



Rancho Bernardo Historical Society Newsletter



Volume XV, Issue 3

Saving Rancho Bernardo's "Silent Sentries"

By Vincent Rossi



Newly planted olive trees line a somewhat empty-looking RB Road in 1964.

In an article in the *Bernardo News* of October 18, 1990, reporter Donna Hartings wrote, "Like silent sentries, olive trees have stood guard over RB's main thoroughfares—Rancho Bernardo Road, Bernardo Center Drive and Pomerado Road—since the community first took root in the early 1960s."

Planted here as part of the development of our planned community, the olive trees are a part of RB's history and its identity. RB residents demonstrated their love for those trees en masse in March, 1982.

The San Diego City Council was voting on a proposal to widen Rancho Bernardo Road and Bernardo Center Drive from four lanes to six, a move that would have wiped out hundreds of the stately trees that formed a gateway to and symbol of the neighborhood.

In response to that proposal, the city council meeting on March 9 witnessed what a reporter for the *San Diego Union* described as "the biggest and best organized display of political clout that the [the council] has seen in years." Writing in the paper's October 10 edition, reporter Anthony Perry noted that "An estimated 500 residents of Rancho Bernardo arrived yesterday in nine buses to protest" against the proposal.

"They packed the council chambers, the lobby, the press gallery, two council offices and a committee room." The RB residents were well organized.

"Representing 16 local advisory and professional groups," wrote Perry, "they spoke with facts and figures about traffic patterns and average daily traffic flow. Each council member was given an inch-thick packet of letters opposing any plan to widen Rancho Bernardo Road or Bernardo Center Drive."

The protestors also had a sense of political theater. The *Union* noted that "two younger Rancho Bernardo residents dressed in branches and leaves [to symbolize the olive trees] ... were asked by fire marshalls to remain in the lobby."

Among others participating in the group was Dr. Ora Peckham, who was then chair of the Rancho Bernardo Planning Board. "We decided not to wait until it was too late and the beauty of our community was endangered," Peckham told the council members.

The protest was successful. The council unanimously voted down the proposal, 7-0.



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**RANCHO BERNARDO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

a 501 (c)(3)

non-profit organization

Tax ID# 33-0269787

P.O. Box 27314

San Diego, CA 92198-7314

858-775-5788

rbhistory1@gmail.com

RB HISTORY MUSEUM

Bernardo Winery

13330 Paseo del Verano N.

San Diego, CA 92128

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President's Message - Past and Future

By Rich Thorpe

Many of our members have lived here for decades, a few back to the early days when there was just one stop sign at Pomerado and Rancho Bernardo Roads. I'm told that everyone knew each other, because they, too, were from "somewhere else." The golf



People settled in Rancho Bernardo from all over the country. A "50-states breakfast" was held at the RB Swim and Tennis Club on February 3, 1974. There were tables for all 50 states plus Canada and Mexico. 1300 people attended the event, meeting fellow residents from their home states. This photo is from the March 1974 issue of Bernardo Brandings. The whole article can be read online through our website.

course was a big draw, of course, and the RB Inn held monthly dinners for residents. The Spirit Shoppe in the Safeway shopping center at Pomerado and Rancho Bernardo Road was RB's most popular. (They even delivered.) I've also heard the 4th of July Parade included golf carts from all 50 states!

There was a neighborhood bond in this new community, not unlike that of others founded during the westward migration. You always knew your neighbor would help if you needed it. When you were on vacation, they would take in your mail. If you worked late, they would haul in your trash cans. Block parties were held for just about any occasion. It was certainly an exhilarating and memorable time. When we reopen, you can discover (or reminisce over) much more in our archives that preserve nearly every newspaper, magazine, or story about early RB.

Which brings me "back to the future." (Sorry, Universal). In the coming months, we could use that same neighborhood bond to help rebuild the local economy, support our schools, and help each other on a personal level. I'm sure you've already seen it, with dozens of walkers waving at passing cars or talking to each other and their neighbors. Many restaurants and nonprofits are providing meals for our first responders and health care heroes. Donations to nonprofit organizations like ours have jumped.

So, until we have a COVID-19 vaccine, please cover your face in public, meet and help your neighbors at a safe distance (especially those at high risk), and support the essential workers who keep our community together. When we're safe from the virus, maybe have a block party!

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COUNTRY CLUB SETS MONTHLY RESIDENTS' DINNER

When the first residents' dinner was held in the Rancho Bernardo Country Club restaurant last month, there was no idea in Manager Bob Albarido's mind of making it a steady affair. But the event met with such success that a monthly Residents' Dinner has been scheduled with the dining room being reserved for Rancho Bernardo residents and their guests for this affair. A special dinner will be featured as well as a "happy hour" in the cocktail lounge from 5 till 6 p.m. The last Monday evening of every month will be reserved for this very popular get-together with the first one scheduled for September 30th.

How a Development Becomes a Home

By Peggy Rossi, Collections Manager

From the beginning, Rancho Bernardo has been an active community with many service and special-interest organizations. That continues today, especially now when community support of those in need is so important.

I thought it might be interesting to see how active Rancho Bernardo was in its early days of the 1960s and 1970s. When did some service or community-interest organizations get started here? Construction began here in 1962, shortly after deals were signed and the proposed community was annexed to the city of San Diego.

Our first newspaper was the *Bernardo Brandings* and where better to find information about those organizations. As it continues to do today, the local paper kept RB's early residents up to date.

It didn't take long for the Lion's Club to form. They were organized and held their first meeting in September 1964. Go to our website at rbhistory.org and scroll down to look at the Bernardo Brandings online collection to the September 1964 issue to see the announcement on page 2.

In that same month, the American Association of University Women had already gotten started. And in

the June 1964 issue we find that the Rancho Bernardo Gardeners were beautifying the neighborhood and the Drama Club was entertaining the neighborhood. By January 1965, we see mention of the RB Woman's Club.

And this continued over the years. In 1971, a woman named Aileen Pollard, a newcomer to the community, felt a welcoming committee was needed to help everyone feel at home. So she had Seven Oaks send out an invitation and in February 1972, 55 people showed up to a warm welcome by the Newcomers Club.

Move on a year and we find in December 1973, the Friends of the Library was formed to assist in the development of what was then a temporary library and to start moving things along for a new permanent library which at that time was planned for the Bernardo Town Center.

And, yes, these organizations and so many more, are still supporting and contributing to our community. And what is exciting for us at RB Historical Society is that we have been given the opportunity to save and protect their history. We have the records, scrapbooks, photographs, flyers, plans, and more for every one of these groups. Most all have been catalogued and are available for researchers now (some are online) and in the future when we can open up again.

It's amazing, isn't it, what ordinary folks can do to turn a development into a home?



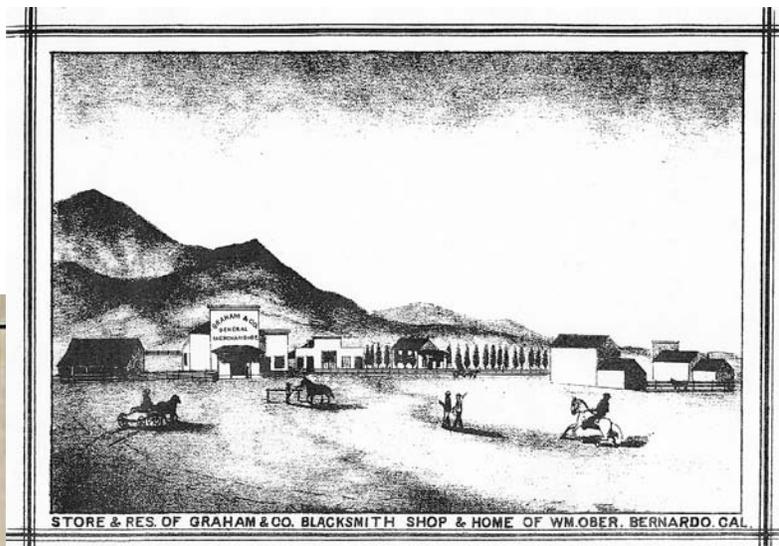
RB Drama Club, "In the Queen's Closet" cast / From the Bernardo Brandings May 1974: A capacity crowd responded happily to the Drama Club's April Showtime offering, "In The Queen's Closet" a play written and directed by Royal Kemp. The machinations of the Chancellor of Nevawazia, played by Bill Dennis, were circumvented by the Princess Eugenia, Christine Feldman, and her conspirator Countess Cecelie, Joan Davidson, to the delight of Queen Veronica, Dorothy Willets, and the King, Pat Kemp, and the amusement of Duchess Anna Matilda, Eva Beckett. The cast seemed to enjoy themselves as much as the enthusiastic audience.

Little Known Facts

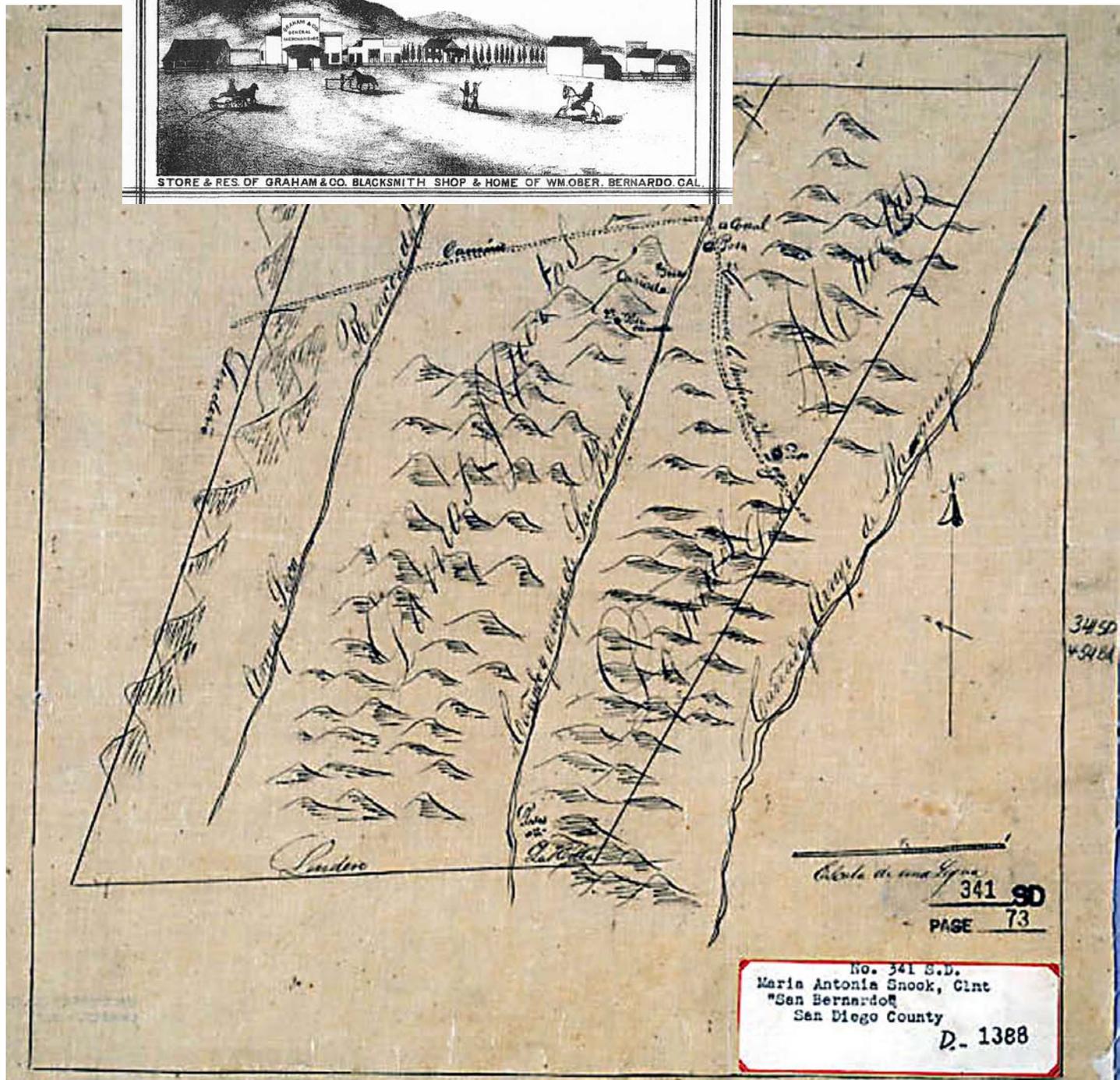
By Raenell Hooten

Our docents get a lot of questions. Here are answers to some of the most common ones. Once you read these, you, too, can become a docent! We'd love to have you.

- *The Rancho Bernardo Historical Society was founded in 1982 with Larry McIntyre as its first president. The society opened its first museum in 2005 at the Bernardo Winery.*
- *Today's Rancho Bernardo was originally part of a 17,763 acre Spanish land grant La Cañada de San Bernardo.*
- *"San Bernardo" was recorded on maps as early as 1800.*
- *Lawrence and Donald Daley, the last ranchers of Rancho San Bernardo, signed a joint agreement in 1961 with Harry Summers and Fritz Hawn to turn the ranch into a planned community to be called Rancho Bernardo..*
- *House prices ranged from \$13,000 to \$26,000*
- *RB medians were planted with 50 olive trees, one for each state. An olive tree was planted in the yard of every home and was a gift from Harry Summers, founder of RB.*
- *The Industrial Park was developed on sites with a view. This was in contrast to usual plans where homes were built with a view.*
- *The first occupant of the industrial park was National Cash Register.*
- *English sea captain, Joseph Snook, is the first recorded land owner of the area that is now Rancho Bernardo. His name was never Sevenoaks despite the myth. He changed his name to Don Jose Francisco Snook, became a Mexican citizen and a Catholic in order to marry Maria Antonia Alvarado, daughter of a prominent San Diego family.*
- *The Snook adobe was located in what is now Kit Carson Park.*
- *The grant was named after a French saint, Bernard of Clairvaux, who led the second crusade from 1147-49 during the Middle Ages.*
- *Missionaries in the greater North County area planted over 10,000 acres of grapes known as mission grapes that were made into high alcohol wines distilled as brandy.*
- *The farming village of Bernardo became obsolete with the development of the city of Escondido and the dedication of the Lake Hodges Dam in 1918. It is a common misconception that after the dam was built, the town was submerged beneath Lake Hodges. The original town site is marked by a plaque across from the Mule Hill battle site.*
- *There was no battle on Battle Mountain, but the fighting took place to the east at Mule Hill.*
- *Mule Hill is the prominent rocky hill that is visible while crossing Lake Hodges going north on I-15. It's the hill next to the freeway looking east.*
- *Mule Hill is so named because pack animals were the only food available to keep the troops from starving.*
- *Kit Carson was academically illiterate but was a genius as a scout and guide.*
- *The adobe-style Daley ranch house is still located in Rancho Bernardo. Today it is a private residence.*
- *The museum's school desk was manufactured in Illinois in early 1890.*
- *A caballero atop a horse in front of the now defunct RB sign was used in a promotional photo to advertise RB. The model for the photo is Earnest Osuna.*
- *San Diego was named San Miguel when it was first settled by the Spanish in 1769.*
- *The museum is located in an original winery equipment garage. Our museum is in a 100-year-old building.*
- *Kumeyaay rock paintings are located in RB, but are now off limits for viewing because of vandalism.*
- *4S Ranch was named for four members of the William J. Stowe family. Stowe was a Los Angeles business man who bought 3,000 acres of San Diego County ranchland in 1918.*



A drawing from a late-1870s San Diego atlas showing the town of Bernardo.



A rough-drawn map of the San Bernardo land grant used by Don Jose Snook to petition for his grant about 1841. San Bernardo is in the center with Rincon del Diablo (Escondido) to the left and Paguay (Poway) to the right.

Additions to our Historic Collection

By Peggy Rossi, Collections Manager

Although the museum is closed, we continue to add to our archival collections. Here are our recent donation items:

- Bound volumes of the *Rancho Bernardo News Journal* covering January 2000 through December 2015, received from the Union Tribune Community Press through *News Journal* editor Elizabeth Marie Himchak. This is a wonderful addition to the archives. Our local newspaper reports all the news of our community providing an ongoing history of issues, activities and ideas.
- Additions to our ongoing collection of materials relating to the activities of the RB chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). These particularly relate to their program called TechTrek which provides educational opportunities for girls with an interest in technical fields.
- Additions to our ongoing collection of materials relating to the Bernardo Gardeners. This donation includes their minutes from the very beginning of the organization plus a number of President's Books.

These and all the rest of the our collection will be available for research opportunities when we reopen.



Thanks for Helping

Fill out the form below and mail to the P.O.Box noted below. Or you can apply online at

www.rbhistory.org/support

I Would Like to Become a Member:

- Student (\$10) Patron (\$100)
- Individual (\$25) Corporate (\$250)
- Family (\$45) Life* (\$500)
- Benefactor* (\$1000)

* One time donation. No annual renewal required.

- Please renew my current membership

I Would Like to Donate to the Society:

- Donation Amount: \$ _____
- Please keep my donation anonymous
- My place of business has a matching gift program
Please contact me for details

I Would Also Like to:

- Become a Docent Help raise money
- Volunteer in the museum Volunteer at events

Please Provide Your Information:

(List both names for Family Memberships)

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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- My check is enclosed for: \$ _____

Make checks payable to, and mail check along with this form to:

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- Please bill my credit card:
 Visa Master Card Discover AMEX

Card No: _____

Exp. Date: _____ / _____ Security Code: _____

Authorized Signature (as name appears on credit card):



Rancho Bernardo Historical Society
P.O. Box 27314
San Diego, CA 92198-7314

Become a Docent and Help Us Share the History of Our Area.

Once we reopen we'd love to have your help. We thank you for your membership and support. Without it, we could not do our work of sharing RB history. If you care about history and enjoy meeting people, consider taking your support to the next level.

We need docents – those people who greet visitors and answer questions in the museum. You will have the opportunity to welcome visitors, not only from Rancho Bernardo, but from all over the world. Donating a few hours a month can make a difference, allowing us to be open more often.

No prior experience is necessary; only your enthusiasm to share the RB legacy. Training will be provided. Please contact Jane Harmon via rbhistory1@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to volunteer.

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- Girl Scout Troop 8157
- Hamburger Factory
- Jewel & Vine
- Kiwanis Club RB
- Mt. Carmel Key Club
- Nancy Canfield
- The Original Pancake House
- Rancho Bernardo Inn
- Shea Realty
- Youth Philharmonic Orchestra

Additions to Our Collections

We constantly update our collections with donated items. To see a listing of our latest additions visit our website www.rbhistory.org/museum or contact Peggy Rossi via rbhistory1@gmail.com