



RANCHO SANTA FE

BY

ERNEST BRAUNTON

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FOREWORD

The following appreciative expression of Rancho Santa Fe was written by Mr. Ernest Braunton, whose vast study, wide experience and unusual ability have made him a recognized authority on horticulture.

As a member of the Board of Forestry and also as a member of the Park Commission of Los Angeles, Mr. Braunton accomplished many things. School grounds in Southern California have been planned by him and many estates landscaped. He has contributed to European and American horticultural journals, to the South-

ern California section of Bailey's "Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture," and acted as California editor for "Country Life in America." He has also spent 12 years as Institute lecturer on plant life for the California State University.

The California Cultivator has claimed Mr. Braunton as Associate Editor for 23 years and he is still giving valuable information to the farmers of California through the California Cultivator.

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IT was not the romance and glamor of yesterday but the deeds and accomplishments of today that fascinated me during a recent visit to the Rancho Santa Fe. Much of sentiment will cling to those who have visited the old time haunts and habitations of the former San Dieguito Ranch, for who that has a soul is proof against it? Yet what modern man has done is far more fascinating in that he has builded well. In the days to come all development will be cumulative, carried out on the foundation that today is and tomorrow shall be.



—“the hacienda grande”

THE PAST

To the poetic soul who loves to dwell on what has been, there is ample food for research and record on these broad, fertile acres through which once flowed the waters of the San Dieguito River. History states that Don Juan Maria Osuna, first alcalde of San Diego, having governed that small but important pueblo with wisdom and honor, was granted by his sovereign, the King of Spain, a league of land wheresoe'er his fancy led him. Knowing well every hectare tributary to his citadel he wisely chose what for nearly a century after was famous as the San Dieguito Ranch, now Rancho Santa Fe.

There, on the King's Highway between Los Angeles and San Diego, he builded his first home. And it still stands, though its sun-baked bricks were laid when the mother of the evanescent Ramona

was but a child, a tangible proof of the old truth "he builds wisely who builds well." During the next score or more of years, waxing opulent, he conceived the idea of building a "hacienda grande." Within full view of the older structure, and but half a mile distant, he reared the walls of that grand old adobe mansion that for so many years welcomed as its guests the "first" families of the land, and "where the stranger, kindly bade to stay, sat by the fire and whiled the time away." It still stands, in all of its old-time grandeur, and friend and roving stranger are alike still supplied with good cheer around the ample hearthstones, in the sunny patio, upon the broad verandas, or beneath the shade of the patriarchal peppers. With the untimely passing of Leandro, the best-loved son of the founder, the peaceful, beneficent sway of the Osunas came to an end.

THE PRESENT

About fifteen years ago the Santa Fe Railway system conceived the idea of growing cross-ties of eucalyptus and selected this old rancho of 9,000 acres on which to establish their forests. A large area was then planted to these trees, which are still growing, but superior material elsewhere available banished the idea of utilization of the eucalyptus, so fortunately they still stand, a valuable asset for many purposes, as they occupy mostly areas least desirable for horticultural development.

In the meantime, W. E. Hodges, vice-president of the Santa Fe, hungered to utilize these wonderfully fertile hills, for they were covered thickly with a native growth that left no doubt as to their richness for agricultural purposes. He cast about for advice and



—“cultivation and planting made possible”—

quickly found a man of vision, L. G. Sinnard, an advisor and developer of experience who had guided several large projects past the shoals upon which so many are foundered. When the comprehensive report of Mr. Sinnard was completed, digested and absorbed, Mr. Hodges engaged him to “paint the picture.”

Since then Mr. Sinnard has been the guiding star of Rancho Santa Fe. This vast tract is six miles from the coast highway, 100 miles south of Los Angeles; 25 miles north of San Diego, with an elevation of 40 to 350 feet above the sea. It is controlled by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, a subsidiary of the Santa Fe railway system, the latter sufficient assurance of its stability, permanency and desirability for settlement.

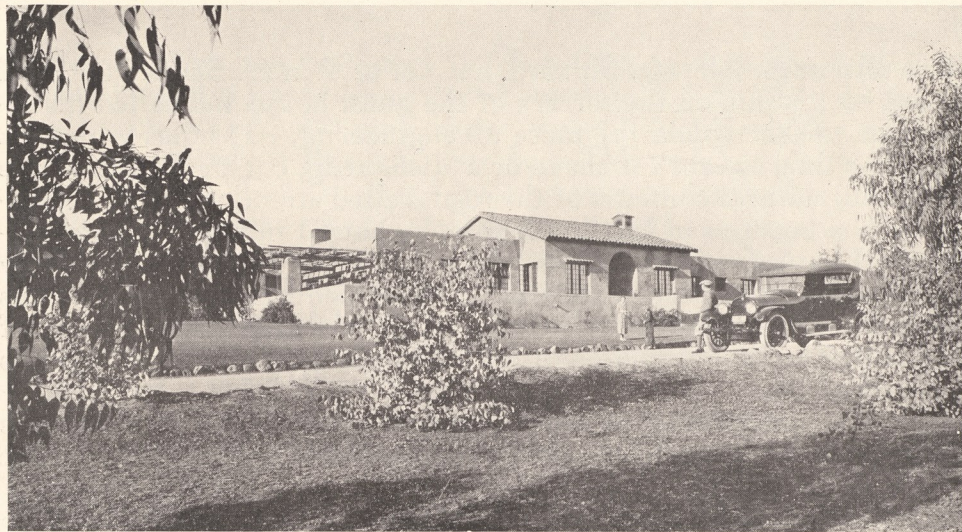
The cultivation and planting of its every acre was made possible

by impounding the waters of the San Dieguito River and its tributaries behind a gigantic reinforced concrete dam 157 feet above bed rock, restraining 37,500 acre-feet of water, three times the total amount necessary for Rancho Santa Fe. This vast body of water the officials named "Lake Hodges," over his protest, for the man of faith. Many miles of concrete and steel water mains have been laid, even to the uttermost boundaries of the tract, and the whole is, through this life-giving fluid, rapidly being covered with nature's mantle of green. Every nook and corner is made available by a system of 53 miles of splendid roadway, surfaced with decomposed granite and rolled until it is nearly as hard as concrete.

But the most marvelous quality of this network of roads is its wonderful aid to scenic beauty. It has been said that man scars the fair

face of nature, but Mr. Sinnard has not at Rancho Santa Fe. As I stood by his side on the terrace of the guest house and called his attention to the wonderful piece of engineering—53 miles without a straight line, an abrupt curve or a disfiguring cut or fill—how the beautiful natural contours of the roads called attention to and accentuated the beauties of knoll and vale, he bowed in grateful appreciation. I have this year traveled from Mexico to British Columbia by automobile, have visited all great developments of land areas in this state for many years past, but can recall nowhere else a system of roads that so supports the natural landscape attractions and violates no rule of art.

Nearly in the center of this 15 square miles of park-like area has been built a civic or community center, with nearly all the public



—“La Morada, the guest house”—

buildings finished and occupied. The first, largest, and most attractive is La Morada, the guest house, 210 feet long and, like all others, of adobe construction. The architecture is of the purest type of Colonial-Spanish, which has been adopted for all civic center buildings, whether offices, dwelling or garage. A half dozen of such buildings now occupy the mesa just in front of the Guest House. No buildings may be erected except the exterior plans meet the approval of the company architect. Within the civic center, on house sites only, the dwellings must cost a minimum of \$6,000, and not much more, for all must harmonize in general appearance. On the orchard sites surrounding this center the homes already erected have cost from \$7,500 up to \$15,000.

It is expected of all purchasers that they shall within one year



—“Broad acres planted to thriving orchards may be seen”—

plant not less than one-third of the acreage to fruit trees or, in lieu of such planting, construct a private residence, or landscape the grounds in an acceptable manner. During the past year 15,000 avocado trees were set out, several thousands of oranges and lemons and many other sub-tropical fruit trees, for here Jack Frost does not pay annual visits, only occasionally may his whitened visage be seen and then only on the lower levels. Broad acres planted to thriving orchards may be seen on a score of ranchlets, a substantial home revealed in the back-ground of each. This enforcement of development is to be carried out on every one of the several hundred units, blending the whole into the most perfectly planned and most extensive rural community the world has ever seen.

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THE FUTURE

With nearly one-half of the tract passed to permanent ownership, the expectant dreams of the owners are being realized. It is easy for one who has visited there to visualize the future. Standing on any one of several points of vantage in and about the community center the visitor of the future may view, from the immediate foreground to the distance, mountains in almost endless perspective, hill rolling beyond hill, each covered with evergreen fruit trees on graceful contour lines, while half hidden in the rich foliage of each unit will be homes suggesting old Spain and her colonies, embellished with leaf and blossom vieing in beauty with the parkings of the civic center at his feet. None of the marks and mistakes of pioneers will be in

evidence, for before its first settler came this community was projected far in advance of any ever before attempted.

As I cast my admiring glance over this great transformed landscape I could but feel almost exultant in contemplation of its future, the assurance that it will be all that was planned, finished on the same grand plane as that already established, because of the great financial forces behind, for is it not the Santa Fe's Rancho? In the near future all will have passed to other ownership and community management, but it will ever stand as an everlasting, ever-improving monument to those who dared and did, the men of faith and vision.



RANCHO SANTA FE

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Los Angeles, California

Please send me a copy of your illustrated historical and descriptive booklet on Rancho Santa Fe. "California, Yesterday and Today."

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Tear off here and mail to

HOW TO GO TO RANCHO SANTA FE

Comfortable Santa Fe trains between Los Angeles and San Diego will take you to Del Mar; thence by auto to Rancho Santa Fe. If driving, take the San Diego Highway; turn east one-quarter mile north of Del Mar, or at Solana Beach. Signs mark the road.