



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



THE 1861 PLAT OF RANCHO SIMI

In January 1861 the Rancho Simi was finally confirmed to Jose de la Guerra Y Noriega by the U.S. Surveyor General. The actual signature on the map, by J. W. Mandeville, U.S. Surveyor General California, is dated March 19, 1861. Ironically, the confirmation came about two years after the death of Jose de la Guerra.

The map provides compass headings and distances in "chains" (ten square chains equals one acre). The perimeter of the Rancho Simi measured 4,614.23 chains, which equals 57 miles 54 chains and 23 links - a good trivia question and answer! According to the survey, the rancho contained 113,009 and 21/100 acres. True to the surveyors' craft, the scale of the map is 160 chains to the inch. (Boy, am I glad we don't use that scale any more.)

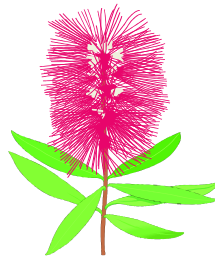
The location of the Simi Adobe is shown and is labeled "Francisco Noriega." Francisco was the son of Santiago Pico, the land grantee. Noriega was his mother's maiden name. The rancho headquarters had moved up to the Tapo by then. However, Francisco may still have been resident at the Simi Adobe.

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**APRIL 18th. CLUB MEETING
PROGRAM SLIDE SHOW**

John Sabol will present a slide show of scenes taken during 2 separate trips into Death Valley in the past year. The pictures reveal this often-maligned desert valley contains some beautiful scenery. Attend the meeting and learn about the awesome expanse of Death Valley.



RSTB CLUB MEETING

**The monthly club meeting will be held at the Community Center
In the B-1 Room
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On
Wednesday, April 18th.**

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CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS 2001

The next Trail Blazers work party will be on "California Trail Days, a two day event (Saturday, April 21 and Sunday April 22) will be held on the **Lower Stagecoach Trail**. One of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District's newer trails, the Lower Stagecoach Trail traverses a canyon from the eastern end of Corriganville Park up to the Santa Susana Pass Road near Lilac Lane. The project will include rerouting some trail sections as well as repairing erosion damage and cutting back brush overhanging the trail.

We will be working both Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Meet at the eastern end of the Corriganville Parking lot on both days. Corriganville is located at the east end of Smith Road off of the south end of Kuehner Drive. Bring 3 quarts water, a snack, sturdy boots/shoes, gloves, hat and sunscreen. Tools will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Hope to see you there.

MARCH TRAIL WORK PARTY

Three boy scouts and four scout leaders from Troop 10, BSA joined the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers on the Chumash Trail for the March Trail Work Party. The day was clear and sunny and as we worked many hikers and bikers enjoying a beautiful spring day passed us. We filled in ruts and repaired rain-damaged trail sections. The drainage was also improved on one large turn and several muddy

As with the 1858 survey of the area, the mountains north of Simi Valley seem to be unnamed. However, Oak Ridge seems to be called "*Loma Barancosas*," or Barancosas rise or slope.

The hills south of Simi Valley are labeled "*Sierra de Santa Susanna*." As with the 1858 survey, what we now call the Simi Hills were then called the Santa Susanna Mountains. It is very clear from this map that the Spanish/Mexican name for the Simi Hills was the Santa Susanna Mountains, and only later, during the Anglo-American period of settlement, was the name changed. Hopefully, this was not another mistake by the federal government (remember that the U.S. Geological Survey seemed to have changed "*Las Lajas*" to "*Las Llajas*").

The "road to Simi" is shown as going through the "Las Posas Valley." While a trail is shown as going up the canyon ("*Des Ravina*") at the eastern end of Simi Valley near the orifice of the railroad tunnel. Also labeled there is "Trail in *Puerta Suela* or *Bajos de Santa Susanna*." The first reference is to "the pass" and the second to the Santa Susana Pass. This is interesting in that we can conclude from the geometry of what is shown on the map that the trail over Santa Susana Pass was probably the same route followed in 1861 by the Stagecoach Road. Indeed, there is evidence that the route followed by the El Camino Real over the pass was an Indian trail before it was used by the Spanish. Being intensionally

WILD GOURD, CALABAZILLA, OR COYOTE MELON

Cucurbita foetidissima

These vines are common in the coastal sage scrub and in grasslands locally. They grow rapidly in the spring in the open, often extending 25 feet or more across. The leaves are triangular with rounded bases. Grayish-green, the leaves are rough to the touch and are about 10-inches long. The flower, both male and female on the same plant, are yellow orange and four or more inches long. The fruit is a spheroidal gourd that is green at first. As the runners die back in the winter, the gourds turn bright yellow. Eventually only a large patch of yellow melons are left. This plant is sometimes referred to as "stinking melon." The leaves and other parts of the plant are bad smelling. When asked why they are sometimes called "coyote melons," a Chemehuevi Indian explained that only a coyote will eat them.

Mike Kuhn

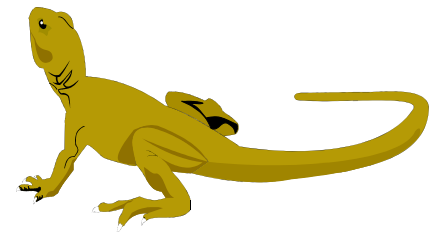
crossings. But the majority of the work involved cutting back brush from the middle portion of the trail. We worked from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and as usual met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers:

Scout leaders: Tom Idiaquez, Amber Johnson, David Seifert and Scott Sterling

Scouts: Joseph Idiaquez, Dan Jacobs and Daniel Sterling

Trail Blazers: Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, John Downey, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, John Sabol, and Carol Tucker

Work Parties Chair
John Sabol



Theodore Payne Open House

For those of you into wildflowers, the Theodore Payne Organization is having its annual open house on **Saturday April 7th. From 8:30 am to 4:30 pm**
For more information call **(818) 768-1802** or check out <http://theodorepayne.org/calendar.htm#poppyday>

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vague, a Ferandeno shrine appears to be present along the old Stagecoach Road.

The other road that is shown on the map in the Simi Valley area is the "Conejo and Simi road in *Puento*." Since the road is shown in the pass where the old Simi Road ran between present day Wood Ranch and the Lang Ranch, it is tempting to suggest that "*Puento*" should have been "*Puerta*" (pass). However, "*Puento*" seems to be clearly written. (If someone knows a Spanish language meaning of "*Puento*," please let me know - this is a work in progress.)

The lowlands which now connect the upper reaches of Skeleton and Lindero canyons seems to be labeled "*Canada del Puerta Suela*," although there is some question whether "*Suela*" might not be something else. If it is "*Suela*," then it means canyon of the pass - which seems to fit.

"*Canada de Lindero*" is there, where Lindero Canyon is today. The "boundary" between the Rancho Simi, El Conejo Rancho and Rancho Los Vergines is a straight line running just west of Simi Peak down to the old "Santa Barbara-Los Angeles Road" (now the "101"). "*Lindero*" of course means "boundary." The survey line terminated at a "Dead Sycamore."

The survey corner markers include a "Manzanita bush" (southwestern corner), an oak, and several "rock mounds." One corner (north central) is es-

tablished by a compass heading and is 60.00 chains from "Some double oak witness corner." I have located one of the "rock mounds." That rock mound probably dates to the early 1800s and was probably placed there by Chumash Indians employed on the rancho.

To cap it all off, it seems that the Surveyor General's Office of California, didn't have a seal. So they drew one.

A WELL MEANING HAND

In 1987 a young, about six month old, mountain lion was hit by a vehicle on the 118 Freeway near Kuehner Drive. A good Samaritan motorist stopped when he saw the downed cat. It was unconscious but still breathing. He loaded the animal onto the passenger seat of his car and drove to the Rancho Sequoia Veterinary Clinic. Having explained the situation to Dr. Stan Kunin, the gentleman stated that he wanted the mountain lion "fixed up" so that he could keep it as a pet. Dr. Kunin pointed out the obvious. The two proceeded to the parking lot - Stan with a syringe full of a tranquilizer suitable to the task - where they discovered that the mountain lions had regained consciousness. In fact, it had thoroughly trash the interior of the good Samaritan's automobile - having shredded the upholstery, the headliner, etc. At this point the good Samaritan no longer wanted the mountain lion, and had begun to wonder just what he was going to say to his insurance agent.



There, in the middle of the City, was a parked car with a very upset mountain lion behind the wheel. One could not simply open the door and let it out. There was the safety of pets, small children and just about everyone else to worry about. In the end, the door was opened and the cat was tranquilized. Unfortunately, the mountain lion succumbed a few days later to its vehicle inflicted injuries. Mountain lions are not good judges of traffic and tend to cross freeway lanes at a dead run, hoping for the best.

I have often wondered what would have been the outcome if the cat had awakened while being driven down Los Angeles Avenue by the good Samaritan. Would the driver have to stopped before exiting?

The next day developer Brian Catalde of Paragon Homes encountered what must of been the cat's litter mate wandering along Kuehner Drive at 1:00 p.m. - alone in this world. A few minutes later, when City planner Wolf Ascher and I met Brian, he was somewhat excited.

(This story is repeated and somewhat modified from one which was included in a chapter written by myself in *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time* (1997), page 327. It is my favorite mountain lion story - I retell it often.)

Mike Kuhn

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| | | 2001 | | | | | | |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | | |
| 1 Rocky Peak Trail Hike 5 pm Read Schedule Happy Birthday Laura Zorick | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read schedule | 6 | 7 Challenger Park Exploratory Hike 8am Read Schedule Happy Birthday Dan Marnier | | |
| 8 Chumash Wildflower Trail Hike 2 pm Read Schedule Happy Birthday Louise Pomes | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read schedule | 13 | 14 Happy Camp Upper Trail Hike Read Schedule 8:30am | | |
| 15 Hummingbird Wildflower Trail Hike 2pm Read schedule | 16 | 17 April 18th. Happy Birthday Karin Russell | 18 club meeting will be held at the Community Center In the B-1 Room 1692 Sycamore Drive At 7:00 PM | 19 Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read schedule | 20 | 21 California Trail Days Corrigan- ville Work Party 8am to 2pm Read schedule | | |
| 22 California Trail Days Corrigan- ville Work Party 8am to 2pm Read schedule | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 Happy Birthday Gary Cremeans Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read schedule | 27 | 28 Romero Canyon Loop Hike 8am <u>Read</u> schedule | | |
| 29 Rocky Peak Wildflower 2pm Hike Read Schedule Happy Birthday Beverly Wood | 30 | | | | | | | |

