

DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801  
(213) 978-1200

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

RICHARD BARRON  
PRESIDENT  
ROELLA H. LOUIE  
VICE-PRESIDENT

GLEN C. DAKE  
MIA M. LEHRER  
OZ SCOTT

FELY C. PINGOL  
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
(213) 978-1294

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA  
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

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EVA YUAN-MCDANIEL  
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INFORMATION  
(213) 978-1270

www.planning.lacity.org

Date **JAN 27 2010**

Los Angeles City Council  
Room 395, City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

CD7

ATTENTION: Patrice Lattimore, Legislative Assistant  
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2009-3537-HCM**  
**LANKERSHIM READING ROOM**  
**10940 N. SEPULVEDA BOULEVARD**

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of January 7, 2010, the Commission moved to include the above property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monument, subject to adoption by the City Council.

As required under the provisions of Section 22.171.10 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Commission has solicited opinions and information from the office of the Council District in which the site is located and from any Department or Bureau of the city whose operations may be affected by the designation of such site as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Such designation in and of itself has no fiscal impact. Future applications for permits may cause minimal administrative costs.

The City Council, according to the guidelines set forth in Section 22.171 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, shall act on the proposed inclusion to the list within 90 days of the Council or Commission action, whichever first occurs. By resolution, the Council may extend the period for good cause for an additional 15 days.

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject modification to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments upon adoption by the City Council.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Barron  
Seconded: Commissioner Scott  
Ayes: Commissioner Louie  
Absent: Commissioners Dake and Lehrer

**Vote: 3-0**

  
Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant  
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Staff Report with Findings

c: Councilmember Richard Alarcon, Seventh Council District  
San Fernando Valley Historical Society  
Los Angeles Conservancy

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4  
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INFORMATION  
(213) 978-1270

[www.planning.lacity.org](http://www.planning.lacity.org)

Date JAN 27 2010

San Fernando Valley Historical Society  
10940 N. Sepulveda Boulevard  
Mission Hills, CA 91345

**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2009-3537-HCM**  
**LANKERSHIM READING ROOM**  
**10940 N. SEPULVEDA BOULEVARD**

As you will note from the attached copy of our communication to the Los Angeles City Council, the Cultural Heritage Commission has moved to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council.

In due course, our transmittal will be given a council file number and will be referred to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for review and recommendation. If you are interested in attending the Council Committee meeting, you should call Ms. Patricia Lattimore (213) 978-1074 for information as to the time and place of the Committee and City Council meetings regarding this matter. Please give Ms. Lattimore at least one week from the date of this letter to schedule this item on the Committee Agenda before you call her.

Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant  
Cultural Heritage Commission

/fcp

Attachment: CHC Declaration Letter to Council and Staff Report with Findings

C: GIS  
Los Angeles Conservancy

Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT

ITEM 6

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2009-3537-HCM  
ENV-2009-3538-CE

HEARING DATE: January 7, 2010  
TIME: 10:00 AM  
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 10940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
Council District: 7  
Community Plan Area: Mission Hills- Panorama  
City- North Hills  
Area Planning Commission: North Valley  
Neighborhood Council: Mission Hills  
Legal Description: Lot 1 of TR 28978

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
LANKERSHIM READING ROOM

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

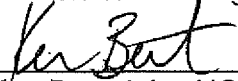
OWNER: San Fernando Valley Historical Society  
10940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
Mission Hills, CA 91345


APPLICANT: Los Angeles Conservancy in conjunction with  
Kennedy High School Architecture and Digital Arts Magnet  
(Irene Guzman-Garcia, Martin Guzman-Garcia)  
523 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014


**RECOMMENDATION** That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7
2. Adopt the report findings.

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP  
Director of Planning

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: August 20, 2009 Historic-Cultural Monument Application  
ZIMAS Report

## FINDINGS

The building reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community" for its association with the development of the San Fernando Valley, the Lankershim Ranch, and members of the Lankershim family.

## CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

## SUMMARY

Constructed in 1904, the Lankershim Reading Room is a one-story, octagonal-shaped structure constructed in a vernacular Folk-Victorian style. Located on the property of the Andres Pico Adobe Park, the subject structure is owned and maintained by the San Fernando Valley Historical Society in Mission Hills. The 21-foot wide structure consists of redwood paneling and wooden trim painted white on the building's upper half and red on its lower half. An eight-sided roof made of composite wood shingles extends over the building's sides. Double French doors provide entry on one of the eight sides of the structure while paired sash windows occupy each of the other seven. Additional character-defining elements include original carriage lights as well as an original redwood floor.

The proposed Lankershim Reading Room monument exists as the last remaining building from the Lankershim Ranch, a 48,000-acre ranch originally owned by Isaac Lankershim, a prominent figure in the history of the San Fernando Valley. The structure was saved from demolition in the early 1950's and moved to a location at the Chapel of the Canyon in Canoga Park and subsequently to its present location on the property of Andres Pico Adobe Park in 2001. In 1869, supported by a group of prominent businessmen including Isaac Newton Van Nuys, Lankershim bought 60,000 acres in the San Fernando Valley's southern half for \$115,000. This land was used to raise sheep and to grow wheat, paving the way for what would become a successful wheat empire for both Lankershim and Van Nuys by the mid-1870's. In 1880, Lankershim's daughter, Susanna, married Van Nuys, linking two of San Fernando Valley's founding families. Lankershim resided at the residence of the ranch until his death in 1882; thereafter, the estate was managed by Lankershim's son, Colonel James B. Lankershim. In 1904, Colonel Lankershim built the subject structure for his son, Jack. The structure, used for painting, reading, and studying, ultimately came to be known as the Lankershim Reading Room. The Lankershims continued to live on the Ranch until 1948, when the last descendant of the family passed away. In 1950, the property was subdivided and sold.

The proposed monument is currently undergoing restoration by the San Fernando Valley Historical Society. Since 2001, various fund-raising events have raised money to construct a foundation, remove stucco to reveal original windows, and reconstruct the overhanging roof. In addition, the broken windows have been replaced with safety glass, a period fan with center

light has been installed, and artifacts from the Lankershim Ranch have been put on display in the interior.

The Lankershim Reading Room appears significant for its ties to the development of the San Fernando Valley and associations with historical personages.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Lankershim Reading Room property successfully meets one of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: "reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community." As a building associated with the Lankershim Ranch, the Lankershim family, and the development of the San Fernando Valley, the property qualifies for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument based on these criteria.

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of November 5, 2009, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On December 3, 2009, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.

## **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") REVIEW**

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 "*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*"

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 "*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*"

The designation of the Lankershim Reading Room as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and

reconstruction of Historic buildings in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

### **FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2009-3537-HCM  
ENV-2009-3538-CE

HEARING DATE: November 5, 2009  
TIME: 10:00 AM  
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 10940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
Council District: 7  
Community Plan Area: Mission Hills- Panorama  
City- North Hills  
Area Planning Commission: North Valley  
Neighborhood Council: Mission Hills  
Legal Description: Lot 1 of TR 28978

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
LANKERSHIM READING ROOM

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument


**OWNER:** San Fernando Valley Historical Society  
10940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
Mission Hills, CA 91345

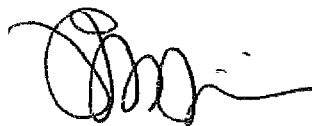
**APPLICANT:** Los Angeles Conservancy in conjunction with  
Kennedy High School Architecture and Digital Arts Magnet  
(Irene Guzman-Garcia, Martin Guzman-Garcia)  
523 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014

**RECOMMENDATION** That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.


S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP  
Director of Planning

  
Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources



Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

  
Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: August 20, 2009 Historic-Cultural Monument Application  
ZIMAS Report

## **SUMMARY**

Constructed in 1904, the Lankershim Reading Room is a one-story, octagonal-shaped structure constructed in a vernacular Folk-Victorian style. Located on the property of the Andres Pico Adobe Park, the subject structure is owned and maintained by the San Fernando Valley Historical Society in Mission Hills. The 21-foot wide structure consists of redwood paneling and wooden trim painted white on the building's upper half and red on its lower half. An eight-sided roof made of composite wood shingles extends over the building's sides. Double French doors provide entry on one of the eight sides of the structure while paired sash windows occupy each of the other seven. Additional character-defining elements include original carriage lights as well as an original redwood floor.

The proposed Lankershim Reading Room monument exists as the last remaining building from the Lankershim Ranch, a 48,000-acre ranch originally owned by Isaac Lankershim, a prominent figure in the history of the San Fernando Valley. The structure was saved from demolition in the early 1950's and moved to a location at the Chapel of the Canyon in Canoga Park and subsequently to its present location on the property of Andres Pico Adobe Park in 2001. In 1869, supported by a group of prominent businessmen including Isaac Newton Van Nuys, Lankershim bought 60,000 acres in the San Fernando Valley's southern half for \$115,000. This land was used to raise sheep and to grow wheat, paving the way for what would become a successful wheat empire for both Lankershim and Van Nuys by the mid-1870's. In 1880, Lankershim's daughter, Susanna, married Van Nuys, linking two of San Fernando Valley's founding families. Lankershim resided at the residence of the ranch until his death in 1882; thereafter, the estate was managed by Lankershim's son, Colonel James B. Lankershim. In 1904, Colonel Lankershim built the subject structure for his son, Jack. The structure, used for painting, reading, and studying, ultimately came to be known as the Lankershim Reading Room. The Lankershims continued to live on the Ranch until 1948, when the last descendant of the family passed away. In 1950, the property was subdivided and sold.

The proposed monument is currently undergoing restoration by the San Fernando Valley Historical Society. Since 2001, various fund-raising events have raised money to construct a foundation, remove stucco to reveal original windows, and reconstruct the overhanging roof. In addition, the broken windows have been replaced with safety glass, a period fan with center light has been installed, and artifacts from the Lankershim Ranch have been put on display in the interior.

The Lankershim Reading Room appears significant for its ties to the development of the San Fernando Valley and associations with historical personages.

## **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

10940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.  
CHC-2009-3537-HCM  
Page 3 of 3

**FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.



August 20, 2009

Mr. Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources  
Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
200 N. Spring Street, Suite 620  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Edgar:

Attached, please find the Historic-Cultural Monument nomination form for the Lankershim Reading Room (currently owned by the San Fernando Valley Historical Society, Director Midge Gisel), along with a CD containing digital photo images of the property.

The nomination was completed by Irene and Martin Guzman-Garcia of John F. Kennedy High School Architecture and Digital Arts Magnet. Please call or email Irene at (818) 896-0637 or [guzgar9@aol.com](mailto:guzgar9@aol.com) if you have any questions or concerns with the enclosed nomination form and materials.

Sincerely,

Adam Rubin  
Youth Outreach Coordinator  
Los Angeles Conservancy  
(213) 430-4208  
[arubin@laconservancy.org](mailto:arubin@laconservancy.org)

Cc: Aaron Kahlenberg, Trudi Sandmeier

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT  
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

**IDENTIFICATION**

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Lankershim Reading Room
2. STREET ADDRESS 10940 N. Sepulveda Boulevard
- CITY Mission Hills ZIP CODE 91345 COUNCIL DISTRICT 7
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 2615001900
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT 28978
- BLOCK None LOT(S) 1 ARB. NO. None
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 10940 N. Sepulveda Boulevard
6. PRESENT OWNER San Fernando Valley Historical Society
- STREET ADDRESS 10940 N. Sepulveda Boulevard E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_
- CITY Mission Hills STATE CA ZIP CODE 91345 PHONE (818) 365-7810
- OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE  PUBLIC \_\_\_\_\_
7. PRESENT USE None--Under Restoration ORIGINAL USE Reading Room on Lankershim Ranch

**DESCRIPTION**

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Octagonal Gazebo  
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)

9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET. 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)

see attachment

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT  
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Lankershim Reading Room

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1974 FACTUAL:  ESTIMATED:

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Unknown

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER Unknown

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS March 17, 2009  
(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)

14. CONDITION:  EXCELLENT  GOOD  FAIR  DETERIORATED  NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS none

16. THREATS TO SITE:  NONE KNOWN  PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT  VANDALISM  PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT  
 ZONING  OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

17. IS THE STRUCTURE:  ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE  MOVED  UNKNOWN

**SIGNIFICANCE**

18. BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE (SEE ALSO SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET. 750 WORDS MAXIMUM IF USING ADDITIONAL SHEETS)

see attachment

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) Los Angeles Times, Midge Gisel (March 17, 2009)

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 03/20/2009 PREPARER'S NAME Irene Guzman-Garcia

ORGANIZATION L.A. Conservancy Youth Advocate STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE CA ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: guzgar9@aol.com

9.

The Lankershim Reading Room is a one- story, octagonal gazebo plan, with a redwood paneling finish and wooden trim. It's octagonal peaked roof is made of composite wood shingles. The wooden framed windows are made up by a fixed sash pane lower moveable " pop- up" with lower storage slot below with a wood cover . The Pop-Up windows are very unique to the design. The entry features centered, French doors. Additional character defining elements of the structure are original Carriage Lights, original wooden frames of the pop-up windows, original redwood walls, and original redwood wooden floor.

The Lankershim Reading Room is significant because it is the last remaining part of Isaac Lankershim's 60,000 acre ranch which today is the southern eastern part of the San Fernando Valley. The original ranch now includes the cities of North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Reseda and Canoga Park.

Isaac Lankershim was born in Nuremberg, Bavaria, 1819. When he was 17 years old he traveled to the United States. In 1854 he came to California bringing, along cattle across the Great Plains, after living in St. Louis . He engaged in the stock business and in raising grain in Napa Valley. He then moved again, now to San Francisco where he was a heavy shipper of grain to Europe. In 1868 he bought El Cajon Rancho in San Diego where, he commenced raising wheat and later built a flour mill. Then in 1869 he bought one-half of the enormous San Fernando Rancho in Los Angeles County, from Andres Pico the brother of Pio Pico, the last Mexican Governor.

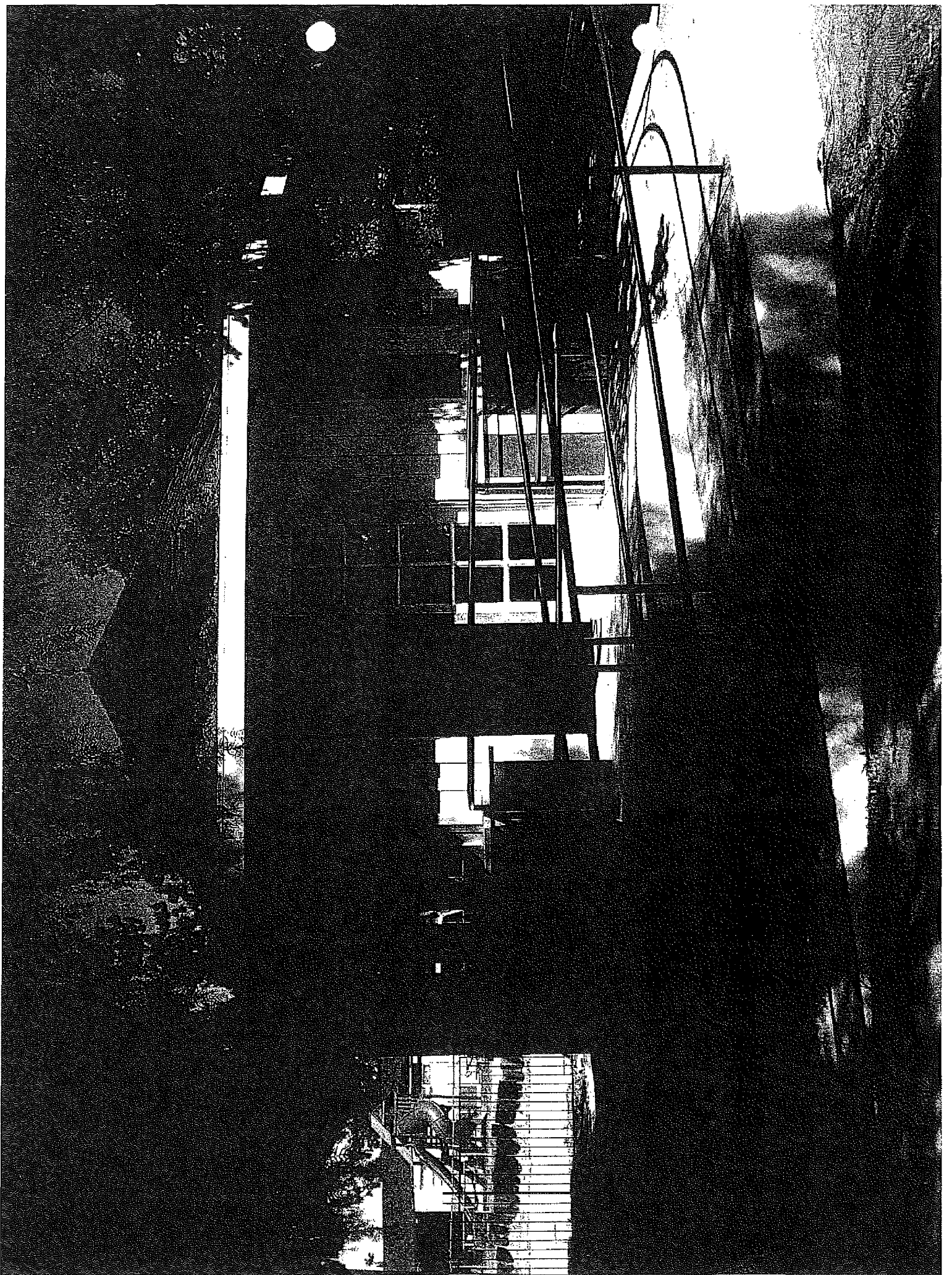
He then would eventually, begin to raise wheat successfully with his son-in-law Isaac Van Nuys. Nearly the all 60,000 acres were cultivated with wheat. In 1878 Lankershim and Van Nuys built a flour mill in Los Angeles. The mill was equipped with the most modern appliances and had a capacity of filling 400 barrels of flour a day.

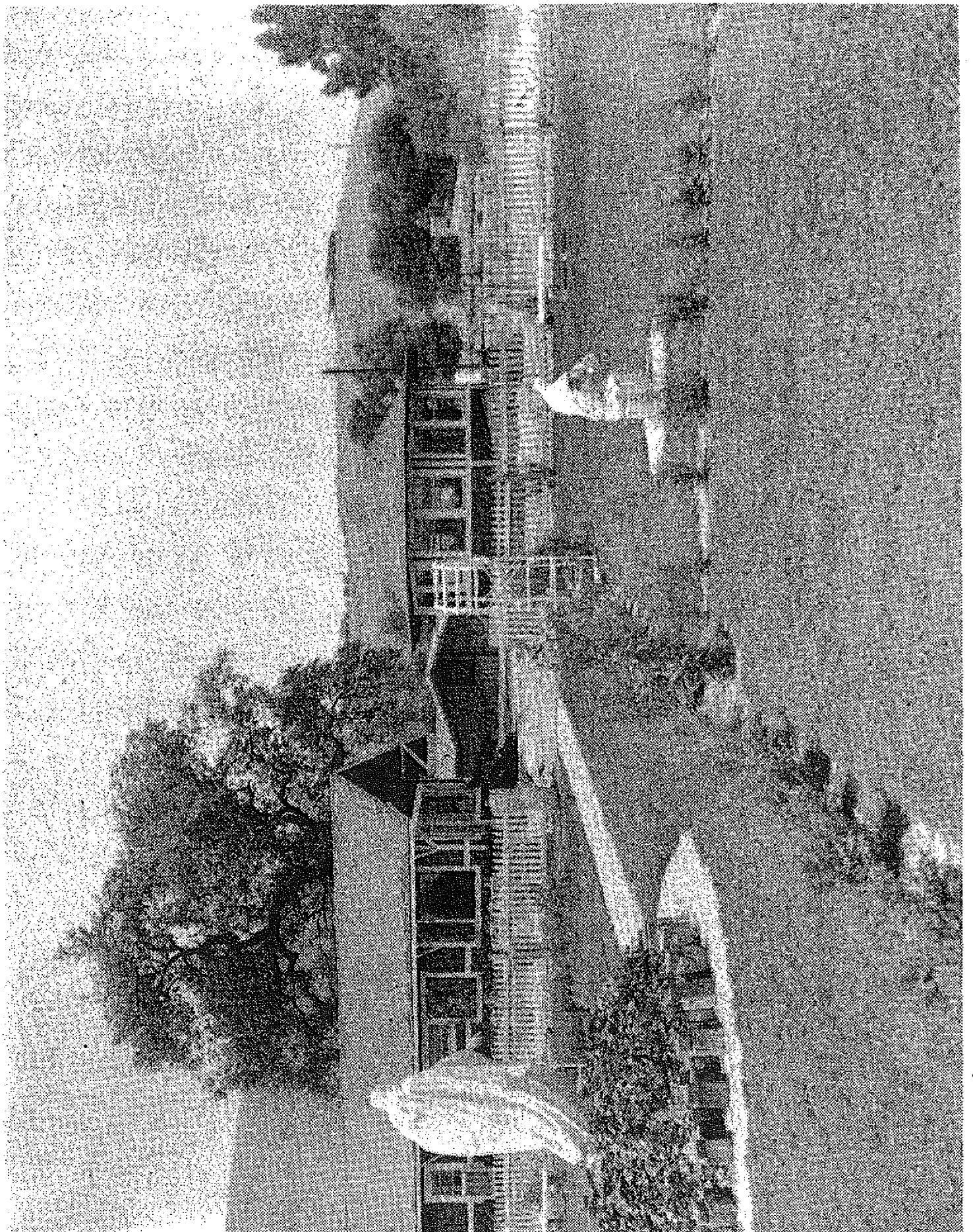
After the death of Isaac Lankershim in 1882 , his son J.B. Lankershim took over and managed the estate. In 1904 J.B. Lankershim , paid to get the Lankershim Reading Room built for his 15 year old son Jack. In the reading room Jack was free to do what ever he wished to do. He would paint, read and study there. Five years later in 1909 J.B. Lankershim subdivided 48,000 acres of the ranch to local real estate developers . The developers then subdivided and sold small parcels for homes.

The Lankershim family continued to live on the Lankershim Ranch until 1948 when the last decedent of the Lankershim passed away. In the early 1950's, the remaining land was subdivided and sold. All of the buildings that were on the ranch were torn down with the exception of the Lankershim Reading Room which was moved to Chapel of th Canyons on Topanga Blvd. While at the Chapel of the Canyons it was used as a wedding chapel until, April 26, 2001 when it was moved to the Andres Pico grounds. The Lankershims played a great part in the development of the San Fernando Valley. If the Lankershim Family wouldn't have made the San Fernando Valley as popular as it was, developers might of never bought the land and the San Fernando would not be the city it is today.

Bibliography:

1. Visit to San Fernando Historical Society (March 17, 2009)
2. Interview with Midge Gisel (March 17, 2009)
3. Shaffer, Gina. "Lankershim's San Fernando Valley: Wheat was King." Daily News. 1985.
4. "Developers buy Lankershim Ranch." Los Angeles Times.
5. "Great Lankershim Ranch Sold, Local Syndicate to Subdivide." Los Angeles Daily Times. 24 Sept. 1909
6. "Avilas: Lankershim Heritage Kept Alive". Los Angeles Times. 9 June 1985
7. "Couple Keep Heritage of Lankershim Alive." Los Angeles Times.
8. "AVILAS: Pioneers' Heritage Kept Alive". Los Angeles Times.
9. "Dedication Planned Oct. 5 for Chapel in the Canyon". 1958
10. San Fernando Valley Historical Society News Letters. February and March 2009







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ISAAC LANKERSHIM was born in Nuremberg, Bavaria, 1819. He came to the United States when seventeen years of age, and made his way to St. Louis, where, for several years, he engaged in the stock and grain business, buying and shipping cattle, grain, etc., from St. Louis down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. In 1854 he came to California, bringing cattle across the plains. He went to Napa County and again engaged in the stock business and in raising grain. Afterward he went to San Francisco, where for a number of years he was a heavy shipper of grain to Europe. In 1868 he bought El Cajon Rancho, in San Diego County, where, the next year, he commenced raising wheat; and later he built a flour mill there. In 1869 he bought one-half of the immense San Fernando Rancho in Los Angeles County. Eventually, he and Mr. Van Nuys began to raise wheat successfully on their ranch, till nearly the whole 60,000 acres were brought under cultivation. In 1878 they built a flour mill in Los Angeles. In this enterprise he was the moving spirit. This mill is equipped with all the modern appliances, and has a capacity of 400 barrels of flour per day. For a number of years previous to his death Mr. Lankershim carried on farming and milling simultaneously in San Diego and Fresno counties, where he owned a farm of 14,000 acres; and at the same time he was at the head of a company that was engaged in the same business in Los Angeles County. Mr. Lankershim was a man of strict honesty and integrity, and of good, practical business capacity, as must be obvious from the

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# Lankershim's San Fernando

By GINA SHAFFER  
Daily News Staff Writer

Vast fields of wild oats carpeted the San Fernando Valley when Isaac Lankershim rode on horseback through the area in 1869.

The Bavarian immigrant already had amassed a fortune raising wheat in Northern California and exporting it to Europe when he decided the Valley was an ideal spot for cultivation. Backed by San Francisco businessmen, including Levi Strauss, and Napa County investor Isaac Newton Van Nuys, Lankershim bought 60,000 acres in the Valley's southern half for growing wheat.

The purchase, organized under the San Fernando Farm Homestead Association, marked the first subdivision of Valley land. The area includes the communities of North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Reseda and Canoga Park.

One-fifth of the acreage at the southeastern end was eventually sold for small farms, mostly 40-acre plots, by the Lankershim Ranch Land & Water Co.

When Lankershim died in 1882, a local newspaper eulogized him as "the leading spirit in turning the San Fernando Valley into the wheat granary of this county and . . . one of the most profitable agricultural valleys in the state."

Lankershim Boulevard, still a major thoroughfare, was named after him in 1888. From 1896-1927, North Hollywood was known as Lankershim.

Susanna Lankershim, Isaac's daughter, married Van Nuys, linking two of the Valley's founding families. Lankershim and Van Nuys are buried side by side with their wives in Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights.

After Isaac Lankershim's death, his son, Col. J.B. Lankershim, managed the family estate.

There are no living Lankershim descendants. J.B.'s son, Jack, who died in 1946, married but did not have children. J.B.'s daughter, Doria, who died in 1948, never married.

Frank and Maria Avila, who lived on the Lankershim Ranch from 1929-1950, have preserved the Lankershim heritage.

The Granada Hills couple also helped stop efforts to change Lankershim Boulevard to Universal Boulevard in 1968 and defended the Lankershim legacy in 1983 by helping to block plans to move a stone monument honoring J.B. Lankershim in the Laurel Canyon hills where his ashes were scattered. The city's Cultural Heritage Board declared it a historic monument.

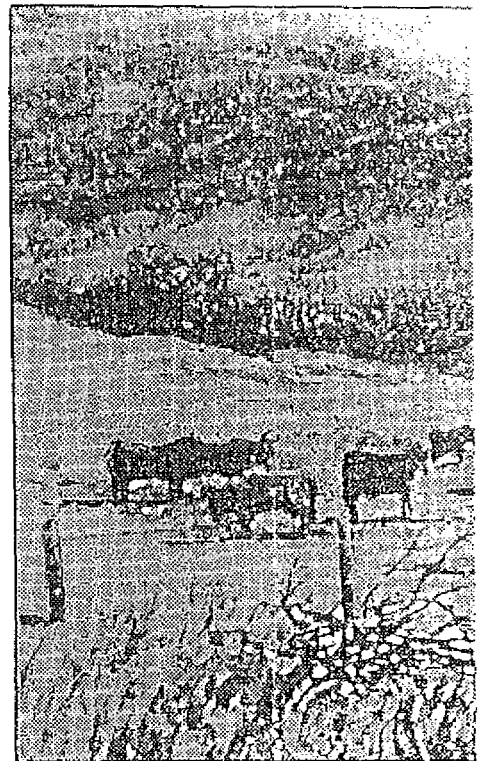
Frank Avila served as caretaker of the ranch, working for J.B. Lankershim until his death in 1931 and then for his son, Jack. In 1950, the property was sold and eventually developed into what is now the Wrightwood Estates.

Only a small part of the 22-room ranch house, which was surrounded by fruit trees and lush gardens, has survived as part of the Chapel in the Canyon in Canoga Park.

*Information is provided by San Fernando Valley Historical Society.*

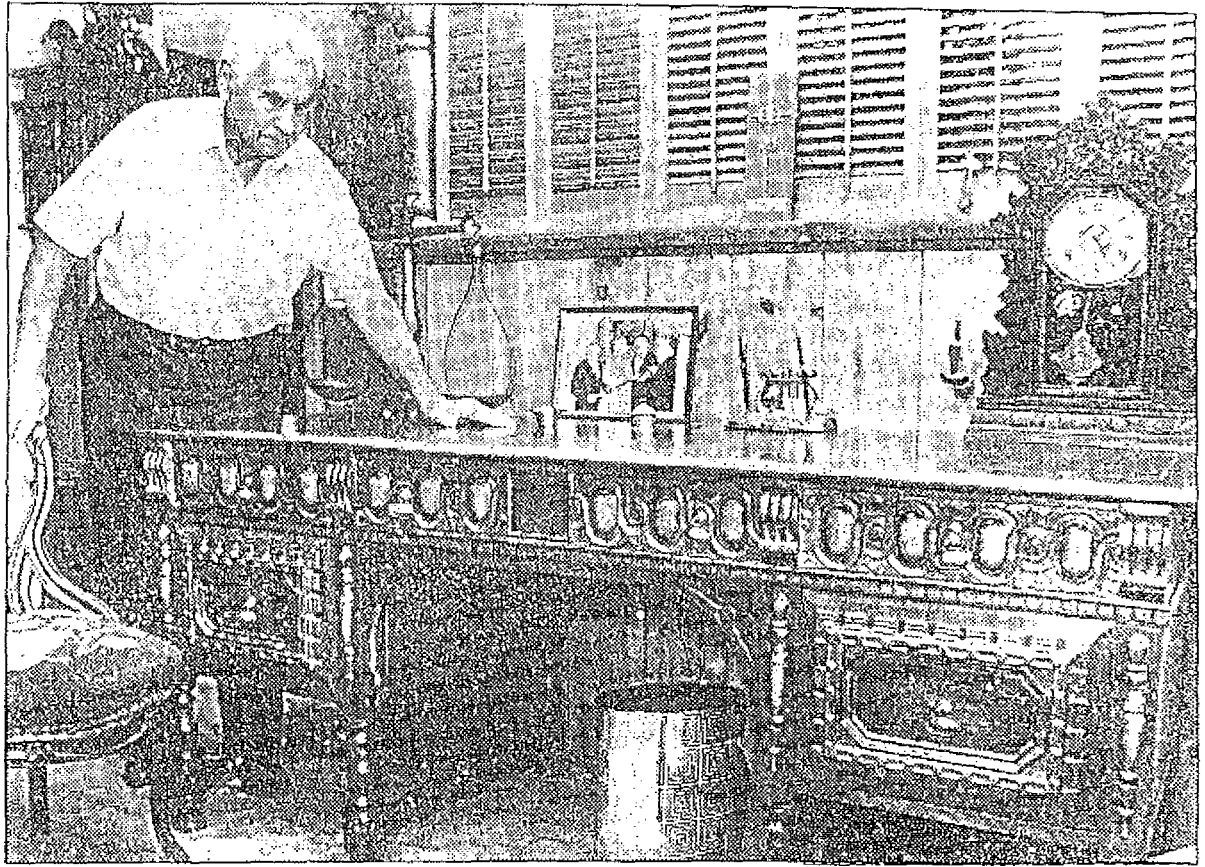


Col. J.B. Lankershim, left, managed the estate after the death in 1882 of his father, Isaac.



Rolling vista of Lankershim Ranch survived in a 1908 painting by Jack Lankershim. Large stone monument is in foreground.

# San Fernando Valley: Wheat was king

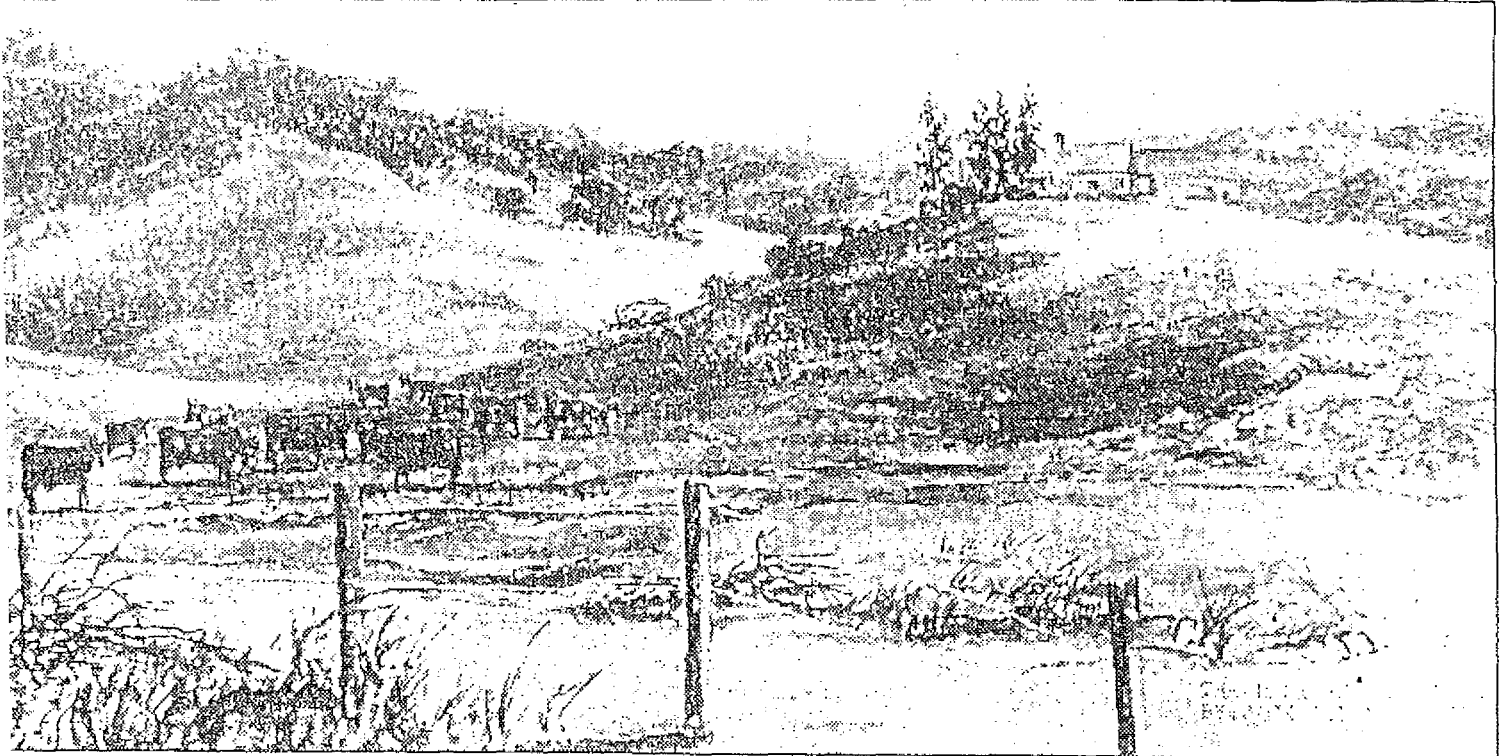


Photos courtesy of Frank and Maria Avila

managed the family  
1882 of his father,

Isaac Lankershim, who acquired 60,000 acres  
in the San Fernando Valley to grow wheat. J.B.

Lankershim's desk, right, brings back memories for Frank Avila, who lived on the estate.



Ranch survives in a  
Lankershim. Lankershim

Boulevard was named after family patriarch  
Isaac Lankershim, who cultivated thousands of

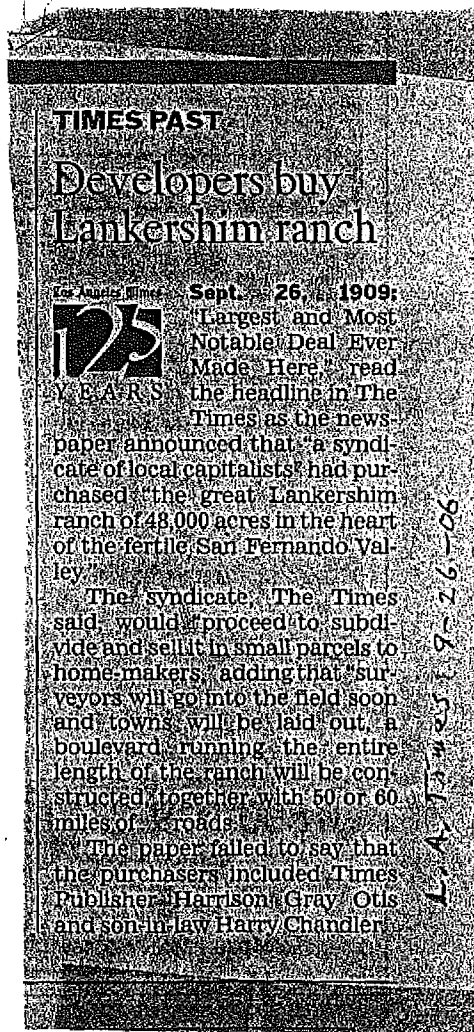
acres in the San Fernando Valley. North Holly-  
wood was once known as Lankershim.

for 100 years the address of Lankershim  
Ranch was

10648 Ventura Blvd, North Hollywood,

after sold - it was

3701 Lankershim Blvd.



NEW ERA.

GREAT LANKERSHIM RANCH SOLD, LOCAL SYNDICATE TO SUBDIVIDE.

Two and a Half Millions for Forty-eight Thousand Acres in San Fernando Valley—Soon Open to Home-makers.

THE GREAT Lankershim ranch of 48,000 acres, in the heart of the fertile San Fernando Valley, has just been purchased for \$2,500,000 by a syndicate of local capitalists which will proceed to subdivide and sell it in small parcels to home-makers.

A number of surveyors will go into the field soon, and towns will be laid out, a boulevard running the entire length of the ranch will be constructed, together with fifty or sixty miles of parallel and lateral roads.

Homes for at least 25,000 persons will be possible under the plans of the purchasers, the small ranches to be placed on the market affording abundant opportunity for the support of this number from the products of the soil.

The purchase includes not only the land, but all the property of the Los Angeles Farming and Milling Company. This takes in the company's big milling plant in this city, the warehouses, live stock, engines, wagons, harvesting machinery, and all other appurtenances of the ranch.

A partial list of the members of the syndicate which has purchased the property is as follows: J. F. Sartori, president; Maurice S. Hellman, vice-president, and W. D. Longyear, cashier, of the Security Savings Bank; Stoddard Jess and W. C. Patterson, vice-presidents of the First National Bank; James H. Adams and James R. Martin of James H. Adams and Company; O. J. Wigdall, vice-president of the Home Savings Bank; W. B. Allen, R. C. Gillis, E. J. Marshall, E. E. Hewlett and J. S. Terrence. There are a number of other purchasers—good citizens who have been enthusiastic and successful developers of Southern California. Henry W. O'Melveny will be the attorney for the new owners.



Isaac Lankershim, late pioneer California merchant and miller, and an early owner of the great ranch, who began its development.

Matter was handled by the late Anson Brunson, one time judge of the County Court here, who was attorney for the Lankershim interests in the division of the ranch.

THE RANCH DIVIDED. It soon became apparent that De Celis wished to have the upper end of the ranch, including the north-south embankment by Chatsworth and the Porter ranches. Lankershim saw that, though there were advantages in the upper part of the valley, the lower part was better suited for general farming purposes.

The soil in this lower part of the valley is most excellent, and the Lankershim holdings embraced 35,500 acres. For several years after the subdivision it was still used for a range for sheep and cattle.

In 1871 L. N. Van Nuys, who was in charge of the ranch, concluded that it would be profitable to undertake fruit growing on a portion of the ranch. Mr. Van Nuys was born and raised on a farm near Danville, a town not far from Rochester in the western part of New York. He had come to California in 1855, settling in the northern part of the State, and to Los Angeles in 1870, where he became associated with Mr. Lankershim.

FIRST SUCCESS. The first crop of wheat was put in in 1874, not a very large area, but the experiment proved entirely successful. In the winter of 1875 a much larger area was broken up and seeded to wheat, the result astonishing every one and far surpassing the most sanguine expectations.

Two RAILROAD LINES. Already there are excellent transportation facilities, the Coast line of the Southern Pacific running through a section of the ranch, while the Chatsworth Park branch also traverses it practically from end to end.

PAGES FROM PAST. EARLY HISTORY OF BIG RANCH. HELD BY LANKERSHIM FAMILY OVER FORTY YEARS.

Pioneer, Now Dead, Whose Name It Bears, Once Part Owner of Entire Valley—Rare Ability of L. N. Van Nuys in Conducting Business Makes It Wonderful Success.

History of the long-gone past in Los Angeles is recalled.

RECORD DEAL ON MAIN.

Foreign Capitalist Pays Nearly a Quarter Million for Peoples' Theater Site.

One of the largest and most important deals in Los Angeles business property consummated this year was put through yesterday when John C. Morough, a retired banker and lumber merchant, of the City of Mexico, purchased through the agency of R. A. Rowan & Co., the property at Nos. 571-573 5th Street, known as the Peoples Theater building. It is J. Woolcott, the seller, received \$250,000 for his holding, or at the rate of over \$400 a front foot.

The site is improved with a three-story brick building, containing two stores and the Peoples Theater on the two upper floors. The lot fronts 8 1/4 feet on Main and extends back 150 feet to an alley. The present rent is \$100 a year, \$115,000 a year, which will pay Mr. Morough 10 percent on his investment.

Mr. Morough came to Los Angeles last with the Shrine convention in 1907, as one of the delegates of the People's Theater building. He was so impressed with the bustling and hustling way of the city that he immediately made a loan of \$50,000 on a Broadway lot. Since then he has visited the city frequently and has loaned through R. A. Rowan & Co., several hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. Woolcott, the seller, purchased the holding many years ago, while it was the real estate property of a front foot. He erected the present building four years ago at a cost of \$16,000.

WAR ON RATES ALONG COAST.

FLASH COST OF OCEAN TRIPS FROM LOS ANGELES.

Steamships of Rival Lines Running to and from San Francisco Announce New Schedule and Further Reduction Is Expected—Pacific Mail and St. Croix Involved.

War in earnest has been declared on the Pacific Coast Steamship Company by Schubach & Hamilton, of Seattle, which firm will publish a first-class rate of \$1.35 from San Francisco to Los Angeles on the steamer St. Croix.

The rate is a cut of \$1 under that declared by the Pacific Coast Company some days ago. A dispatch from San Francisco received last night, says:

"Beginning Monday the St. Croix will leave San Francisco alongside the Pacific Coast Company's craft, each carrying the President and the Governor and will carry passengers first class to Los Angeles for \$1.35. The round trip rate will be \$1.50. We shall have an intermediate rate of \$1.35, \$1.50 for the round trip, and one-way steers age rate of \$1.35. The St. Croix will make two round-trips each week, sailing Mondays and Thursdays and will make a little money at the rates published."

It is said that the St. Croix may be operated for what it costs to purchase the coal for one of the Pacific Coast Company's steamers and perhaps only Schubach & Hamilton have entered a fight to a finish. It is expected the Pacific Coast Company will sell out to the St. Croix but will go under it.

Whatever the final outcome of the rate war, the traveling public will be benefited both by low rates and by augmented steamer service between the North and the South.

MYSTERIOUS. ELOPES WITH HIS OWN WIFE!

YOUNG WIFE DISAPPEARS WHILE TAKING A WALK.

Had Recently Left Her Husband for Coast—Mother Is Perplexed With Girl—Husband Is Also Missing—Evidence That She Intended to Return When She Left.

A puzzling enigma was presented to the police yesterday when relatives of Mrs. Sadie Clark Sinclair, 16 years old, reported that she had suddenly disappeared while taking a walk Sunday. Her kin declare she has either been kidnaped or "gone away with."

Behind her "mysterious disappearance" lies a story of domestic unhappiness and a separation from her husband less than three weeks ago. One strange feature of the case is that her husband, Harry H. Sinclair, whom she had left, cannot be found.

Mrs. C. F. Clark, the girl's mother, is prostrated with grief and fear over her daughter's disappearance. On this account, other relatives are exerting every influence to find Mrs. Sinclair.

REPUBLIC SMITH

Two Thousand As Per

Convention Refuses Board of Education Lively Contest of Auditor.

THE FOLLOWING are delegates to the great last night, the regular Los Angeles:

- Mayor—George A. City Clerk—Harry J. City Treasurer—R. J. Tax Collector—E. E. City Assessor—Rabe City Auditor—E. E. City Attorney—Leslie Councilman—First Ward McKee; Third Ward, S. C. Fifth Ward, W. H. O'Connell; Ward, Henry H. Lyon; Eight R. E. Wirsberg.

The only great uproar in the election of nearly 1000 delegates, their names were announced, was caused by proposals to create the board of Education, for re-nomination was followed by a sharp contest.

When the chairman read against the approval of candidates for the board of Education and assessor, it was noted that there were no "strangers" on the delegates, for in these matters the voters simply vote loose, and did not act as if pleased.

When the chairman read against the approval of the endorsement of Board of Education, indignantly, many believed the matter was over for further action, and on a call division it was voted 525 to 222 in majority was against the endorsement.

The only two administrative officers about which there was any great vote those of Assessor and Auditor. It had been understood generally that the present Assessor, Walter Mallard, was to be re-elected, but many of the delegates were opposed to such action. The name of Mallard was proper and it was thought nominations were

McGAVIN



D. C. McGavin, chairman of the Republican City Convention, who called the convention to order.

close, but a man from the Sixth Ward created a stir by presenting the name of Robert L. Hesterman, who a few days ago announced that he had stepped out of the race, and another delegate proposed the name of Fred Stein.

ANOTHER BREAK. In the case of...

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Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Van Nuys, Who Have Relinquished the Vast Property.

For forty years Mr. Van Nuys was associated in the management and ownership of the immense ranch, his wife being the daughter of the late Isaac Lankershim, who bought the land from Pio Pico and the De Celises in the late 1850s.

The transaction just completed does not include the Encino ranch, which occupies a comparatively small portion of the Lankershim ranch, and which is owned by outside interests.

It was stated yesterday by one of the members of the purchasing syndicate that it has two purposes in mind. The first, of course, is to make money, and the other is to afford an opportunity to home-makers to secure desirable and fine to Los Angeles at a reasonable price instead of being forced to distant points and pay more property less desirable.

On these objects in view, the syndicate will build highways and establish towns, making of the vast territory the great community of ranches, many of them to be sold in parcels to the buyers. The town of Van Nuys is to be named in honor of the man who for so many years has controlled the destinies of the big ranch, and which will be the first to be established.

WORK FOR SURVEYORS. The possession of none of the land is given to the purchasers before the first of next year, it is understood that locations will be staked some time before that date, sections to be laid out and the first lots prepared.

Chahuena Pass. The soil is uniformly rich and deep and of an alluvial character. It is declared to be of the best in Southern California for alfalfa, small fruits, and diversified farming. It is the largest single body of fertile level land in this part of the State, and said to be the largest single body of land lying so near a big city in the United States.

The northern boundary of the Lankershim ranch is near the town of Chatsworth, while to the west are the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, and to the east the level floor and alight rolling hills of the remainder of the great valley.

RAPIER UNDER FLOW. Of the 43,000 acres of the ranch, 11,000 were plowed in summer fallow or in grain last year. Some 2000 to 3000 acres, suitable to the cultivation of strawberries and other fruits, have been plowed or planted. Only a small proportion of the entire area is of a nature that precludes its cultivation.

The crop of the Los Angeles Farming and Milling Company for the current year was approximately 300,000 bags of wheat and barley. In the production of wheat the ranch is notable in Southern California. It is about the only one that has been continuously and successfully

tentious but beautifully cultivated country home.

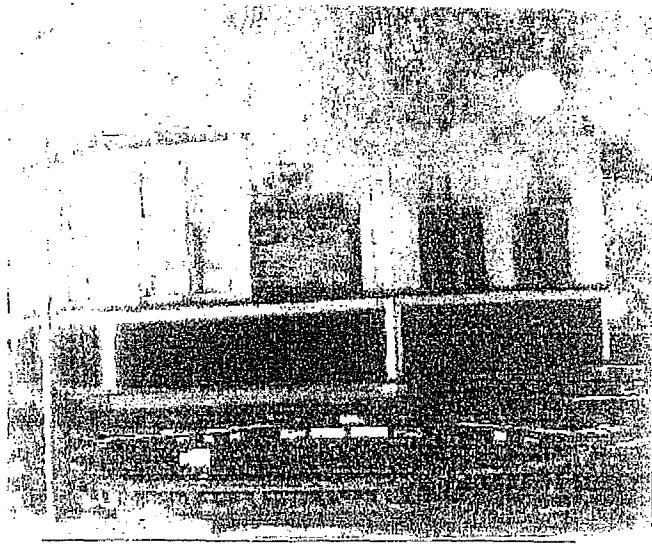
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## What's So Important About the Lankershim Legacy?

*You may be wondering why all the fuss about saving the Lankershim Reading Room. After all, it's just another old building, right? Here's a bit of information that may turn your thoughts toward making a donation to help restore it:*

Isaac Lankershim, passing through the San Fernando Valley in 1869, was impressed by the grazing potential of the land. When he heard the Pico brothers needed cash, he joined with other prominent businessmen to create the San Fernando Farm Association (which became the Los Angeles Farm & Milling Co.). The group bought 60,000 acres from the Picos for \$115,000, and the northern border was Roscoe Boulevard. The ranch land was used to raise sheep, then wheat. The association built the Valley's first flour mill and produced an astounding 510,000 bushels by 1888. One of the narrow roads cut through the wheat fields eventually became Lankershim Boulevard.

What we call North Hollywood was originally called Lankershim, then the name was changed in 1927. Eventually, the land became more valuable and was sold off in 5-, 10-, 20- and 40-acre parcels at \$120 an acre.

The Lankershims continued to live on what became the Lankershim Ranch until the last of the Lankershims died in 1948. Their remaining property was subdivided and sold in the early 1950s. Some of the buildings were moved to Chapel of the Canyons on Topanga Blvd.

The Lankershim Reading Room is all that remains of this part of Valley history.

*It was moved on the Andrew Pico grounds April 26-2001*

## Dedication Planned Oct. 5 for Chapel in the Canyon

The Chapel in the Canyon, 9012 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Canoga Park, will be dedicated Sunday, Oct. 5 at 3 p.m.

This particular day was chosen because it marks the first anniversary of the con-

gregation. One year ago on the first Sunday in October a few friends met in the minister's living room. Now, one year later, that same group of friends, many times multiplied, are dedicating one of the most beautiful chapels in the Valley.

The Chapel is but one of several facilities that will become a Christian retreat. There are no locks on the doors, and they are open day and night. Soft illumination at night welcomes the lone worshipper to rest in most helpful surroundings. On both sides of the chapel are enhanced by full-length planters and statuary, and recessed within rose glass windows is a life-size statue of Christ.

No offerings are ever taken at the Chapel, nor are there any solicitations or pledges of any kind.

Other facilities that presently serve the retreat grounds is a separate library building with 2000 books and a large landscaped prayer garden with 11 statues, many of them life-size.

The prayer garden has five divisions providing privacy in rest and worship; one section, called the "children's garden," has four statues of little children. There are many visitors each week.

The grounds are always open, and the public is cordially invited to visit.

## Lankershim Reading Room Progress



**Carriage Lights**



We have finally signed a contract with Joe Gonzalez to get the ramp built. It will be of concrete with iron railings, and due to City specifications, it will have to be somewhat long and ungainly to accommodate the handicapped-accessible codes. The parking lot will need to be expanded on the south side of the Lankershim Reading Room so the driver's side of vehicles face the ramp access (don't handicapped people ever sit in the passenger side?). Joe Gonzalez was heartily endorsed by Joe Govea, a member and former LA City Building Inspector, who knew him from his professional days. Mr. Gonzalez specializes in concrete work, which was one of the reasons he was chosen. We are most grateful to Midge Gisel who generously donated \$5,000 towards the project! After all these years of waiting, it is most unfortunate that since the contract was signed, we have been experiencing inclement weather causing the work to be stymied!

The original carriage lights were connected by Arnie Moore in January. The electricity is all hooked up.

The next big project will be refinishing the wooden oak floor and painting the inside.

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### **Your New San Fernando Valley Historical Society Board**

Elections were held, and we have some new board members; but first we would like to heartily thank our outgoing members for their service: Adrienne Biondo, Ken Morris, Bobbie Trafalski, and Phil and Bobbie Wenger. New board members are Arnie Moore and Elsie Iwata. Taking over as Vice-President for Bobbie Trafalski is Dr. Carole Morton. All the other officers remain the same.

To become a boardmember all one needs to do is be a dues-paying member of the San Fernando Valley Historical Society and have a willingness to serve. The board only meets once a month, with a hiatus of a month during the summer. One is allowed to miss for travel or sickness, of course.

One also may attend the board meetings without being a member. We welcome new ideas and input from all our members!

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**Consider helping to man our booth at the L.A. Heritage Day on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Heritage Square.  
Please phone the office for more details: (818) 365-7810**

## The Lankershim Mansion and Trembley Family History by William H. Trembley

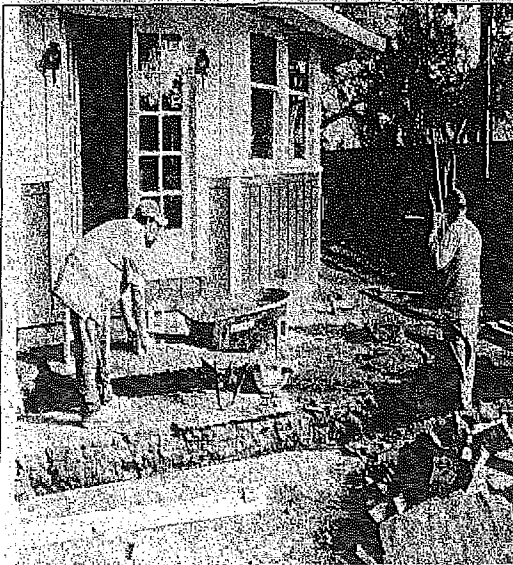
In response to the patriotic stresses of war effort, factory building, and management in Bakersfield and Santa Barbara, Harvey Trembley looked for a retreat to become reacquainted with his family. With an assignment for Lockheed in Burbank, the San Fernando Valley was the logical area of search. The Valley had minimum population, proximity to urban convenience, an agrarian economy, and scenic surroundings. The hills around Chatsworth Lake were the first selection. The limited level ground around the Lake kept the search alive. Having a son in high school in Canoga Park and a daughter in grammar school, the family was moved for an interim to a cozy little house on tree-lined Saticoy Street at Topanga Canyon. Not part of Harvey's plan, the vacant lot next door became populated with son Bill's multiple junk cars. Harvey's search was for a property large enough to accommodate a "Victory Garden," like Momma grew during the "Great War."

Ever conscious of a bargain, Harvey became aware of tax sales over the years; in his usual revue, he discovered a two-and-one-quarter acre, unimproved parcel in Chatsworth. He quickly moved to close the deal and bring utilities to the corner. An improved dry wash separated the property from a larger parcel facing Topanga Canyon Boulevard. This piece was only a few hundred feet from the intersection with Nordhoff Street. As luck would have it, the property for which he had searched had presented itself. In addition to making the combined parcel more than eight acres, a magnificent White Oak was the central feature of the Topanga property. The GREAT OAK, hundreds of years old, provided roosts for hawks, owls, songbirds, and any tired feathered or furred friend. The Great Oak also welcomed the Trembley family.

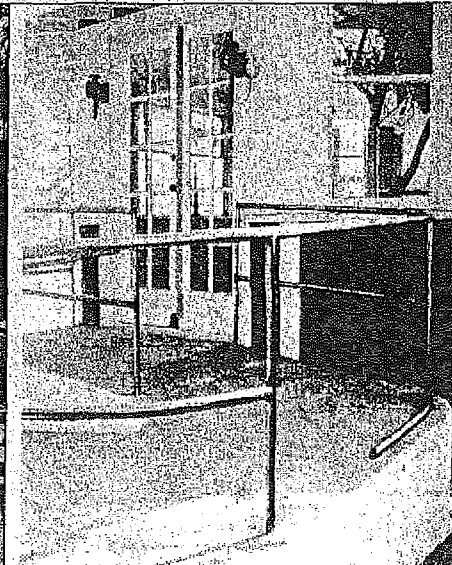
Since the acquisition of the properties had absorbed all liquid assets, there was time to dream, plan, and research. What structure might take advantage of the magnificent tree and provide for construction of the "homestead?" During the time for accumulation of finance, and the decision of what and where the house would be placed, Harvey allowed Bill to "share crop" on the property.

*To be continued in the next edition of The Valley.*

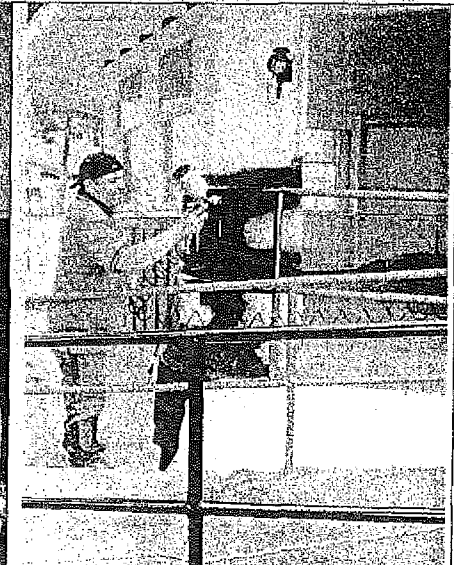
### The Lankershim Reading Room is nearly complete.



Pouring the Concrete



Adding Iron Rails



Painting the Rails

## History of the Trembley family and the Lankershim Reading Room; Richard M. Doyle, M.D.

The octagonal, 21-foot-wide building which we call the Lankershim Reading Room was built in 1906 by Col. J. B. Lankershim on the Lankershim Ranch in the city of Lankershim (now called North Hollywood). When the Ranch was sold to developers, the buildings were scheduled to be demolished. Harvey Grey Trembley, a Lockheed executive, heard of the opportunity to buy the octagonal room and the ranch house and purchased half of the U-shaped mansion and the LRR, and moved them in 1950 to an eight-acre property he had previously acquired on Topanga Canyon Blvd. between Parthenia and Nordhoff Streets.

On Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> 2009, I had the privilege of interviewing the lovely, alert, 97-year-old Mrs. Evelyn Anne Trembley and her charming daughter, Barbara Jean (Bobbe) Trembley. Mrs. Trembley recently donated three beautiful upholstered Victorian parlor chairs to the Historical Society. We wanted to know more about their life on the Topanga Blvd. Ranch and learned that they called the LRR the "Summer House."

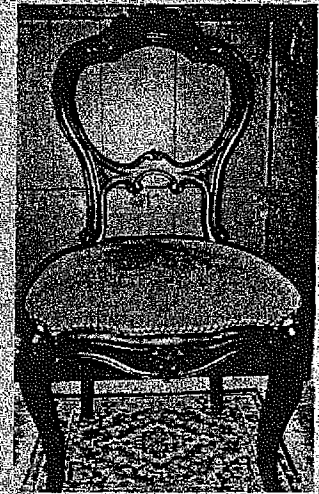
Mrs. Trembley was delighted to know that the LRR had been rescued from the bulldozer in 2001, and moved to the Andres Pico Adobe Park, and that its rehabilitation is almost complete at this time. (The home which they had enjoyed for seven years has been razed since its subsequent purchase in 1956 by the Chapel in the Canyon, and later sale by the Chapel for development as an up-scale retirement facility.)

They considered they were living "in a beautiful garden," and particularly enjoyed the beauty of a great oak tree and its feathered and furry denizens. They positioned the house adjacent to the beloved tree to shade it, but not obstruct the view of their front entrance. They entertained often. Mother played the accordion and father the guitar. They also hired the "Holy Cows," a high school music group, to entertain at their "taco parties."

Bill Trembley, who was finishing at Canoga Park High School, helped his father move the house in 1950, and "share-cropped" a portion of the ranch, growing corn, vegetables, fruit, and salad greens. He enlisted help from his "teen-aged cronies" for the farming. Barbara was in grammar school, and later attended San Fernando High School. She was selected as "Miss Granada Hills." They loved the ¾-inch oak floors and the wood-paneled walls, with cabinets of maple and some mahogany accents. Harvey used the "Summer House" for poker parties with his friends from the West Valley Sportsman's Club. Harvey decided to move to Woodland Hills, and was persuaded by his friend, Roy Rogers (Leonard Slye) to sell the Topanga property to the Chapel in the Canyon Church. The entire family was very disappointed when the house was radically altered and the great white oak was cut down to accommodate the church's plans. Subsequently, the pocket windows were boarded-over and stuccoed by the time the Historical Society rescued it. Harvey electrified the structures, which had been hooked-up to gas. He had them painted barn-red. The interior shelving in the LRR was added by the church.

We are grateful to Mrs. Trembley for the gift of the chairs. Also, to Barbara Trembley for the framed photos of the house; the LRR; and the great oak when they owned the property; and to Bill Trembley for his poignant three-paged account of life and times on the ranch.

Among Harvey's assignments for Lockheed were guiding the manufacturing organization of the Polaris missile system in Sunnyvale, CA, and five years in Brussels, Belgium, as European Director to train NATO pilots to fly the F104 fighter plane.



One of the three  
Victorian Salon Chairs

Tuesday, February 24, 2009



## "ADOBE'S ALLEY 2ND HAND SALE"

Saturday, May 17th 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Andres Pico Adobe,  
10940 Sepulveda Blvd., Mission Hills [Map](#)

Mission Hills, CA - The San Fernando Valley Historical Society will sponsor the "Adobe's Alley 2nd Hand Sale" from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 17, 2003 at the Andres Pico Adobe, 10940 Sepulveda Blvd., Mission Hills. The landmark adobe is located at in Andres Pico Adobe Park at the intersection of Sepulveda and Brand Boulevards (directly across from the Mission Hills Annex of the U.S. Post Office).

All proceeds from the sale will benefit restoration of the Lankershim Reading Room, the last remnant of Valley pioneer Issac Lankershim's ranch that once covered the southern half of the San Fernando Valley. Built in 1906, the octagon-shaped redwood building was saved from demolition by the Society, which hopes to complete restoration this year with the assistance of community funds.

"This fundraising event is also somewhat of a museum collection clearance sale to help make room for historical artifacts that need to be in a protected environment," noted Midge Gisel, chairperson of the sale. "We need to clear out several hundred items from our storage areas both inside and outside of the Adobe."

Among the items to be sold will be several small appliances, cookware, clothing, and other odds & ends that are not of historical value, but nevertheless may be useful or helpful for someone else, Gisel added.

The public is invited to donate items to the sale for the purpose of raising money for the Lankershim Reading Room. These items will be accepted on Monday, May 12 at the Adobe from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Any items not sold at the sale will be donated by the Society to the Council of the Blind.

In addition, the Valley Quiltmakers will have a "Poppies on Parade" opportunity quilt on display at the sale, and will be selling chances for \$1 each. A portion of the proceeds from this sale will go to the Painted Turtle Camp for Children.

The San Fernando Valley Historical Society is celebrating its 60th anniversary year in 2003, and will be open for tours from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, May 18.

For additional information  
call the San Fernando Valley Historical Society  
818-365-7810

### History of the Lankershim Reading Room

In 1904, J.B.Lankershim built on the Lankershim Ranch an octagonal 21' wide redwood building with a roof extending ~3' beyond each dimension. (Now called North Hollywood, Lankershim was the community name at that time.) Double French doors provided entry. Double adjacent pocket-windows provided ventilation and light on the seven other sides. The lower panel of each pocket-window could be lowered into the wall space below the window for cross-ventilation. J. B.'s son, Jack used the structure for recreation, and it is believed that it was from this house that he painted a small painting of the surrounding countryside.

Frank and Maria Avila had been hired to manage the Ranch, and they lived in half of the U-shaped ranch house when it was not occupied by son, Jack, or daughter, Doria.

By 1950, the Ranch had been sold for subdivision, and a Lockheed executive, Harvey Grey Trembley, purchased the octagonal house and half of the U-shaped house. Mr. Trembley had the two buildings moved to 9012 Topanga Canyon Blvd. on eight acres he owned there, between Parthenia and Nordhoff Streets in Canoga Park. The Trembleys called the octagonal house the "Summer House" and entertained in it. In 1957, Mr. Trembley decided to move to Woodland Hills and sold his property to the Chapel in the Canyon at the urging of his friend, Roy Rogers, a supporter of the new church.

The building was then transformed by placing panels over the windows, removing the two adjacent windows opposite the doors and constructing a bay-window-like structure there. The building was then covered with stucco.

The property was sold by the church to the Marriott Co. to be used for an assisted living facility and condominium complex.

In 2001 Jim Gulbranson witnessed a bull-dozer heading for the remaining forlorn octagonal building and hopped out of his truck to speak to the driver who had no idea of the historical value of the structure. After Jim had explained that it was the last remaining building from the Lankershim Ranch, the bull-dozer driver/contractor offered to allow the San Fernando Valley Historical Society the building if it could be removed within the month. Jim approached his friend, Ray Phillips, at the Leonis Adobe in the hope of obtaining funds to facilitate the move. The Board of the Leonis Adobe generously provided \$7,500 to help finance the move. The Department of Recreation and Parks agreed to allow the structure to be moved onto the property of the Andres Pico Adobe Park. The Board of the SFVHS was enthusiastic about saving the structure, and on April 17, 2001 the move was made. Preparations for the move required removing a portion of wrought-iron fence along Brand Blvd, removing a tree which was determined to be dying, removing fencing, gates and light poles to accommodate the tight squeeze while passing in front of the Adobe.

Money has been raised since that time by dedicating multiple fund-raising events to construct a foundation, remove the stucco to reveal the unique windows, reconstruct the overhanging roof (the roof extended beyond the 21' width of the building and had to be shaved off for the move), re-shingle, remove the "bay window", support the floor, rewire, and to construct a disabled access ramp. The city required enhanced disabled access and funds to cut the curb and construct a decomposed granite path to the Adobe bathrooms, upgrade the stalls with grab-bars, raise wash-basins to accommodate wheelchairs, and

faucet levers to facilitate use by the disabled were generously provided by the Mission Hills Neighborhood Council.

The exterior has been painted; the interior is ready for scraping and painting. The broken windows have been replaced with safety glass. A period fan with center light has been installed. The floor will be sanded and protected. Finally, artifacts from the Lankershim era will be displayed in the building. Many artifacts from the Lankershim Ranch have been preserved and kept at her home by Maria Avila. They will be moved when the building is ready for them. Plans to place an enlarged a copy of Jack Lankershim's painting of the Lankershim Ranch on the wall-space opposite the French door entry are underway.

Preliminary report by Richard G. Doyle, M.D. April 20, 2009

# A VALLEY STORY

TWO LIVES ENTWINED

by Hazel Palm

Never in history, at any time or place have two men named Isaac helped to formulate a destiny as did Isaac Lankershim and Isaac N. Van Nuys.

The San Fernando Valley in Southern California was discovered in 1769 by Don Gaspar de Portola as he passed through the Sepulveda pass in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The spacious valley covers 275 square miles (175,360 acres). Rectangular in shape, it is encompassed by foothills and lower mountain slopes. It extends 24 miles in its east-west direction and 13 miles in the north-south direction. The south side is bordered by the Santa Monica mountains that reach 2,000 feet elevation near Calabasas to the southwest and to 1,800 feet at the Canuenga Pass. The eastern boundry is marked by the Verdugo Hills, an extension of the San Gabriel Mountains. The Verdugo Pass or Narrows is an opening at the foot of Verdugo Hills that leads out of the valley. It is at this spot the Los Angeles River flows. The northern edge of the valley is separated from the Mohave Desert by the San Gabriel Mountains. Their beautiful snow covered peaks can be seen from the valley on a winters day. The western edge is framed by the Agoura Hills, the Simi Hills and the Santa Susana Mountains.

The rocks around this region tell a great story of uplift of mountains and retreat of the seas. Apparently the earthquakes that accompanied these great jurching earth movements were of a magnitude completely unlike those measured in historic times. Well before the first sign of human settlement, the valley lay under the ocean, with freshly uplifted mountains forming the tilted sides of a great trough, whose walls were cut by enormous side-canyons. Into this trough were dumped great volumes of mud, sand, and even boulders as the neighboring mountains continued to be stripped down. Some of these deposits fell in the ocean, burying whales, seashells, and other creatures in gigantic underwater avalanches. Others fell on the flanks of the trough, burying the remains of great forests. With continued uplift of the mountains, some of these fossil beds got uplifted as well, so that fossil whales can be found today at thousands of feet above the present sea level.

Many of the fossils of land-dwelling animals like sabre-toothed tigers, giant ground sloths, and mountain lions tell us that the climate was much wetter and warmer than today. The region may have supported a large human population of nomadic peoples not very different from the "native Americans" our grandfathers knew, but nobody's quite sure when. Even though human artifacts and fossils don't usually have numbers stamped on them telling of their age, some scientists like to speculate that all of these changes took place over several million years. Speculation aside, we can all agree that the formation of the San Fernando Valley did not take place without some pretty radical and catastrophic upheavals! \* *as a result of the world wide flood (Noah's)*

Now, so much for the geographical description of the valley, let us go back in history to see how Isaac Lankershim and Isaac Van Nuys helped to develop this area.

\* contributed by Bill Hoesch MS geology, from the  
Institute of Creation Research  
August 14, 2001

Isaac Lankershim 1819-1882

Lankershim was born in Nuremberg, Bavaria in 1819. As a young boy of 17 he came to America. Isaac was a restless sort and soon ventured to the midwest. In 1854 he helped drive a herd of cattle across the plains from an outpost in St. Louis, Missouri, to California, settling in Napa, Calif.

Isaac Van Nuys 1835-1909

On a farm near West Spartan, New York, on November 20, 1835, Isaac N. Van Nuys was born, the son of Peter Van Nuys of Dutch ancestry. Isaac was educated in West Spartan schools and at the Academy of Lima in New York. He worked on his father's farm until he was 30 years old. All of his life he suffered from asthma, so in 1865 he decided to come to California for his health. He settled in Napa, California. From there he went to Monticello, California, where he opened a general merchandise store selling small implements to nearby farmers. From this association with farmers he learned about farming in California, which was much different than the way farming was done on the family farm in New York.

It was at this time that the two Isaacs met. Shortly after their meeting Lankershim bought a rancho in Fresno. He also had much land in Northern California which he used for cattle grazing. In 1868 Lankershim purchased the 16,000 acre El Cajon Ranch in San Diego County. He needed help managing all of these properties, so Lankershim persuaded Van Nuys to be supervisor of his business ventures while he continued to operate his general store.

In 1869 Lankershim became interested in the San Fernando Valley land, which was at this time devoted to raising sheep and cattle. Lankershim subsequently formed a syndicate called the San Fernando Farm and Homestead Association. On July 2, 1869, they purchased an undivided half interest in the San Fernando Valley from Governor Pio Pico for \$115,000.00. In the sale certain specified areas were retained, including the 1,000 acre "Pico Reserve" near the San Fernando Mission.

The Association brought a friendly suit against the heirs of Eulogio de Celis, the valley was resurveyed and the Association received the southerly half amounting to nearly 60,000 acres. Within a year the venture's name was changed to San Fernando Sheep Co. An extreme drought in 1874-75 put an end to this business.

Going back a few years to 1861, on Christmas Eve during a periodic wet cycle that struck the Los Angeles area, adobe structures gave way and just melted under the downpour of thirty days of rain. Orchards and vineyards collapsed as the ground supporting them gave way. Shoppers on Main Street stood waist high in water. Rain continued through January, February and March of 1862. Drinking water and refuse systems were hard hit by all the rain and typhus and small pox began in epidemic proportions, spreading out to neighboring settlements and reaching into the

San Fernando Valley. The epidemic practically wiped out all of the Indian population.

The rain caused the valley to bloom. Wild wheat, feed for the ever growing cattle herds, was plentiful. This brought the price of beef up and the standard of living increased. Overstocking and overgrazing of the range land brought on the predictable results. In a few years the inevitable dry cycle returned. The floor of the valley turned from lush green grazing land to brown, then to dust.

The sheep could be moved to the hills where there was food and water. The valley received four inches of rain in two years. As a result, the cattle died and those that survived were sold for feed. The market was glutted with beef, thus causing the prices to go down. With beef prices down, the only value in cattle was in hides for leather. The over abundance of hides also brought the price of leather down.

By 1880, nine years after San Fernando Homestead Association was formed, the name changed to Los Angeles Farm and Milling Company. By 1874 Van Nuys and others had joined the corporation. This was the beginning of real progress in the farming and milling business in the San Fernando Valley.

Cattle and sheep grazing gave way to farm land in 1875. The rainy season was helpful. Isaac Lankershim and Isaac Van Nuys founded their wheat empire which was to rule San Fernando Valley for a generation.

The plowing and seeding were done by teams of eight horses or mules. The community of San Fernando was used as a shipping point for crops of wheat and barley. The horse teams would arrive every day except Sunday during August, September and October and haul grain for shipment to San Pedro, until the construction of the San Fernando tunnel and the completion of the Southern Pacific railroad between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The completion of the railroad proved to be all important in transporting the wheat by rail to San Pedro as well. The abundant wheat crop was loaded on ships and sent to Liverpool, England. The 1888 crop raised 510,000 bushels of grain.

Pioneers and squatters were coming to California in great numbers. They were drawn to northern California because they felt there was not enough water for farming in the southern part of the state. They were not aware of the rich underground streams. Due to the importance of water to the valley, it was not long before experimentation with water development began.

In 1882 Isaac Lankershim, an outstanding pioneer in the development of the valley died. He was a devout Baptist. It is said that he did not live to see his ranch reach its highest potential.

Real estate development was making inroads into the wheat bearing land. Squatters descended like locust onto Rancho San Fernando. In the south

half of the ranch, 1,200 "misguided, get something for nothing" people moved onto the land belonging to the Los Angeles Farm and Milling Company, of which Isaac Van Nuys was president and manager. Van Nuys' attorney suggested, "haul them to the nearest county line and dump them". Van Nuys was a courteous man and preferred to take them to court instead of using force. As a result, the matter was in litigation for ten years and was eventually required to go to the United States Supreme Court for a decision. The squatters claimed the patent to the rancho was void, therefore the land was open to homesteading. Van Nuys spent \$50,000 in court costs and attorney fees.

February 10, 1880, Isaac Newton Van Nuys married Miss Susanna Lankershim, daughter of Isaac Lankershim. Three children were born to Susanna and Isaac. They were: Annis (Mrs. Richard Schweppe), J. Benton Van Nuys and Kate (Mrs. James R. Page).

Isaac Lankershim had one son (in addition to his daughter), Colonel James B. Lankershim, who continued to work the family business that his father started. The Colonel had a son, Jack, and a daughter, Doria. Jack and Doria were the last generation to carry the Lankershim name.

The 60,000 acres that Isaac Lankershim bought from Governor Pio Pico were located all the way south from the present Roscoe Blvd., to the Hollywood hills, from Cahuenga Pass and west to Calabasas.

The street named for Lankershim runs through what is now known as North Hollywood. The town was at one time called Toluca. Colonel J.B. Lankershim donated quite a bit of property to the Southern Pacific Railroad, with the understanding that they change the name from Toluca to Lankershim. This same railroad runs along Chandler Blvd., in the town of North Hollywood. The name was changed in 1927.

In the late 1800's a great real estate boom took place in the San Fernando Valley as well as all over Southern California. One of the main causes of this boom was extensive advertising and publicity. News of this great valley was published abroad by gold diggers, travelers, residents writing to families back East encouraging them to come and see this great land. Railroad companies were eager to induce travelers to locate along their lines. Newspapers boasted of the climate, agricultural potentials, low cost of living, healthfulness, beautiful scenery and business opportunities.

Even as far back as 1874, Ben C. Truman, a newsman and editor of the "Star" in his publication "Semi-Tropic California" said, "Los Angeles County has no equal in the world. Look this way to seekers after homes and happiness! Semi-tropical California welcomes you all." This and other similar publications went all over the United States. Little wonder our valley has developed into the "melting pot" of the world.

In 1888 a new corporation, The Lankershim Ranch Land and Water Company, bought 1,200 acres of land from the Los Angeles Farm and Milling Co. The directors of the new company were L.T. Garnsey, F.C. Garbutt, William

Bagel, S. W., Cartwright, G. W., Smith and W. S. DeVan. The land was subdivided into lots, most being 40 acres each. The selling price was anywhere between \$5.00 to \$150.00. This land first known as Toluca, changed to Hankensham and is now North Hollywood.

The Weddington Brothers General Store and post office served the land holders of this area. Soon a blacksmith shop was added, also a hotel and a school. North Hollywood today is a great industrial area. Every enterprise imaginable can be found there.

The real estate industry began to grow with the advent of subdivision. The Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company paid \$2.5 million for 17,500 acres of land purchased from J. B. Van Nuys, son of Isaac Newton Van Nuys. The land was divided into three separate town sites, one being Van Nuys. In 1911, the town site of Van Nuys covered one square mile. A half interest was bought by William Paul Whitset for \$176,000. A real estate office was soon built, followed by ten homes and the So. Pacific Railroad depot. By this time people were driving across the country to Los Angeles. The automobile added in driving prospective customers to the Valley. Whittier's slogan to draw customers to Van Nuys was, "Van Nuys, the town that started right". Lots on Van Nuys Blvd., were auctioned off and fairly were sold the first day. Thus the town of Van Nuys officially began on February 22, 1911. Street lights and gas were not available until 1912.

Ranch and ranch land soon gave way to sites for homes and industry. In 1950 Van Nuys narrowly escaped over 4,000 jobs entering to the aircraft industry. Van Nuys Administrative Center was constructed, as well as freeways making downtown Los Angeles accessible. Approximately 150,000 people reside in Van Nuys today. It has become a popular residential, industrial, commercial, manufacturing and transportation center of the San Fernando Valley.

May I add a personal note? When I first started this research, the only thing I knew about these two men were their names and that the boulevards of Van Nuys and Hankensham were named after them. Neither did I imagine how their lives were intertwined nor how their lives helped shape San Fernando Valley history.

#### Hillegas De Ocelis

In 1815, the San Fernando Mission lands were leased to Andres Pico and Juan Manso for \$1,120.00 per year for nine years. This lease did not bring in enough money to finance the war with Mexico so Pico Pico, then Governor of California, went to necessary to lease 117,000 acres to his friend Hillegas De Ocelis for \$11,000.00 in the year 1816. This was the largest area of any single grant at this time. The grant stipulated he could not take possession for eight months.

A board of Land Commissioners was formed by the U. S. Government to pass and complete investigate this transaction. The Commission confirmed

the claim with the statement, "The genuineness of the grant is clearly established and circumstances under which it was made is clearly explained as to leave no doubt it was done in good faith."

In 1845 De Celis sold a half interest in the property to Andres Pico for \$15,000.00, which he later transferred to his brother Pio.

In 1869, Pio Pico sold the land to the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association, headed by Isaac Tankersham and Isaac Van Nuys, who paid \$115,000.00 for the property.

De Celis did not spend many years on his rancho home in the San Fernando Valley, which still stands at 10910 Sepulveda Blvd., near Brand Blvd. This property was restored and enlarged by Andres and Catarina Pico, who resided there until the late 1890's when they moved to the Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. The home was then rented out and eventually fell into ruin.

In 1930 Mark R. Harrington, an anthropologist and curator of the Southwest Museum of Los Angeles, completely restored the Adobe.

De Celis returned to Spain in 1853 and never returned to California. He died in Bilbao, Spain, on January 27, 1889. However, his widow and children did return to Southern California.

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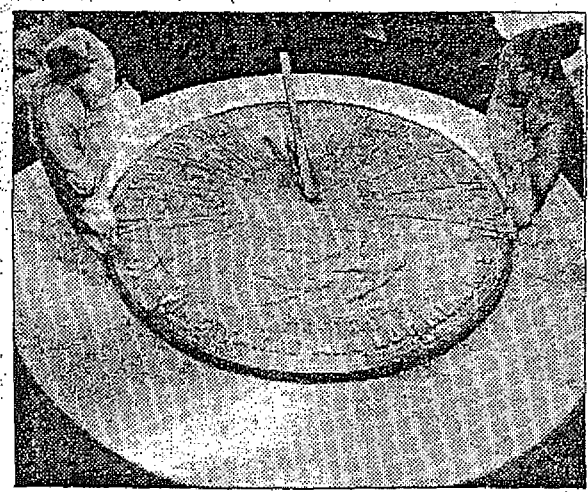
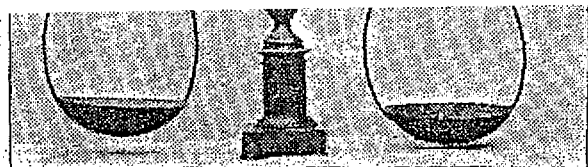
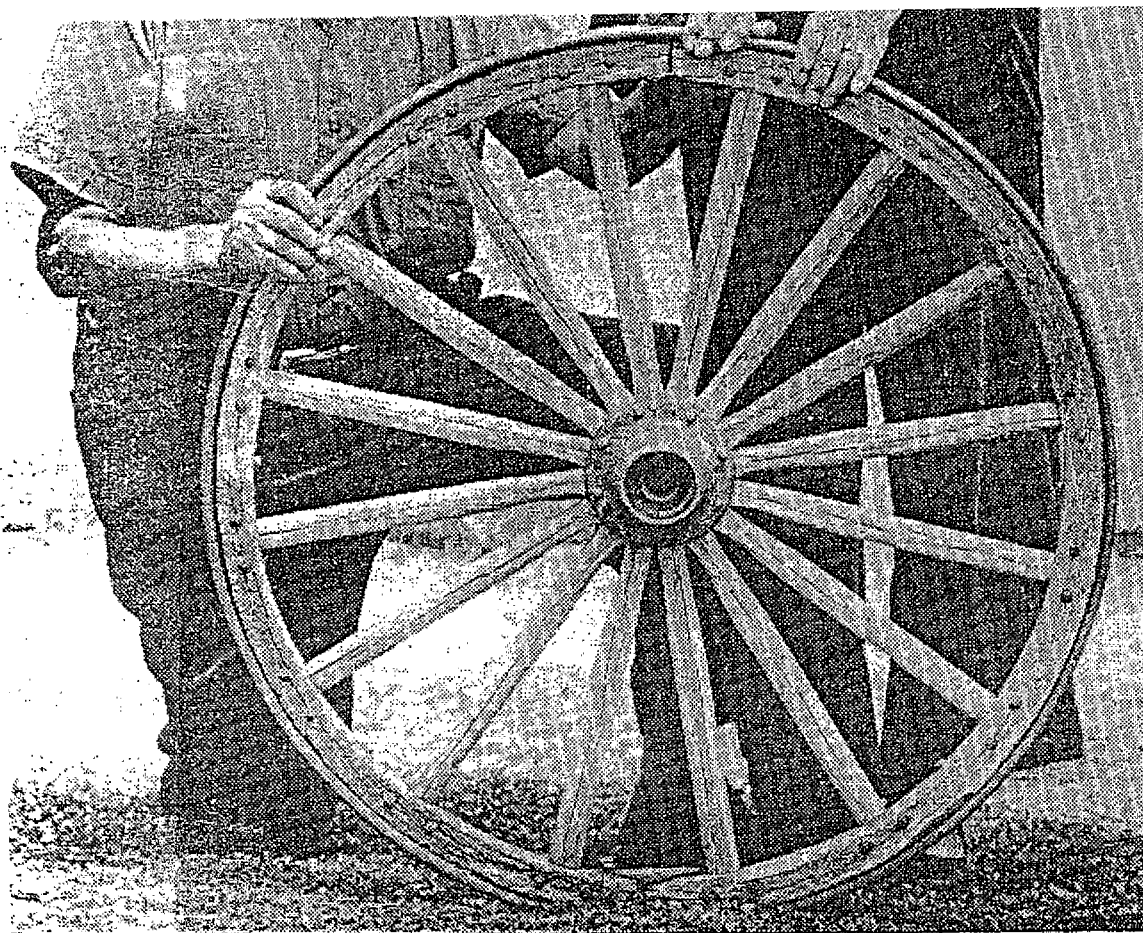
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AL SEIB / Los Angeles Times

Francisco and Maria Avila with an old wagon wheel from the Lankershim ranch in front yard of their Granada Hills home; Francisco Avila, former Lankershim caretaker, adjusts delicate scales once used by the Lankershim family to weigh gold; a sundial in Avilas' backyard was originally part of the Lankershim estate.

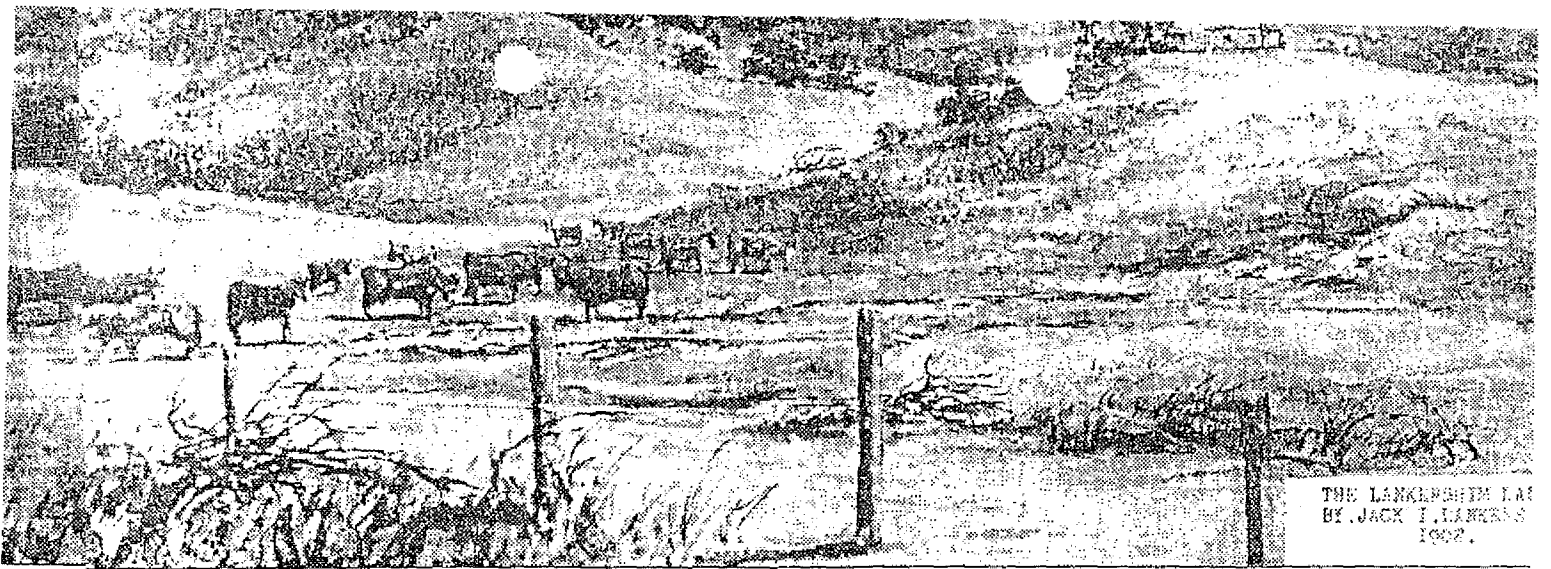
# Couple Keep Heritage of Lankershim Alive

By MAYERENE BARKER, Times Staff Writer

One of Francisco and Maria Avila's most prized possessions is a painting done by their former employer, the late Jack Lankershim, that exemplifies his pioneer family's love affair with the San Fernando Valley. In the painting, which hangs in a prominent spot at the couple's Granada Hills home, cows graze contentedly amid fruit trees and lush, rolling hills. A winding dirt road crosses the tranquil scene. In the background, the mountains rise almost majestically—unobstructed by tall concrete and glass buildings, the clutter of billboards and neon signs or the thick brown haze of smog. The setting for the 1908 painting was what is now the corner of Lankershim and Ventura boulevards—near one of two roads that led to the main use on the 60,000-acre ranch that the artist's

grandfather, Isaac Lankershim, bought in 1869. Lankershim paid Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California, \$115,000 for the property, which included much of the southern Valley. Maria Avila, 72, said the home's other road was a half-mile away at what later became the intersection of Lankershim Boulevard and Vineland Avenue. "It's quite a contrast between then and now," she said. "I look at this painting every time I read about the complaints about high-rise buildings, traffic congestion and billboards on Lankershim or Ventura. I wish others could see it. People don't realize how nice it was back then. And soon there won't be anybody around to tell them." The Avilas, who lived on the Lankershim ranch from 1929 until the last of family's original property

was subdivided in the early 1950s, are dedicated to preserving the Lankershim name and the family's place in the Valley's history. "They were just like family," Maria Avila said. "I was only 16 when I married Francisco and moved to the ranch. After we're gone, there won't be anybody left who knows how things were then." Except for Jack Lankershim's adopted daughter Jacqueline, who has no children and has lived in Europe for more than 40 years, the last of the Lankershims died in 1948. Maria Avila said Isaac Lankershim's partner in developing his vast Valley holdings was his son-in-law, Isaac Van Nuys, and "the Van Nuyses are all gone, too." As caretakers of the Lankershim estate, the Avilas said they lived in one wing of what they call



Los Angeles

1902 painting by Jack Lankershim shows cows near dirt road that is now Ventura Boulevard near Universal C

# AVILAS: Lankershim Heritage Kept Alive

Continued from Page 16

big house." while members of the Lankershim family lived in the wing. Orchards of walnuts, peaches and other fruits shed around them.

Avilas' wing of the house reserved and moved to Canonick. It now is the Chapel in the Topanga Canyon on, 9012 Topanga Canyon, Avilas said.

Maria Avilas inherited many of the couple's personal possessions. Lankershim's furniture once used in the ranch, including a four-poster bed, cedar chest, treadle sewing machine and huge desk, old photographs, now decorating the Avilas' home.

The Lankershim sundial from the couple's back stands in pump from the

A water pump, a shiny red and white, repainted the circular driveway, stands in the house. Maria Avilas in front of a pair of lace curtains has several pairs of lace curtains, hand women, carefully folded and put away.

## to Museums

Items Donated

belonged to Col. Lankershim's sword that Isaac's son and Lankershim has on display at his father's house on Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood. The museum also gave the Avilas family the Valley Forge Historical Museum. Francisco Avilas, director of the museum.

Avilas' success in the 1970s in Hollywood opposed the merchants chants when the name of Lankershim Boulevard to Universal Boulevard.

eastern edge of the family's vast holdings in 1888. He later changed the community's name from Toluca to Lankershim. In 1927, the international lure of Hollywood inspired local merchants to launch a campaign to change the community's name to North Hollywood. The old town site of Toluca is now part of Toluca Lake.

"They thought they would cash in on the Hollywood image," Avilas said. "They never really did."

## Journal Saved

Among other items saved by the Avilas was a typed and bound journal kept by Col. Lankershim during a 1929 European journey. The journal, entitled "Europe Before the War, Volume 2," is illustrated with pictures taken by Lankershim during the trip. His writings detail shipboard life among the wealthy and describe places in Europe the Lankershims visited.

The journal also recalls the stock market crash of that year and the attitude of Europeans toward visiting Americans.

"The Swiss innkeepers posted a notice in their hotels that they would charge 20% extra on all bills that were not paid in Swiss money," Lankershim wrote, "but they afterward rescinded this ridiculous order and practically any American could board at the hotels as long as they wanted without paying until the end of their trip; and soon the hotel companies took any money or checks that they gave them. I had plenty of money with me and paid my bills regularly, being almost the only one that did."

The second volume of the journal starts in mid-sentence.

"I wish I could have saved the first half," Francisco Avilas said.

The 15-foot-high monument sits behind what was once actor Errol Flynn's estate, atop a steep, almost inaccessible incline between Mulholland Drive at the end of Nichols

Canyon Road. It was built by Boy Scouts of America more than 40 years ago to honor Lankershim who had donated several acres

Please see AVILAS, Page 16

# AVILAS: Pioneers' Heritage Kept Alive

Continued from Page 20

land in the mountains for a campsite.

The Avilas helped convince the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board to declare the stone tower a historical monument in 1977.

Francisco Avila said he at first favored a recent proposal to move the monument to Campo de Ca-huenga, where it could be seen by more people. However, he said, after contacting the former Jacqueline Lankershim in Europe, he now opposes the move.

"She said, 'Frank, don't let anyone disturb Grandpapa's monument,'" Avila said. "I will honor her wishes. His ashes are scattered there in the mountains. In a sense, it is his burial place."

## Arrived in Toluca in 1920

Francisco Avila first saw his future employer's vast landholdings in 1920 when he came to Toluca in the eastern Valley from Arizona with his parents. He was 12. At that age, he said, he quit school and went to work doing odd jobs for 20 cents an hour.

"The biggest thrill of my life was to bring that first \$10 I earned home to my mother," he said.

Avila said there was very little in Toluca in those days—"a hotel with some stairs outside, a grocery store, a feed store, not too much else."

Avila said he later earned 35 cents an hour working in the peach groves that were abundant in the eastern Valley in the early part of this century. When he was 16, Avila said, he helped build the McKinley Home for Boys in North Hollywood. Later, he worked on the construction of the Lakeside Golf Course in Toluca Lake, earning 50 cents an hour.

He said he was told by a friend that the Lankershims needed a caretaker and went to apply for the job.

## Asked 4 Questions

"I guess Jack Lankershim thought I was somebody dependable," Avila said. "He asked me only four questions: my age, where I lived, where I came from and where I had worked before. Then, he hired me."

He said he went to work for the Lankershims on June 19, 1929. The

pay was 50 cents an hour for nine hours of work, six days a week. Avila said he received his check every Monday in the mail.

When the Avilas married in November, 1929, Avila said, Jack Lankershim asked the newlyweds to move to the ranch. His salary was raised from 50 cents an hour to \$125 a month, Avila said, and he was put in charge of running the estate.

"I was given a free hand," Avila said. "The only thing Jack told me when I bought anything for the ranch was to make sure it was made in California. They had respect for working people. They treated us well. They were very, very nice people."

When he left the Lankershims' employ after more than 20 years, Avila said, he received a \$1,500 "separation allowance" and some furnishings from the estate. He worked for General Motors until his retirement 12 years ago.

The Avilas bought the half-acre on which their present house stands for \$4,500 in the early 1950s.

## Other Volunteer Work

Before they built their ranch-style home on the site, Maria Avila said, they used to go there to pick oranges.

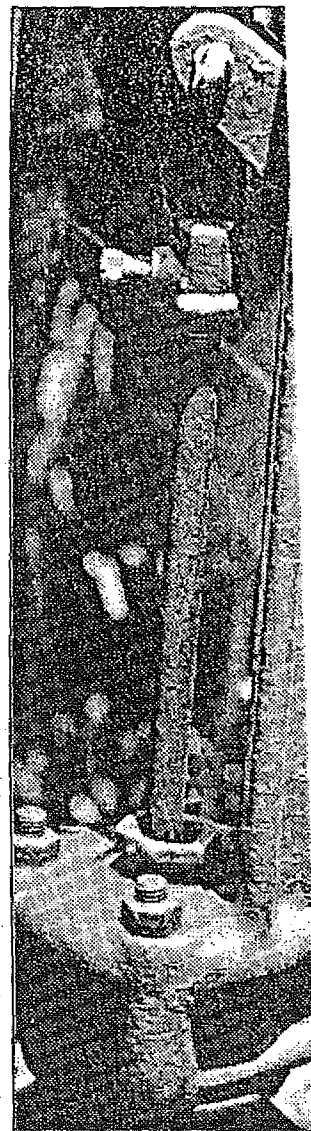
Besides preserving the Lankershim name and becoming involved in other historical causes, the Avilas volunteer two days a week at the Spastic Children's Foundation in Canoga Park. The foundation has been the home of their only child, a daughter, Esther, now 48, for the last three years.

"She stayed at home with us until then," Maria Avila said.

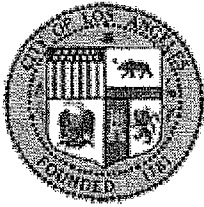
Francisco Avila said he had several opportunities to buy parcels of the Lankershim estate as it was being sold bit by bit over the years. He said he bought a house and some land in North Hollywood in 1935 for \$800. He put \$200 down on the property and made \$25-a-month payments on it.

The couple never lived in the house but rented it until it was sold for \$15,000 in 1946.

"I passed up a chance to buy 20 acres at Lankershim and Sherman Way for \$500 an acre in 1938," Avila said. "I've been kicking myself ever since."



Hands of Francisco Avila



City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning

10/23/2009

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

**PROPERTY ADDRESSES**

15370 W BRAND BLVD  
10940 N SEPULVEDA BLVD

**ZIP CODES**

91345

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

None

**CASE NUMBERS**

CPC-1990-596-GPC  
CPC-1986-602  
CPC-12275  
ORD-94591  
ORD-169432-SA460  
ORD-133958  
ND-89-927-ZC  
AFF-2317

**Address/Legal Information**

PIN Number: 210B145 467  
Lot Area (Calculated): Data Not Available  
Thomas Brothers Grid: PAGE 501 - GRID H2  
Assessor Parcel No. (APN): 2615001900  
Tract: TR 28978  
Map Reference: M B 761-23/24  
Block: None  
Lot: 1  
Arb (Lot Cut Reference): None  
Map Sheet: 210B145

**Jurisdictional Information**

Community Plan Area: Mission Hills - Panorama City - North Hills  
Area Planning Commission: North Valley  
Neighborhood Council: Mission Hills  
Council District: CD 7 - Richard Alarcon  
Census Tract #: 1094.00  
LADBS District Office: Van Nuys

**Planning and Zoning Information**

Special Notes: None  
Zoning: OS-1XL  
Zoning Information (ZI): None  
General Plan Land Use: Open Space  
Plan Footnote - Site Req.: See Plan Footnotes  
Additional Plan Footnotes: Mission Hills  
Specific Plan Area: None  
Design Review Board: No  
Historic Preservation Review: Yes  
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone: None  
Other Historic Designations: LA-7: Romulo Pico Adobe (Ranchito Romulo)  
CA-362: Romulo Pico Adobe (Ranchito Romulo)  
US-66000211: Romulo Pico Adobe (Ranchito Romulo)  
Available  
Other Historic Survey Information: Available  
Mills Act Contract: None  
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts: None  
CDO - Community Design Overlay: None  
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay: No  
Streetscape: No  
Sign District: No  
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area: None  
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency: None  
Central City Parking: No  
Downtown Parking: No  
Building Line: None  
500 Ft School Zone: No  
500 Ft Park Zone: Active: Andres Pico Adobe Park

**Assessor Information**

Assessor Parcel No. (APN): 2615001900  
Ownership (Assessor): L A CITY  
0  
0

Ownership (City Clerk):	CITY OF LOS ANGELES, DEPT. OF REC. & PARKS 200 N MAIN ST. #1290 CHE LOS ANGELES CA 90012
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*:	2.130 (ac)
Use Code:	6400 - Club Lodge or Hall or Fraternal Organization
Assessed Land Val.:	\$44,954
Assessed Improvement Val.:	\$0
Last Owner Change:	12/08/67
Last Sale Amount:	\$0
Tax Rate Area:	16
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk):	2-889
Building 1:	
1. Year Built:	Not Available
1. Building Class:	Not Available
1. Number of Units:	0
1. Number of Bedrooms:	0
1. Number of Bathrooms:	0
1. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)
Building 2:	
2. Year Built:	Not Available
2. Building Class:	Not Available
2. Number of Units:	0
2. Number of Bedrooms:	0
2. Number of Bathrooms:	0
2. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)
Building 3:	
3. Year Built:	Not Available
3. Building Class:	Not Available
3. Number of Units:	0
3. Number of Bedrooms:	0
3. Number of Bathrooms:	0
3. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)
Building 4:	
4. Year Built:	Not Available
4. Building Class:	Not Available
4. Number of Units:	0
4. Number of Bedrooms:	0
4. Number of Bathrooms:	0
4. Building Square Footage:	None
Building 5:	
5. Year Built:	Not Available
5. Building Class:	Not Available
5. Number of Units:	0
5. Number of Bedrooms:	0
5. Number of Bathrooms:	0
5. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)

**Additional Information**

Airport Hazard:	None
Coastal Zone:	None
Farmland:	Urban and Built-up Land
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone:	No
Fire District No. 1:	No
Fire District No. 2:	No
Flood Zone:	None
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties:	No
Methane Hazard Site:	None
High Wind Velocity Areas:	YES
Hillside Grading:	No
Oil Wells:	None
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone:	No
Distance to Nearest Fault:	0.71384 (km)
Landslide:	No
Liquefaction:	No

**Economic Development Areas**

Business Improvement District:	None
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Federal Empowerment Zone:	None
Renewal Community:	No
Revitalization Zone:	None
State Enterprise Zone:	None
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative:	None

**Public Safety**

Police Information:	
Bureau:	Valley
Division / Station:	Mission
Report District:	1943
Fire Information:	
District / Fire Station:	75
Batallion:	12
Division:	3
Red Flag Restricted Parking:	No

## CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for Case Summaries is Retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) Database.

**Case Number:** CPC-1990-596-GPC  
**Required Action(s):** GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)  
**Project Description(s):** AB283 PROG PROP PLAN AMEND, ZC & HD CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE CITY IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE NEWLY CREATED OPEN SPACE (OS)

**Case Number:** CPC-1986-602  
**Required Action(s):** Data Not Available  
**Project Description(s):** GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY PROGRAM

**Case Number:** ND-89-927-ZC  
**Required Action(s):** ZC-ZONE CHANGE  
**Project Description(s):** Data Not Available

## DATA NOT AVAILABLE

CPC-12275  
ORD-94591  
ORD-169432-SA460  
ORD-133958  
AFF-2317

Case Number:  
**CHC-2009-3537-HCM**  
Declaration Letter Mailing List  
MAILING DATE: **Jan. 27, 2010**

CRA/LA  
Attn: Cynthia Foronda  
354 S. Spring St., Ste. 800  
**Mail Stop 182**

Council District 7  
City Hall, Room 470  
**Mail Stop 211**

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