

ADOBE TO ACHIEVEMENT

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Santa Rosa began as a long, low, adobe alongside a lazy stream. Through the combined efforts of her steadfast pioneers, Santa Rosa has become one of California's loveliest cities. A city owes its existence to its founders, Santa Rosa to the Carrillo family.

The Carrillo family was founded in Alta California by Jose Raimundo Carrillo. Jose came with Father Junipero Serra and Portola, being a member of the latter's famed expedition. Jose was Alferes, Lieutenant, and Captain in the Spanish Army, and later, Commandante of the Precidios of Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego.

The Carrillo family grew in numbers and resided in various parts of the state; from the time Jose trekked with Portola to Monterey, to the establishment of Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa. The larger portion of the family lived in San Diego.<sup>1</sup> In San Diego, in 1833, at the age of 18, Francisca Benicia Carrillo married General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. Senora and General Vallejo made their home in Sonoma.

In 1837, at the invitation of Vallejo, the widowed Senora Maria Ygnacia Lopez de Carrillo, the Generals' mother-in-law, arrived in Sonoma.<sup>2</sup>

General Vallejo, being on the secularization commission, purchased a piece of church property on the south bank of Santa Rosa Creek. On this property stood an adobe building, built by the Franciscan priests as a chapel annex to Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma.<sup>3</sup> This was used as a branch chapel to the mission, and services were held here for the nearby Indians. The Indians living on the creek bank of the Carrillo rancho were the remnants of the Indian village supported by the chapel. Since Mexican independence had been achieved, and secularization was in progress, all documents and reference to the chapel have been forgotten or destroyed.

Since Vallejo owned this property, he presented it to his mother-in-law, and in 1838 she took up residence in the adobe with her children.

Senora Carrillo became the first woman rancho in Sonoma County. Finley says the Senora had 12 children; 5 boys and 7 girls; Tuomey says 9 children; 3 boys and 6 girls. More accurate, I believe, since he is a Carrillo, is the testimony of

<sup>1</sup>Originally, all the present site of the city of San Diego was included in the land grant of Joaquin and Maria Carrillo.

<sup>2</sup>Some sources list her as Maria Antonia Lopez de Carrillo or Maria Ignacia Lopez de Carrillo.

<sup>3</sup>The property, on which stands the adobe ruin of the chapel, is owned by the Archbishop of San Francisco. There are several groups now trying to obtain the property for public use as an historical park. It is hoped that the Archbishop will donate this property for public use. This proposed restoration is a favored project of Fr. Erwin Becker, first pastor of St. Eugene's Parish.

The building is known to have been a chapel; due to its narrow nave construction, typical of mission planning. Records are completely lacking as to its design, construction, use, and decoration.

Marryat notes: "the chapel of Santa Rosa was apparently built in 1821." This cannot be substantiated, but, if it is true, the chapel was built two years before Fr. Altimira laid the foundations of San Francisco Solano.

Eugene Jr., who says the Senora had 13 children.

The chapel was added onto, and thus a ranch house took shape.<sup>1</sup> Frank Marryat, who visited the ranch in August 1850, as a guest of Jose Ramon, described the ranch house as a long, low adobe, in front of which was a courtyard of considerable extent, and part of this was sheltered by a porch. There is evidence of another adobe built at a 45° angle to the original structure, thus partially enclosing what could have been the courtyard. The remaining portion, the original chapel, shows definite marks of an addition in the direction of the newer house. The building was all of adobe brick, with redwood roof beams and window casements. The walls are about two feet thick. I found, nearby in the willows of the creek, tile fragments, giving evidence of a tile roof. The tile has been worn by water and abrasion, but is the same type used on the roof of Mission Solano and other buildings of the Spanish-Mexican period.

The year 1841 saw the birth of the Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa. Governor Manuel Jimeno granted to Maria Ygnacia Lopez de Carrillo, on September 30, 1841 a tract of land in the virgin Santa Rosa Valley.<sup>2</sup>

The home was called Chocualomi by the natives living nearby.

After the acquisition of the grant, farming practices were carried on. Vacqueros were kept at the ranch not only for herding cattle, but also for protection, since the family lived a distance from the military protection of Sonoma and a distance from Rancho Sotoyomi.

During his visit with the Carrillos, August 1850, Marryat describes the picturesque life as follows: "...when the "vaccaros" have nothing to call them to the field, they pass the day, looking like retainers of a rude court. A dozen wild, vicious little horses, with rough wooden saddles on their backs, stand ever ready for work; while lounging about, the "vaccaros" smoke, play the guitar, or twist up a new "riatta" of hide or horse-hair. When the sun gets warm they go to sleep in the shade, while the little horses, who remain in the sunshine, do the same apparently, for they shut their eyes and never stir. Presently a "vaccaro", judging the time by the sun, gets up and yawns, and staggering lazily toward his horse, gathers up his "riatta" and twists it round the animal's neck; the others, awakened, rise and do the same, all yawning with their eyes half open, looking as lazy a set as ever were seen, as indeed they are when on foot. Huppa!-Anda!--away they all go in a cloud of dust, splashing through the river, waving their lassos round their heads with a wild shout, and disappearing from the sight almost as soon as mounted."<sup>3</sup>

Long-horn Mexican cattle roamed over the broad plain and under the spreading oaks of Santa Rosa. Roundups were not uncommon and the branding and so forth was done here as on any other rancho. I would judge, that in the vicinity of Matanzas Elementary School, on Yulupa Drive, the slaughter pens or corrals were located, since Matanzas is the Spanish for slaughter-house.

<sup>1</sup>The adobe addition stood until a few years ago, when it was declared unsafe, and destroyed.

<sup>2</sup>On the Feast Day of Saint Rose, August 30, 1829, Fr. Juan Amoris, Franciscan Friar, baptized a little Indian girl beside the stream now known as Santa Rosa Creek. Therefore Santa Rosa was named. The Carrillo rancho was named Cabeza de Santa Rosa since it lay at the head of the Santa Rosa Valley, that is, when looking west toward Sebastopol. The ranch boundaries extend south from Santa Rosa Creek to the northern line of Rancho Cotati, and east from the boundary of Rancho Llano to the (cabeza) headwaters of Santa Rosa Creek and Rancho Los Guillicos. Records are lacking, but judging from the allotment to two daughters and one son, various subdivisions after the Senoras' death were more than 17,000 acres.

<sup>3</sup>MARRYAT, Frank, Mountains and Molehills,  
Stanford University Press P. 72-73

Ramon employed a few Pomo Indians in enclosing a few acres of land, which were sown in barley and peas. As before stated, these Indians were the remains of the chapel Indians. They occupied a few wattle huts not far from the house. Every week a bullock was killed for them, the whole of which, including entrails were devoured on the instant. "Of an evening they made a great disturbance by indulging in what they intended for a dance; this consisted in crowding together in uncouth attitudes, and stamping on the ground to the accompaniment of primitive whistles, of which each man had one in his mouth, while women howled and shrieked in chorus." <sup>1</sup>

The Indians lived in a village just west of the house, below the creek bank, on the south side of Santa Rosa Creek. The site of the village is now covered with blackberries, willows and wild vines. (Recently, I visited the site and found a stone grinding bowl.) People living near the place display stone mortars and grinding slabs on their porches. (The old burial ground is close to the village. Upon digging in the site, I found, bone fragments, which are possibly human, also small animal bones were found. Shell ships of clams and other shellfish fragments lie buried in the bank. Since freshwater mollusks are not found in Santa Rosa Creek, these clams were evidently brought from the coast by the natives, for food.

The hospitality typical of the Spanish Californians was present in the Carrillos. Their home was always open to visitors. Marryat testifies: "We dismounted at the door and were hospitably greeted by Don Ramon. Having much refreshed ourselves in the rivulet which ran past the house, we were rejoiced to find that our host had prepared a dinner... n...; and while we ate a couple of Indian girls tickled our ears and noses with the long green boughs of a fir, with the intention of keeping off the flies."<sup>2</sup>

Upon Senora Carrillos' death, her son Jose Ramon, his wife, and two of the Senoras' daughters continued to live in the family home.

Senora Carrillo was laid to rest beneath the floor of Mission San Francisco Solano. Her memory shall always live on as the "mother of Santa Rosa".

The children received a great portion of the rancho and the remainder was legally disposed of. One daughter received as her portion all the land lying between Santa Rosa Creek and Bennett Valley. Nearly 1,500 acres of the rancho was confirmed on Jacob R. Mayer, but within a few years, was divided up and sold to settlers. Another claimant for part of the rancho was James Eldridge. Oliver Boulio filed March 2, 1853 for 640 acres, but his claim was rejected by the commission on January 30, 1855.

In 1853, another son, Julio filed claim for a part of his mothers property, two square leagues lying between Rancho San Miguel and Santa Rosa Creek. Julio built his house near Santa Rosa Creek on what is now Second Street. Julio gave to the city, half of the property for the plaza on which is situated the present County Courthouse. While the county records were in transit between the courthouse in Sonoma and that in Santa Rosa, they were kept in Julio Carrillos' home, which served as Sonoma Countys' second courthouse.

Senora Carrillos' eldest son, Joaquin, had two daughters. One, Josefa, married Henry D. Fitch of Massachusetts. General Valléjo brought Dona Josefa and Fitch to Sonoma from San Diego. Governor Micheltorena granted Rancho Sotoyomi to Fitch and his wife in 1841.

Joaquin received the grant of Llano de Santa Rosa from Governor Micheltroena in 1844. This tract of three square leagues adjoined his mothers' property, and lies due west of Santa Rosa. The tract previously had been granted to Marcus West, who had allowed his right to lapse; and, upon petition, it was regranted to Joaquin Carrillo.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. P. 83

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. P. 68-69

Joaquin built a small house and afterward erected a large and comfortable one. This adobe, long ago torn down, faced the east on what is now Gravenstein Highway South, in Sebastopol.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Senora Carrillo, Juana de Jesus became the wife of David Mallagh, and continued to live in the family home with Ramon and his wife. Another daughter, Felicidad, became the second wife of Victor Castro.

When the merchandise firm of Mallagh and MacDonald was formed in 1851, a part of the house was used as a store. The store passed on to William Hartman, F. G. Hahman, and "Barney" Hoen in 1853, who engaged in business there in conjunction with Julio Carrillo, under the firm name of Hoen and Company. The mercantile business was later sold to Dr. John Hendley, Sonoma County's first recorder and clerk. Dr. Hendley took as his partner E. T. Farmer.

The home has served many purposes including that of a stage station. The structure for many years was used for the storage of walnuts.

Today, grass grows around the ruin and prune blossoms lend a majestic air to the proud structure. A fence and tin roof were added as a stop-gap protection from the erosion of vandals and weather.<sup>2</sup>

There are many legal and financial entanglements, but, through the combined efforts of the Archbishop of San Francisco, civic organizations, the California Historical Society, and other interested persons, the home, which paved the way for our city of Santa Rosa, may soon be restored as an historical park.

Among the interesting tales connected with the Carrillo rancho is the episode during the Sonoma conquest, when Juan Padillo's band of marauders took over the old adobe. Two Sonoma men, Cowie and Fowler, were trying to get to Moses Carsons' on the Russian River for ammunition. Juan Padillo of Rancho Roblar was informed of the American uprising, and with his band overtook Cowie and Fowler. Padillo's band took their two captives to the Carrillo home and forced Senora Carrillo to house them for the night. The Carrillo house was no doubt picked, since it was the only house in the vicinity, and that the Senora's son, Jose Ramon, was a member of the band. Senora Carrillo would not permit the killing of Cowie and Fowler on her property. The next morning Padillo's band took the two to Chanate Valley, near the present County Hospital, to decide their fate. Also a member of the band was the notorious "three fingered Jack". Cowie and Fowler were tortured, shot, mutilated and tossed into a ditch. They were later buried under a nearby pine tree by Carson.

Padillo's band also followed General Vallejo and Julio Carrillo, enroute to Sutters Fort during the rebellion.

Ramon, accused of taking part in the Cowie - Fowler incident, was tried and died at the hands of vigilantes between Los Angeles and San Diego, May 21, 1864. In a sworn statement, Ramon said he knew nothing of the murder of Cowie and Fowler. In July of the same year, Julio, in an article in the Santa Rosa Democrat, testified to Ramon's statement, and his word is felt "incontestable".

Mystery, intrigue, romance, and beauty, all nearly lost in the mists of time, surround the Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa, an adobe which has reached achievement.

<sup>1</sup> HOOVER and RENSCH, Historic Spots in California  
Stanford University Press, 1953 P. 375

<sup>2</sup> PHILLIPS, Rosalie, DETERIORATING OLD ADOBE WAS FIRST PIONEER HOME  
Santa Rosa News - April 13, 1961