

HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LA BALLONA TOWNSHIP.

List of Ranches—Centinela and Sausal Redondo—Brea Ranch—Rosecrans Tract—Stock—Cattle—Sheep—Bees—Dairies—Santa Monica—The Roadstead—Wharf—Town—South Santa Monica—Old Santa Monica

LA BALLONA township lies on the western or Pacific side of the county, and is very extensive, having about forty miles of sea-coast. It includes within its limits the following ranches:—

NAME.	ACRES.	TO WHOM CONFIRMED.
Rancho Boca De Santa Monica	6,658.9	Ysidro Reyco [Reyes] and the heirs of Francisco Marquez
“ San Jose De Buenos Ayres	4,438.69	B. D. Wilson
La Ballona Rancho	3,919.9	Augustin Machado et al.
Rancho Rodeo De Las Aguas [Aguas]	4,449.31	Maria Rita Valdez
Rancho Rincon De Los Bueyes	3,127.89]	Francisco Higuera et al. Tomas Sanchez et al., and Victoria Higuera, wife of Casilda Aguilar, and undivided half to each
Rancho Sausal Redondo	22,458.94	Antonio Ignacio Abila
Rancho San Vicente	38,409.63	Ramon Sepulveda et al.
Rancho Centinela	2,240	Bruno Abila
Rancho Las Virgeues [Virgenes]		
Rancho La Brea	4,432.7	
Rancho Las Cienegas		
Rancho Topanga Malibu Siques [Sequit]	13,315	

CENTINELA AND SAUSAL REDONDO.

These two Ranchos are generally classed together. In years gone by there has been considerable litigation as to the exact bounds of this property, and under date April 14, 1869, we read in the *Los Angeles Daily News*: —

The object of the meeting of the Settlers' League, to be held April 15th at the Six-mile House, on the San Pedro road, is to lay before the settlers some plan for resisting the iniquitous survey of the Sausal Redondo Rancho, by which the large grant holders propose to illegally and

wrongfully deprive about two hundred men and women of their homes by fraudulently extending the lines to the original grant. The land sought to be covered, belonged originally to the city, and formed a part of the public lands, and the original lines of the Sausal Redondo grant was bounded upon the north by the pueblo lands. After the confirmation of the Sausal Redondo grant, the city authorities released several thousand acres of land lying on the southern boundary of the city to the Government of the United States, for the sole reason that the city authorities deemed it unwise to bold lands outside the corporate limits of the city. This land thus generously given by the city to the Government, that it might be occupied by settlers under the preemption laws of Congress is now covered with valuable farms the products of which are adding much to the general prosperity of the city and county, and the purchasers of the Sausal Redondo grant are now making an effort to extend their five-league grant over all the land thus occupied. To meet and resist this fraud so monstrous in its business, so wicked, so destructive of every principle of right, that not one word can be said in its defense, is the Object of the meeting of the settlers.

The following account of the present condition of these ranches was furnished us by Mr. D. [Daniel] Freeman, the lessee and occupant thereof:—

The Centinela Ranch has two thousand two hundred and forty acres, and the Sausal Redondo Ranch twenty-two thousand eight hundred acres.

The Centinela was granted to Bruno Abila September 14, 1844 by the Mexican Government, and patented to the same party by the United States Government August 3, 1872.

The Sausal Redondo was granted to Antonio Ignacio Abila on May 20, 1837, by the Mexican Government, and patented to him by the United States Government March 2, 1875.

The Centinela and Sausal Redondo Ranches have together about twelve thousand acres of flat *mesa* land, and from the center of the ranch to the sea are rolling hills; these also occur on the northern boundary. The hills are fit only for pasture, and are unwatered save by wells. The *mesa* land is fit for all kinds of small grain, and is watered by the Centinela creek, flowing from the eastern part of the Centinela Ranch, where it takes its rise, westerly to the ocean. It contains water the year round sufficient to irrigate, say five hundred acres of land.

This property is now owned by Sir Robert Burnett, Bart., of Crathes' Castle, Scotland. Mr. Freeman has held the ranches from him under lease since 1873, and has bonds for a deed.

Mr. Freeman resides in the old ranch house, which was built in 1844, and is still in good repair. Neary the whole building is of adobe. He has two hundred acres under oranges (seven thousand trees), planted in 1874, and now nine years old from the seed. They are not yet bearing. He has, also, two thousand almond trees six years old, just commencing to bear; eighteen hundred lemon trees (budded) four years of age, not yet bearing; four hundred lime trees eight years old, and all bearing; three hundred olive trees seven years old, and just commencing to bear. A few olive trees planted by the Mexicans thirty years ago, are still bearing well. A few assorted temperate fruits are doing well. Of grains he has three thousand acres of

wheat—Odessa, Sonora, Australian, and Propo. The Sonora predominates. Three thousand acres of barley; one hundred acres of flax; fifteen thousand sheep—Spanish Merino. In the dry season of 1876, Mr. Freeman lost fourteen thousand head of sheep by starvation.

The ranch house is about ten miles from Los Angeles City.

THE BREA RANCH.

This property is largely owned by Messrs. Henry and John Hancock, who, in 1863, procured it from the widow of Jose Antonio Rocha, the Mexican grantee. The land is level and very moist, growing every variety of small grains in abundance. In March, 1880, when the writer rode over this property, a *third volunteer crop* of barley stood two feet high, and was so rank as to seriously impede traveling. This crop, seeded three years before, and cut yearly since, covered two thousand acres.

This ranch was formerly included in the Rancho Rodeo De Ios Aguas [Aguas] (the gathering of the waters), and Mr. Hancock thinks the name was probably given from the fact that here is an amphitheater which is the natural receptacle for a large portion of the waters which flow from the neighboring mountain range and the Cahuenga Pass. Not many years ago this ranch was largely under *ciénega* (swamp), and in but few places is the water now more than twelve feet deep.

The principal peculiarity of this ranch is the existence of an apparently inexhaustible deposit of *brea* (asphaltum), which is supposed to underlie some eighty acres. We have fully treated of this in our chapter on “Minerals.”

THE ROSECRANS TRACT.

The title to this property is now in litigation. The tract is claimed by M. J. O'Connor as grantee of General W. S. Rosecrans. A number of persons, claiming that Rosecrans obtained this land from the United States Government by fraud, and that this grant was therefore void *ab initio*, have located homesteads thereon, and while the rights of the owners remain undecided, the generous land yields golden crops to the parties in possession. The following information regarding the present *status* of the property was furnished to us by two of the squatters thereon, Messrs. Erastus Roots and J. F. Hawk:—

The Rosecrans tract originally contained eighteen thousand acres of land, which formed a part of the Sausal Redondo Ranch, but was excluded on the final survey in 1872.

There is now twelve thousand acres of the tract lying south by west of Los Angeles City and extending nearly to the city limits. This twelve thousand acres is claimed by M. J. O'Connor, as the grantee of W. S. Rosecrans, who claims to have obtained the land by patent from the State of California in the year 1868.

In 1876, some seventy-two persons, principally residents of Los Angeles county, claiming that General Rosecrans' title to the land had been procured by fraud, and was invalid, squatted thereon, and still hold it. At the time they squatted on the land it was pasture land, only used for grazing sheep, but during the three years they have held it they have broken up and seeded with grain nearly the whole tract. The crops grown thereon are wheat and barley, the former largely predominating. The principal farms at present upon the tract are the following:

NAME.	ACRES.	WHEAT.	BARLEY.
C. R. Clark	160		80
D. Murphy	160	160	
M. Knealy	160	40	40
Geo. Rose	160	160	
—— Homes	160	80	80
—— Mann	160	160	
J. C. Cobb	160	160	
J. M. Vicars	160	160	
Jno. Slurt	160	90	50
W. R. Farris	160	80	80
Wm. Short	160		80
James Root	160	160	
—— Hooker	160	160	
S. W. Hiller	160	100	
—— Sweeny	160	100	
J. P. Wanvig	160		80
T. U. Wilson	160	80	80
E. Roots	160	135	25
H. Slaughterback	160	100	
J. F. Hawk	160	160	
—— Farley (1)	160	160	
J. T. Stewart	160	160	
J. Sanders	160		160
E. Bein	160	160	
D. McAulay	160	80	
Wm. Mahiggin	160		160
—— Mackentacket	160	160	
T. Cobbler	160	160	
W. G. Lyster	160	160	
Geo. Oaks	160	80	80
—— Farley (2)	320	240	80
—— Reid	160	160	
—— Reynolds	160	100	40
—— Frazer	80		80
—— Brush	160		160
—— King	160		160
—— Wooley	160	160	

—— Davidson	90	90	
—— Price	160	100	60, flax.

This includes most of the cultivated land. About three-fourths of the cultivated land is under wheat and the rest is under barley.

Potatoes, corn, vegetables, etc, are raised only for home use. Some fruit trees have been put out, but are not yet bearing.

Water is obtained from wells at from twenty to sixty feet. No artesian water has yet been found, though one well has been bored three hundred feet. There is no irrigation, but in all ordinary years small grains do well; in wet years the land will grow corn.

There is a school-house on the tract, erected in 1878, with average attendance of about ten to fifteen. Most of the land is very level, yet drains itself. There are three bands of sheep on the tract viz.: —

Domingo Amestoy	6,000
Pat Cauley	4,000
Frenchman	3,000

Domingo Amestoy has all in about thirty thousand head of sheep, pastured on the neighboring ranches.

In 1879 this twelve thousand acres was assessed at one hundred thousand dollars, or eight and one-third dollars per acre.

The principal varieties of wheat being raised here are the white Australian, the white Sonora, and white Odessa. The first predominates, the last is an experiment.

Wheat and barley are the main crops of La Ballona township. There is but little fruit grown in the township; a few small vineyards here and there do fairly. Mr. Rose, near Santa Monica, experimented with ten acres of early amber sorghum cane last year. The yield was good, and he fed it to his stock with excellent results.

STOCK.

CATTLE—There are about two thousand head of cattle in the township. The principal owners are:—

Louis Sentous	1,000
Anderson Rose	170
F. Machado	250
John D. Young	60
B. Marquesas	200

Sheep are much more numerous, a large portion of the township being devoted to this industry. The following is a list of the principal owners (in addition to those before mentioned):—

Bryan Gates	5,400
— Garnier	10,000
—Machado	3,000

In all there are probably not less than thirty thousand sheep in the township. They are principally of the Spanish Merino variety, and are sheared twice a year. The average annual yield is from eight to ten pounds to each sheep, and the variance in price is from eight cents to thirty-seven and a half cents per pound in different years.

BEES.

In the canons of the Santa Monica Mountains, there are great many bee ranches, but while in 1878 these would probably have aggregated one thousand or more swarms, they are now estimated at only four hundred, the bees having starved to death in great numbers during the past two years.

DAIRIES.

Machado Brothers conduct a dairy of some two hundred cows on La Ballona Ranch. They manufacture about one hundred and fifty pounds of cheese per day. Their dairy has been established two years.

Anderson Rose (on La Ballona Ranch) milks eighty cows, and makes two hundred pounds of cheese per day.

John D. Young milks twenty-five cows and markets the milk.

SANTA MONICA.

Situated at the innermost point of a great curve in the coast-line, and to a large extent protected by the islands of Santa Catalina, St. Nicholas, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa, and

Santa Cruz (lying from thirty-seven to seventy-five miles away at different angles), Santa Monica has been pronounced by competent authority a first-class anchorage, but a port it is not, and never can be.

When Senator Jones built his railroad from Santa Monica to Los Angeles, he erected at the former place a wharf, which extended out into the ocean one thousand seven hundred and forty feet. Here vessels drawing twenty feet of water or under could lie in safety, and for a time Wilmington had a dangerous rival. But when the Southern Pacific Railroad obtained control, they condemned and tore down the wharf and warehouses, thus once more concentrating the shipping trade at its old point. Of course this action on the part of the railroad had a ruinous effect on the property interests of the town, and many have been the plans laid by the inhabitants to once more secure at least a portion of the ocean trade.

In March, 1879, a site for a new wharf was selected at South Santa Monica, and a company formed. Ten thousand dollars were speedily subscribed, and we read in the *Express* of April 12, 1879: —

At a meeting of the subscribers to the proposed wharf at South Santa Monica, held at the United States Hotel, Friday, April 11th, the following committee was appointed to prepare a constitution and by-laws, and to take legal advice that they may be so worded as to prevent the wharf from ever passing out of the hands of the of the original association: Ivar A. Weid, Walter S. Moore, W. M. Williams, J. D. Young, D. Freeman, L. Mesmer, J. H. Seymour. The estimated cost of making the wharf is twelve thousand dollars. The following trustees were elected, with full power to order the material and start the work at once on the pier; L. Mesmer, Ivar A. Weid, J. D. Young, D. Freeman, J. H. Seymour, J. W. Scott, O. F. Kimble. Twelve thousand dollars were subscribed at this meeting.

The final result of the agitation and the present condition of this enterprise, is related to us by the Secretary of the Company, Oscar F. Kimble, Esq., as follows:

AUGUST 2, 1879—A company incorporated under the name of the South Santa Monica Wharf and Shipping Company, with a limited capital of thirty thousand dollars in three thousand shares of ten dollars each. The object of this company was the establishment of a wharf and warehouses at Santa Monica, and the grading of a good wagon road from that place to Los Angeles. The officers of the company were: President, Ivar A. Weid; Vice-President, Alfred James; Secretary, Oscar F. Kimble; Treasurer, L. Lichtenberger; Directors: E. J. Baldwin, San Francisco; Ivar A. Weid, Los Angeles; Alfred James, Los Angeles; L. Lichtenberger, Los Angeles; N. T. Lucas, Santa Monica; Oscar F. Kimble, Los Angeles; John D. Young, Ballona Ranch.

About half of the shares are taken and paid for. The lumber for the wharf is on the ground; the grading for the approaches done; and a warehouse with capacity of thirty thousand sacks of grain completed. The wagon road will be graded one hundred feet wide, and wherever necessary, macadamized. The Board of Supervisors have granted the company a twenty years' franchise for the wharf, which is to be completed by August 1st, the contract being let to San Francisco Bridge Company.

The new wharf is to be one thousand five hundred feet long. At the end of it, the water will be twenty-four feet deep at low tide. The bridge is to be built on piles driven firmly into the ocean-bed, which is of hard clay.

THE NEW TOWN OF SANTA MONICA.

Dates properly from July 16, 1875, when a sale of town lots was held by Senator Jones and Colonel R. S. Baker, at which a great number of people from Los Angeles invested, the prices ranging from one hundred and twenty-five to five hundred dollars per lot. During that and the succeeding year, a great many houses were erected, and some nine hundred persons were resident in the new town. In May, 1876, a correspondent of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote:—

“The town of Santa Monica which started with the railroad last July, is a thriving little place for a yearling. It now boasts of nine hundred to one thousand inhabitants, with one hundred and sixty buildings.”

A weekly newspaper called the *Santa Monica Outlook* was established by L. T. Fisher in September, 1875, and lasted until 1878, when it was discontinued.

In 1877, a stone pipe-works—for manufacturing drainage pipe, was started by one Spencer, who was succeeded by Toberman & Co. of Los Angeles. The works are at present closed for want of a market.

By actual count, made in the spring of 1880, the town of Santa Monica is now said to have three hundred and fifty permanent residents. This number includes the residents of—

SOUTH SANTA MONICA.

Which is merely a suburb of Santa Monica proper. This suburb was laid out on the land of Mr. Lucas and J. W. Scott, in 1876. There were then a good many lots sold, and there are at this time about a dozen cottage residences, owned by parties living in Los Angeles.

Santa Monica is supplied with first-class water, brought in iron pipes from the San Vicente [Kuruvungna] Spring, some three miles away. There is a fall of over two hundred feet, and a sufficient supply for all purposes.

The crowning glories of this town are its hotel and its bathhouse. These were both erected by the Santa Monica Land Company in 1875-6, and are both worthy of more than a

passing notice. The hotel cost about twenty-two thousand dollars, and has accommodations for one hundred and thirty guests, and nearly all the rooms are supplied with open fire-places. A block of land connected therewith is handsomely laid out in shrubbery, and steps lead therefrom down to the bath-house.

The present landlord is Mr. M. D. Johnson. There are two other smaller hotels, the Perkins House, and the Ocean House. The bathhouse is conducted by C. M. Waller, Esq. It is twenty-eight by one hundred feet, and contains eighteen bathrooms, each furnished with salt and fresh water, both hot and cold of either variety, also shower baths. There are also two steam rooms, and a large plunge bath, having a possible depth of six feet. An invalids' room up-stairs is comfortably furnished and has a steam bath attached. There are sixty surf rooms also connected with the establishment.

There are two churches in Santa Monica. The Methodist Church was built in 1876, at a cost of about one thousand dollars. The first minister was Rev. J. D. Crum, who was in turn succeeded by Rev. — Allen, and he again by Rev. J. D. Crum, who was in turn succeeded by the present incumbent, Rev. S. K. Russell.

The Presbyterian Church was built in 1876, at a cost of one thousand six hundred dollars (frame building). There has never been a resident minister, but the pulpit has been supplied from Los Angeles. Services are irregular.

There is a good school-house, built in 1876, at a cost of five thousand dollars. It has two departments, and two teachers.

The Odd Fellows and Good Templars societies have both been represented here, but are disbanded.

The following circular, issued by the Santa Monica Hotel, exhibits what the residents claim for this place:

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA—"THE LONG BRANCH OF THE PACIFIC."

A continued growth of public patronage during the past four years proves beyond a doubt that Santa Monica is permanently established; not only as a summer watering place, but that it is unequalled as a winter resort for tourists and invalids seeking the benefits of a mild climate.

Sheltered as it is by the Coast Range from the north and north-west winds, as well as the equalizing influence of so vast a body of water lying adjacent, combine to render the climate of Santa Monica the least variable of that of any point in the United States, if not in the world.

The fact that heliotropes, fuchsias, geraniums, and other flowers equally sensitive to the effects of frosts and chilling winds continue to bloom the entire year without the slightest injury, is proof of this statement.

The growth of shrubbery is positively marvelous, and a visitor from the North or East would say, the trees and plants must have been ten years in growing, instead of the brief period of three or four years.

From the dry plain of 1875-6, Santa Monica has grown to be almost a forest, dotted with beautiful gardens and lawns.

The bot salt baths, which in winter form so great an attraction for visitors are especially fine, as also the unusual facilities for all other kinds of baths.

OLD SANTA MONICA.

This has for years been a favorite summer resort, and does not seem to grow out of favor. We copy the following in regard to its early history from the *Star* of August 15, 1872:

Seventeen years ago Santa Monica was selected by Dr. Hawyard as a summer resort, and until the last five years he and his family were the only ones who availed themselves of its delights and benefits. It is only two years ago since Camp Hawyard became what may be called popular. Santa Monica proper is a farm house situated on the edge of a plateau, about half a mile from the beach, where the camp is located. At the farm house the road descends suddenly into a deep, dry ravine or *arroyo*. At the foot of this ravine, near its confluence with the ocean, is a thick grove of ancient sycamore trees and underbrush. It is in this grove that the gipsy-like encampment has been established. It consists of a long row of tents of every description, with here and there a brush wigwam—the structure of an hour. The location is a favorable one; for besides the shelter afforded by the massive branches of the sycamores, the western bank of the *arroyo* rises high, forming a perfect barrier between the camp o the keen western breezes.

From the summit of the western bank, which forms a promontory almost to the water's edge, a magnificent view of the ocean, of Catalina, Santa Clemente, and other isands, is to be obtained. Stretching away to the northward, about two miles off, is the point projecting into the sea, and beyond which lies Malaga Ranch, the rendezvous of notorious band of horse thieves. At a mile further on is the Shoo Fly Landing where the majority of the asphaltum from the Brea Ranch is shipped to San Francisco.

During every summer quite a village of tents springs up at this point, there being often from two hundred to three hundred at one time, and sometimes one thousand people may be seen here on a Sunday. Stores and all the necessary industries are started, and then in a couple of months the whole fades away again, leaving only the half-dozen permanent families who reside there, these being principally Mexicans.

The following is from the *Express* of December 26, 1879:

CLOUD-BURST AT SANTA MONICA CANYON.

Mr. Michael Duffy, the well-known bathing-house man at Santa Monica Canyon beach, was in town to-day, and he gave us the particulars of a waterspout or cloud-burst at the head of the canyon last Sunday morning which destroyed considerable property. The water in the canyon suddenly swelled to great dimensions about three o'clock in the morning, and poured down the gorge with fearful and irresistible force. It swept in its march immense sycamore trees that had roots stretching in various directions for twenty-five or thirty feet. These it washed away as if they had been shingles. The first improvement reached was the bee ranch of Mr. Kilgore, who lost bees and boxes to the value of about one hundred dollars. Mr. Cox, further down, suffered more severely. His honey-house, with one thousand five hundred pounds of strained honey, his bees and hives, together with his cabin and all his effects, were swept away and destroyed. Mr. Duffy's wool ranch was completely cleaned out. He lost his cabin and tent, his entire crop of potatoes, and his ranch, for the soil was all swept away clean down to the bed-rock. Mr. Peter Brione, a Frenchman, however, suffered the most. He had a very valuable poultry ranch, well stocked with all kinds of poultry, and improved with sheds and chicken-houses. The house in which he resided. all the out-houses and other improvements and his entire stock of poultry were swept away and destroyed, leaving him absolutely without anything but the clothes he stood in. As the torrent swept down towards the mouth of the canyon, it carried away plows and other agricultural implements belonging to Pasqual Marques, and then attacked Duffy's bath-house on the beach and destroyed about forty feet of the long narrow building. We neglected to mention above that Mr. Sullivan, who also had a bee ranch up the canyon, lost about forty stands of bees and a large number of empty hives. All the fencing in the line of the freshlet has been carried away.