east. During the Mexican War, when Reid became hard-pressed to the point of offering Rancho Santa Anita for sale, Dalton bought it for 20¢ an acre (\$2,700)—although he kept the Azusa as his permanent home.

After the War, Alta California was ceded to the United States and, in 1850, admitted to statehood. Henry Dalton's title to Rancho Santa Anita was upheld by the American Board of Land Commissioners, in spite of being a last-minute grant by the fleeing Mexican governor. Several such grants the Commissioners ruled invalid.

Joseph A. Rowe—1854

Rowe, owner and star performer of California's pioneer circus (19), bought the Santa Anita for \$33,000—retiring from the sawdust ring to raise cattle. He also pastured a few wild animals and performing horses.

But Rowe and his pretty wife, both trick riders, were inexperienced and unsuccessful ranchers. After giving a mortgage on the place to William Wolfskill, they took the money and went back in the show business—off to Australia—leaving a foreman to run the ranch as best he could, until a buyer appeared.

William Corbitt and Albert Dibblee—1858

Albert Dibblee, a New Yorker who attained prominence in San Francisco's business and political life, bought the Santa Anita as an investment, sight unseen, in partnership with a Los Angeles promoter and trader named William Corbitt. They took over the Wolfskill mortgage and acquired a fine ranch of 13,316 acres for \$16,645. Joseph Rowe, the only owner who did not make a profit out of Ranch Santa Anita, wanted to be rid of a burdensome property—even at a 50% loss.

Neither of the new owners ever lived on the ranch. It was managed by a younger brother of Albert Dibblee's named Thomas, who left a promising law practice in New York City to come to Southern California. Albert remained in San Francisco, earning the money for capital expenditures. Their hopes rode high until the catastrophic years of drought commenced in the early '60's, ending the great days of cattle ranching in California.

The beautiful lake at Santa Anita, fed by springs, dried and shriveled into an ugly marsh. Livestock died like flies on bare, paper-dry pastureland. When the partners decided to sell, Thomas Dibblee moved to Santa Barbara. He married into the royal family of the region, that of Don José de la Guerra; and managed another ranch, the Lompoc, for his older brother.

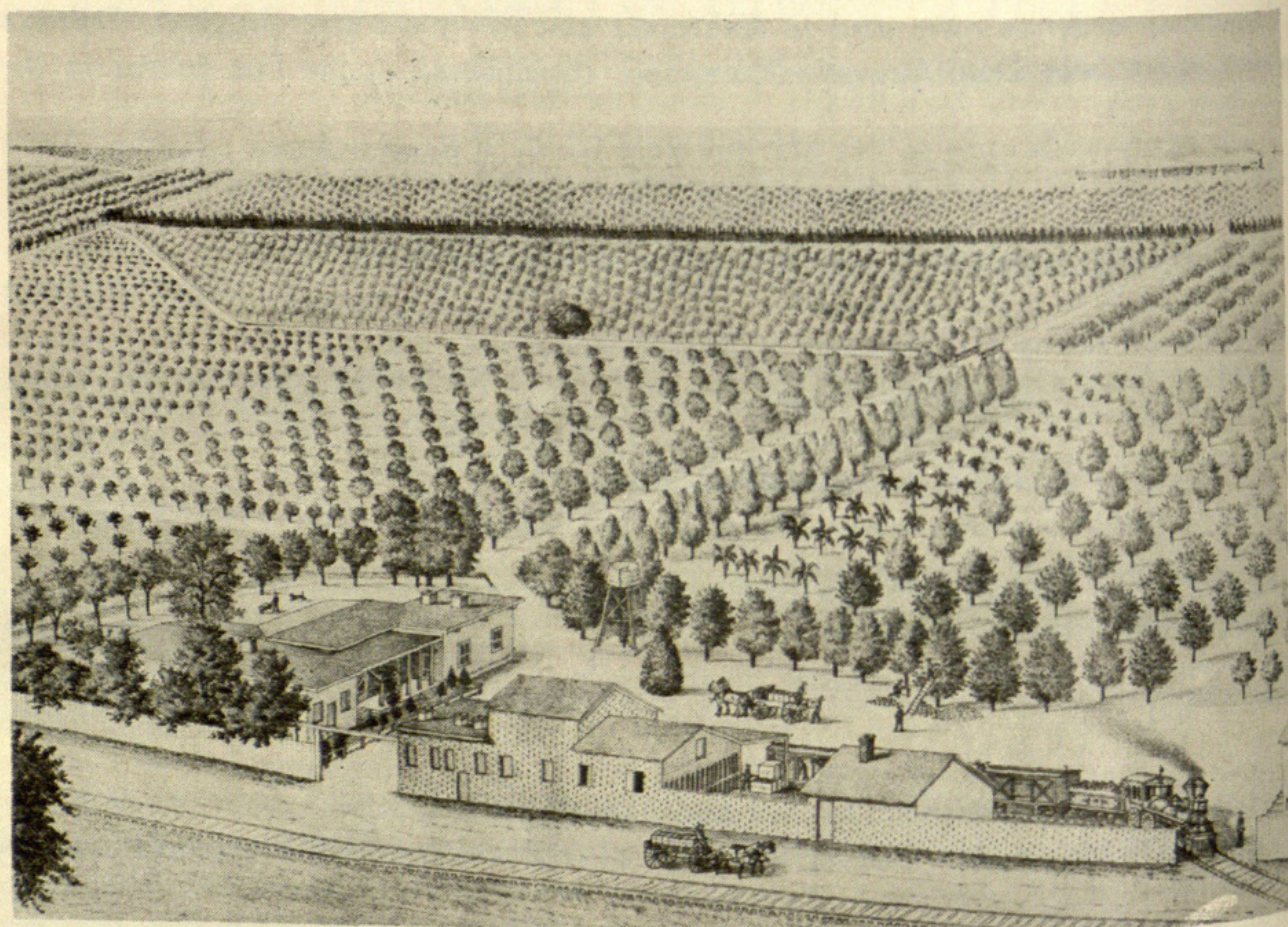
Leonard Rose—1865

Rancho Santa Anita was sold in two sections. The first and most important subdivision of Reid's original grant, 2,000 unimproved acres in the west, went to an indus-

trious German named Leonard Rose, for \$2 an acre. In time, after extensive irrigation, he created a splendid estate—a showplace known as "Sunnyslope". Grapes grown from Rhineland slips and trotting horses became Rose specialties. He also produced high-grade citrus fruits, wine and the brandy called *aguardiente* (firewater) by the *paisanos*.

William Wolfskill—1865

Wolfskill bought the remainder of Rancho Santa Anita including the homesite—11,316 acres for \$20,000—with the idea of irrigating and raising more diversified crops than anyone in the country. Widely known as a horticulturist, he appears in Bancroft's "Pioneer Register" as "the pioneer [with his French *vecino*, Louis Vignes] of California's greatest industry, the production of wine and fruit." He had known and coveted the Santa Anita ever since mission ownership.



The old Arcade Depot of the Southern Pacific Railroad, about 1861. The orange grove beyond the station was a portion of 100 acres of trees belonging to William Wolfskill—
(Courtesy of Title Insurance and Trust Company, Los Angeles.)

Wolfskill first came to California from Taos in 1831, heading an overland beaver-trapping expedition (13). He was a Kentuckian of German ancestry, belonging to that "reckless breed of men" who met and overcame incredible hardships crossing the continent afoot or horseback—fighting hostile Indians, sinking in deep snow, suffering from thirst on interminable desert stretches.

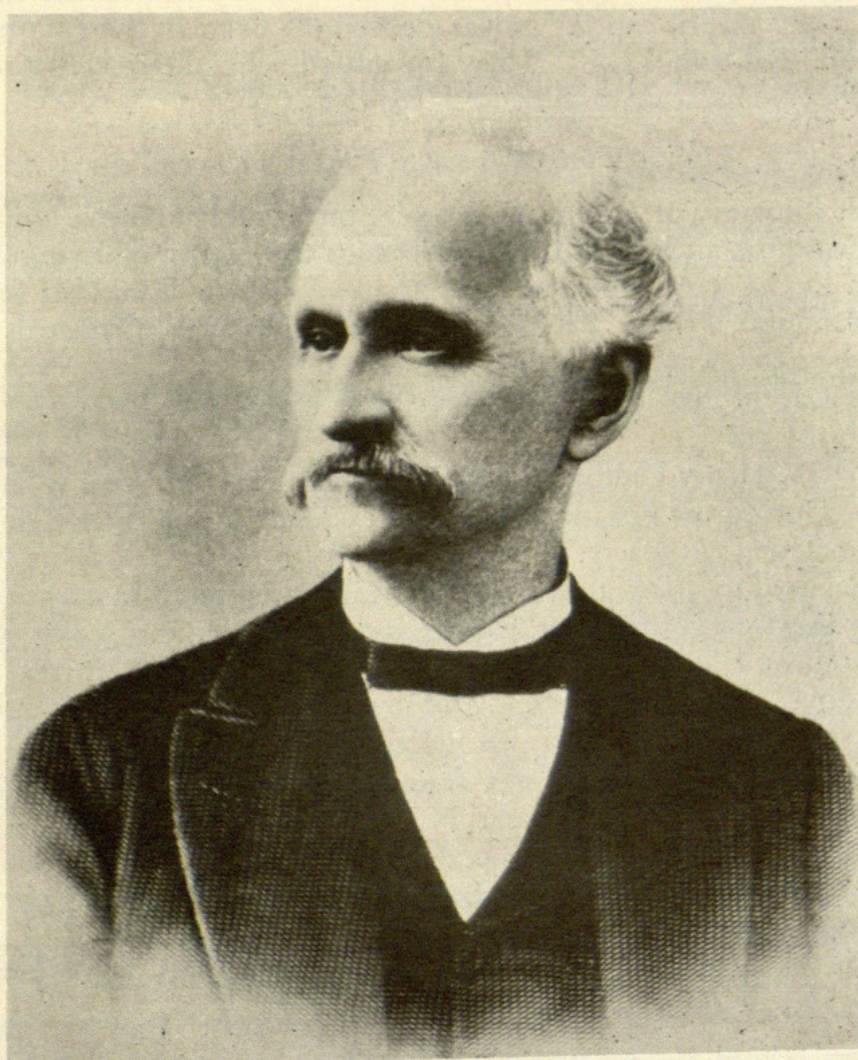
The Wolfskill party made a winter crossing of the Wasatch Mountains, the Great Mojave Desert, and then—only five years after Jedediah Smith showed the way—climbed over the Sierra Madre and down into San Gabriel, where exhausted men found beds and food at the mission. It was while resting there that the party leader first saw Rancho Santa Anita, and fell in love with the land.

Wolfskill settled down in Los Angeles. His home in the center of town became a mecca for former trappers, and a showplace surrounded by fruit trees. He married a daughter of Don José Lugo, Magdalena, with whom he raised a large and congenial

family. Often the Wolfskills would pile into a *carreta*, or ride horseback out to the Santa Anita—to visit with Reids, Daltons, Rows, or Thomas Dibblee. But possession came too late, for William died in 1866. He had only time to plant some eucalypti from Australia, and a few date palms which he introduced to California from Africa.

His youngest son Louis—named for Louis Vignes and married to a daughter of Henry Dalton—inherited the ranch, developed and further subdivided it. This period was one of rapid change in the use and value of California land. Among Louis' sales was the section now known as "Chapman's Woods", 1,740 acres adjoining the Rose estate, sold for \$19,500 to Alfred Chapman, a West Pointer with legal training.

Although inexperienced in ranching, Chapman was intelligent and industrious. He set out and irrigated a record number of orange trees. Citrus orchards of other owners sprang up where livestock had roamed in undisputed possession of the countryside, only a few years previously. The entire San Gabriel Valley was pastureland until that time—save for an infrequent garden near an *adobe* building (with never a lawn), a few vineyards and other plantings of slips and seeds carried afoot from Lower California by the Franciscans, or brought in by sea-captains.



E. J. (Lucky) Baldwin (Courtesy of Title Insurance and Trust Company, Los Angeles.)

Harris Newmark—1872

Newmark, the merchant author of "Sixty Years in Southern California" (15), paid \$85,000 for Rancho Santa Anita, reduced by sales to 8,000 acres. Besides putting more land under irrigation for orchards and vineyards, he pastured sheep in the rocky foot-

hills, as an adjunct to a flourishing wool business in Los Angeles. He did not live continuously on the ranch, but made good use of the *adobe* during frequent visits.

Newmark deeded a northern section of his property to the Southern Pacific, realizing that land values would skyrocket with the coming of the "Iron Horse". But before this could happen, he sold the Santa Anita for a fabulous price to a fabulous person.

Elias Jackson ("Lucky") Baldwin—1875

"Lucky" Baldwin—rich from the sale of Ophir mine stock, in the Comstock Lode—paid \$200,000 for Rancho Santa Anita. Born of poor, pioneer parents in the Ohio wilderness, he set out to rival all the "Bonanza Kings" in Northern California—with his racing stables and private track, his deer park and stately peacocks, his pleasure pavilion and exotic plantings around the lake that he restored beyond its original size and beauty. Like his German neighbor, Rose of Sunnyslope, "Lucky" had a practical side—shown in the fine livestock and poultry, fruit and nut trees, grain fields, vineyards, winery and the buttery that supplied his ranch houses and three hotels that he built (in Arcadia, San Francisco, and Lake Tahoe) with plenty left to sell in the open market. Among his frequent guests at Santa Anita were stars from the Baldwin Theatre in San Francisco, always entertained in his "Oakwood Hotel" or the elegant "Queen Anne Cottage" right on the ranch,¹¹ while he himself lived in the simple *adobe* at the southern end of "Baldwin Lake". There, eventually, he died—remaining a controversial, contradictory character to the end of his days (10).



Since the first discovery of gold in California, residents have been tantalized by "get rich quick" schemes of all kinds. In the late 1840s the tempo of living commenced to accelerate, even in the south where easy-going *rancheros* made sudden fortunes selling beef to rich but hungry miners. Besides pasturing and mining,¹² other uses of the land were explored by new owners, of all nationalities. Of the new uses, even including oil discoveries, the sale of real estate has made easy money for the greatest number of people, through the years.

As early as 1855, Henry Dalton became the pioneer realtor—using modern promotional methods. During the first decade of his residence in Southern California, he acquired approximately 45,000 acres of ranch land. With the sale of Santa Anita to Rowe in '54, he commenced to break up this huge acreage—acquired mostly without cost, by grant from the Mexican government. To dispose of the dry and rocky foothill section of Rancho Azusa, he tried the lottery method—offering prizes, in real and personal property, including 240 "elegant lots in the town of Benton". This might be called a "ghost town", since it existed only in his imagination.

Not enough gullible people had yet found their way to Southern California, so Dalton failed in this promotion scheme. Not until the boom of the '80s did a town actually rise at Azusa. As a real estate operator Dalton was forced into second place when Nathaniel Carter came out from Lowell, Massachusetts, to recover from "consumption". Arriving in '71, he bought 17 acres of Santa Anita foothill property from Dalton's son-in-law, Louis Wolfskill who by then was doing some sub-dividing on his own.

¹¹The Victorian era favored fanciful terminology and, for reasons of his own, "Lucky" Baldwin dubbed his guest house "Queen Anne Cottage". From the standpoint of architectural design, the term has no validity whatever; but, it has become so fixed in the minds of the public that there seems little likelihood of its ever being dislodged. The cottage was completed in 1881. It is a typical expression of the late Victorian period in which it was built.

¹²Refer to page 313, in Newmark's, *Sixty Years in Southern California*. "Although cattle raising was the mainstay of Southern California for many years, and gold mining never played a very important part here, Wells Fargo and Co., during the spring, frequently shipped thousands of dollars worth of gold at a time, gathered from Santa Anita, San Gabriel and San Fernando placers, while probably an equally large amount was forwarded out through other channels."

Carter's recovery was quick, and he became "the most picturesque boomer" California has ever known (8). He circulated a picture of himself called "Before and After Taking", and would explain that this referred to the climate as a sure cure for *t.b.* Even before the Southern Pacific reached the area, in 1872 he tried to interest Collis Huntington, as one of the railroad "Big Four" (14), in adding cheap excursion cars to westbound trains. Two years later, and for twenty-five years thereafter, Carter made annual trips back home for the express purpose of advertising his adopted state. He achieved official status as Excursion Agent for the Santa Fé.

Nathaniel Carter prospered by becoming the "first California booster to boost on a large scale." In 1881, he bought 845 acres from "Lucky" Baldwin for \$33,880. He piped water down from the Santa Anita and Little Santa Anita Canyons, divided the entire property into town lots, advertised widely, sponsored a stylish hotel called "Sierra Madre Villa", also a church and a school—and soon attracted a colony which he called "Sierra Madre". "Lucky" admired his way of doing things and asked him to act as agent for the Baldwin properties. Together they planned the "Santa Anita Tract"—a model to this day of high-class residential subdivision.

Mr. Baldwin had added to his original holding at Santa Anita, by canny foreclosure and timely attendance at county tax sales as well as, by outright purchase. By 1885 he owned over 80,000 acres of increasingly valuable Southern California property. Unlike Henry Dalton, thirty years earlier, he found the time ripe for a successful sale of his surplus land. His first prospect appeared as an overnight guest at the Santa Anita, a railroad engineer from Texas named William Monroe who had settled in Los Angeles and became a member of the City Council.

After seeing the Carter advertisements of Sierra Madre, Monroe decided to build a modest country home in the San Gabriel valley, somewhere. His host enlarged his ideas. Before departure next day he had bought eight thirty-acre "choice, frost-free" lots in the wild undeveloped area that became the boom town of Monrovia.

A Los Angeles businessman named Jonathan Slauson revived interest in Azusa as a townsite and helped to organize the Azusa Land and Water Company, with a capitalization of \$500,000. Although this company acquired 4000 acres of predominately fertile land from the Dalton family, Slauson located the town in a desolate, rocky, sandy wash. When asked why, he answered: "If it's not good for a town, it isn't good for anything."

With examples of such enterprise all around him, Mr. Baldwin commenced to plan his own community. From the Santa Anita Tract sprang Arcadia, east of the historic homesite where "Lucky" continued to live. Water rights were shared with the Sierra Madre Water Company, founded by Nathaniel Carter; and shade trees, Santa Anita seedlings, planted along all the new streets. Arcadia was solidly established when the boom "shriveled" at the end of a rate war between the rival Southern Pacific and Santa Fé railroads.

At one time, in 1887, the cost of a ticket from Kansas City to the coast descended to \$1. Mr. Carter's excursion trains overflowed with gullible prospects, well supplied with real estate literature. Mr. Baldwin learned the jargon, and even improved upon it. When one prospect protested the price as too high for unimproved property the answer was, "Hell, we're giving the land away. We're only selling the climate." So successful were "Lucky's" methods that the Louisville Courier-Journal used him as a symbol of California aggressiveness.

The boom was all but forgotten when that indefatigable historian, H. H. Bancroft, paid Mr. Baldwin a visit in 1891, to interview him for *Chronicles of the Builders* (2a). His affairs were in good order, aside from periodic lawsuits involving women and water rights. Cash realized from Carter sales of Baldwin property had brought the "Home Place", the historic homesite, to a peak of production and beauty. So it remained until "Lucky's" death in 1909.

Distributees of the estate of Elias Jackson Baldwin, under the decree of distribution rendered April 24, 1913, were Baldwin (McClaghry) Baldwin $\frac{1}{4}$; Dextra (Mc-

Claughry) Baldwin $\frac{1}{4}$; Albert Snyder $\frac{1}{4}$; Rosebudd D. Mullender $\frac{1}{4}$ (subject to the Life Estates of Anita Baldwin-McClaughry and Clara Baldwin Stocker).

The buildings at Rancho Santa Anita depreciated sadly after Mr. Baldwin's death, although his peacocks increased and some care was taken of exotic trees and shrubs planted by him and earlier owners around the lake. No member of the family continued to live on the Home Place. It was managed by his younger daughter, Anita, who took back her maiden name after divorce from a lawyer named Hull McClughry. Earlier, at sixteen, she had briefly married her cousin, George Baldwin. Her own mother Jennie Dexter (Lucky's third wife) was not much older at the time of Anita's birth. Five marriages apiece seem to be the score of "Lucky", his elder daughter Clara, and Anita's son Baldwin. This has led to continuing inheritance confusion.

A widow who never remarried, after resuming the Baldwin name, Anita operated the Santa Anita successfully as a stock ranch, but lived at her own home (now Anoakia School). She improved and even increased her father's fine cattle, sheep and hogs, and kept some of his champion race horses, out of sentiment. Only a month after his death, a state law was passed banning horseracing in California. A spectacular era ended suddenly at Santa Anita. The private track echoed to its last starting bugle on April 20, 1909.

Arcadia voted dry, April 15, 1912, and not long afterwards "Lucky's" resort hotel, "The Oakwood", burned to the ground. No more gay passengers climbed down from the Baldwin tally-ho, to open wicker baskets of viands and vintage champagne on the grassy mall of the "Home Place". Sporting life in Arcadia remained in suspension—save at Clara Baldwin Stocker's "Clara Villa"—until long after World War I. "Lucky's" racetrack was on property appropriated by the United States government for a "Balloon School" in 1917. Not for seventeen years did construction start on the Santa Anita racetrack site sold by Mr. Baldwin's heirs to San Francisco's Dr. Strub and his associates. Mrs. Anita Baldwin was their honor guest at the Grand Opening on Christmas Day, 1934.

Harry Chandler—1936 (Rancho Santa Anita, Inc.)

Baldwin heirs agreed to sell the historic homesite of Rancho Santa Anita to Harry Chandler, owner and editor of the Los Angeles Times and already a great landholder in California, Arizona and Mexico. The price was undisclosed, also the acreage. Mr. Chandler anticipated that complete subdivision of the Santa Anita would be more profitable than any sort of ranching, considering the phenomenal growth of population in Southern California. Therefore he set up a corporation to conduct a high-class residential subdivision, calling it "Rancho Santa Anita, Inc."

The City of Arcadia, whose first mayor had been "Lucky" Baldwin, expanded enormously as a result. So did the new racing establishment. Modern homes, shops, churches, schools all were encroaching on Mr. Baldwin's "Home Place" by 1947 when the State paid \$320,000 to Chandler heirs for property amounting to 111 acres. This was the last vestige of the once vast Baldwin estate. Contrast Henry Dalton's payment, considered adequate 100 years ago, of \$2,700 for 13,300 acres!

State of California—1947

We, the people, form the final link in Rancho Santa Anita's Chain of Title.

The Santa Anita homesite became the nucleus of the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, for public use and enjoyment. As a part of a long-term master plan, a citizens' Historical Committee works on restorations, both architectural and horticultural, in a nine-acre "Historical Preserve". This borders Baldwin Lake, includes the Baldwin "cottage", and carriage house, besides the *adobe* built by Hugo Reid in 1839 and used by each successive owner. Director of Restorations is Maurice Block, formerly Curator of the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery and originator of the period rooms there. Because of depreciation—caused by dry rot, termites and vandals—the latest to

be built was first to be restored. The frame "Queen Anne Cottage", finished in 1881, was dedicated as Historical Landmark No. 367 of the State of California, in 1954. Money from the accumulated Tidelands fund has been allocated by the State for architectural restorations of the frame carriage house and the *adobe* ranch house. Private funds have paid for the elegant Victorian restoration, and will be needed to furnish and landscape the other two buildings in the Historical Preserve.

A formal garden enhancing the Queen Anne Cottage was planned and planted by the late Charles Gibbs Adams. From boyhood visits, he remembered and restored pampas grass reflected in the lake, Russian violets edging the paths, banksia roses rampant. His successor, whom the Historical Committee shares with the entire Arboretum as Landscape Consultant, is Edward Huntsman-Trout. To aid him in planning an authentic setting for the *adobe*, there is Hugo Reid's own planting list for 1844 enclosed in a letter to his friend, "Don Abel" Stearns.¹³

Early plantings are treasured wherever they survive. Several of the ancient trees have grown from tiny seeds or slips to extraordinary size. There is a pomegranate, more than 100 years old, probably from the San Gabriel Mission garden, a eucalyptus given to Albert Dibblee in the 1850s by a sea-captain coming in from Australia, a date palm introduced from Africa by William Wolfskill, seven ginkgoes carried home by "Lucky" Baldwin after a big game hunt in India, and so on.

With the exception of Rowe the circus rider and Chandler the newspaper tycoon, each owner of the Santa Anita has pioneered in some way during tenure—in improvement of livestock, plant introduction, new uses of the land, modern farming methods. Henry Dalton originated a method still in use, of packing grapes in sawdust. Among these were the first French winegrapes grown in California, started by Hugo Reid from slips of his *vecino* Louis Vignes.

Reid's planting inventory is an amazing document of the time and place. He diversified Santa Anita products as seldom was done. On vast ranges of the early *ranchos* in California, there was no attempt to produce more than hides and tallow for the coastal trade. Variety in foodstuffs, clothing, et cetera, came mostly through trade. On arrival of a sailing vessel at the nearest port, *rancheros* and their families from miles around climbed aboard—to see and feel and taste wonders from the outside world.

Back in home pastures choice meat may have been left for the buzzards, after a slaughter for hides that sold at \$2 a piece. Few *rancheros* bothered to make butter or cheese, or even to keep cows that must be milked. Irrigation did not become general practice until after the disastrous drought of the 1860s. In that empty, bountiful land—California before the Gold Rush—there was scarcely any need for the residents to exert themselves. The aborigines lived without farming at all.

As the population increased and there was less land for higher price, its use became intensified. As acreage shrank, on the original *ranchos*, production went up. Moving with the times, using the most advanced farming methods, each owner of the Santa Anita developed the fertile land for his private need and gain. With the establishment of a public arboretum a new era has commenced.

People of world-wide reputations already have contributed thought, time and money towards an ideal which cannot be realized by one man's effort or in one man's lifetime. As in earlier days, seeds and slips arrive from similar geographical zones of the world, for experimental planting. William Wolfskill, more than 100 years ago, was first to explore Africa as a source of trees for semi-arid, semi-tropical Southern California. But, like all the private owners of Rancho Santa Anita, he was limited in concept—if not in space. Confined to a tiny fraction of the original land grant, dedicated men and women at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum continually are expanding their contributions, in the allied fields of horticultural, medical and historical research.

¹³Dated June 1, 1844. Preserved among the Stearns papers in the Huntington Library. Published in *Lasca Leaves*, Summer, 1951.

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