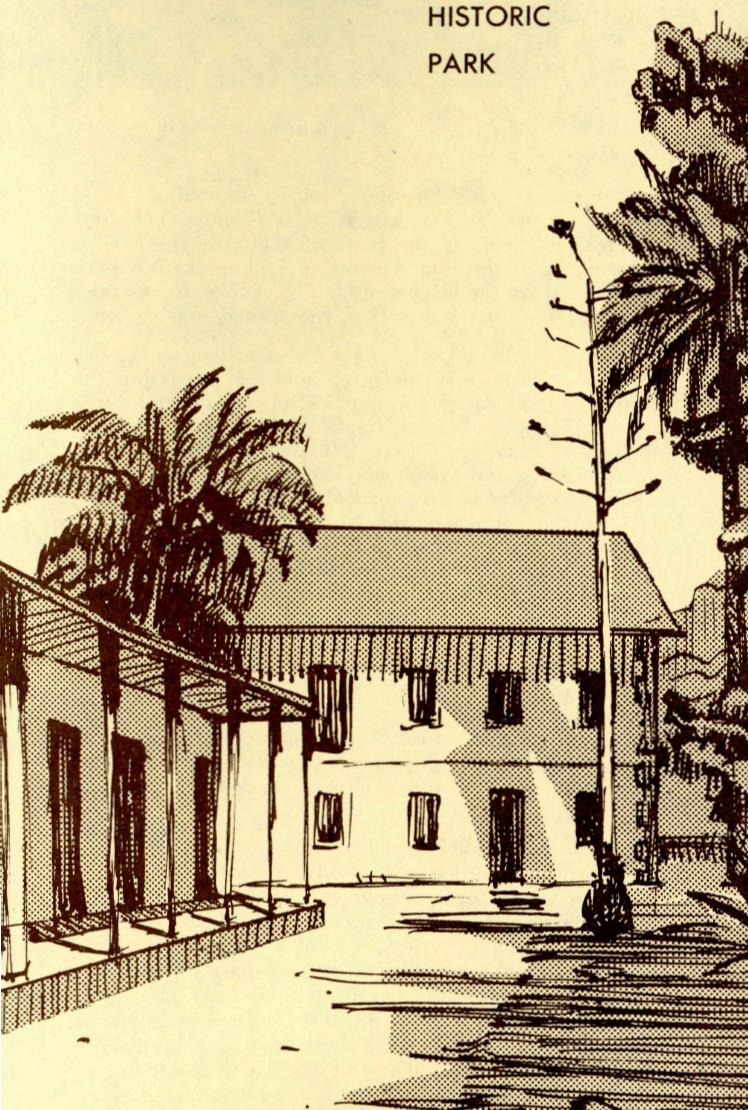


# los encinos

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STATE  
HISTORIC  
PARK





A Frenchman, Garnier built a two-story limestone house in the style of his native land. The limestone was quarried on the ranch. He also was responsible for the construction of the lake shaped like a Spanish guitar. The unusual shape of the lake is clearly visible from the hills above and to the south. The continuous warm running water of the springs feeding the lake is still an all-year source of water for the Los Angeles River. The Indians believed that the muddy marshland around the lake had curative powers and they came from miles around to soak in the mud. With his brother, Garnier made extensive improvements to the property and engaged in sheepherding on a large scale. Twenty men were employed at this time and some of the finest wool in southern California came from the rancho. One year the Garnier brothers paid \$18,000 for Merino sheep for the rancho. On May 28, 1878, the interests of Eugene Garnier were conveyed to a Basque named Gaston Oxartart.

Through court proceedings Oxartart foreclosed on a mortgage of \$18,000 held against Eugene Garnier. Then the land changed hands quickly. While ill, Oxartart made a disposition and left the ranch to his nephew, Simon Gless. The deed was filed on September 4, 1891, and, on December 30 of the same year, Simon deeded the land to his father-in-law, Domingo Amestoy, who died just 12 days later. Operation of Los Encinos Rancho was taken over by his son John. The Amestoy family owned the ranch for 55 years until 1945, when Clarence Brown purchased the property. When land prices in the valley rose sharply, the rancho was subdivided.



Simon Gless Victorian kitchen

PLAQUE  
HISTORICAL LANDMARK  
689

The Franciscan padres used Encino as their headquarters while exploring the valley before the establishing Mission San Fernando in 1797. In 1849 Vicente de la Osa built an adobe with nine rooms. The next owner of El Encino Rancho was Eugene Garnier. He built the existing two-story limestone house in 1872. In December 1891, Domingo Amestoy acquired the property.

**Los Encinos State Historic Park**  
16756 Moorpark Street  
(near Ventura and Balboa Boulevards)  
Encino, California  
Phone: (213) 784-4849

Open Wednesday through Saturday, 1-4 p.m.  
Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

CLOSED MONDAY AND TUESDAY

For guided tour reservations, write to the  
Supervisor, Los Encinos State Historic Park  
16756 Moorpark Street, Encino, California 91436



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Resources Agency  
Department of Parks and Recreation

# los encinos

STATE  
HISTORIC  
PARK







A group arriving at the park

Los Encinos State Historic Park is located at 16756 Moorpark Street, Encino, Los Angeles County. This five-acre area, acquired by the State of California in 1949, is designated as California Historical Landmark No. 689. Located here are the original de la Osa Adobe, the Garnier House, the so-called Reyes Hut, the springs and the lake.

History records that on the afternoon of August 5, 1769, Don Gaspar de Portolá's party of discovery arrived at the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains. In this advance party was Don Gaspar de Portolá, Captain Fernando de Rivera y Constanzo, Father Juan Crespi, Lieutenant Pedro Fages, Sergeant Ortega and 63 soldiers. Father Junípero Serra was not with this party as he remained in San Diego to receive treatment for an infected foot. No doubt the members were tired from their journey through the brush and up the hillsides, crossing by way of Sepulveda Canyon. They rested briefly among the oaks at a point between present-day Sherman Oaks and the town of Encino. Before them lay a large level basin 8 miles across and 36 miles long. They probably were still stained and smelled of tar from the previous day's encounter with an oily marsh. Relating this experience, Father Crespi wrote, "a certain substance like pitch steamed and bubbled on the ground." They called the place Alders of St. Estevan but today it is known as the Brea Tar Pits. Unknowingly they had discovered California petroleum.

The explorers moved up the valley about a mile and came upon warm springs and a body of water. The springs are said to be the same springs that are now part of the Los Encinos State Historic Park. The famous diarist, Crespi, noted, "We reached a very large pool of fresh water where we met two very large villages of very friendly tractable Heathens; the men, women, and children must amount to nearly 200 souls. Don Fages went to the villages and counted 205 souls; and at the same time there must have been some 12 heathens at the Camp. They all stood with basins full of their sorts of Pinole-drink and Sage tea ready to be given us for our refreshment. We drew off a little into the shade of



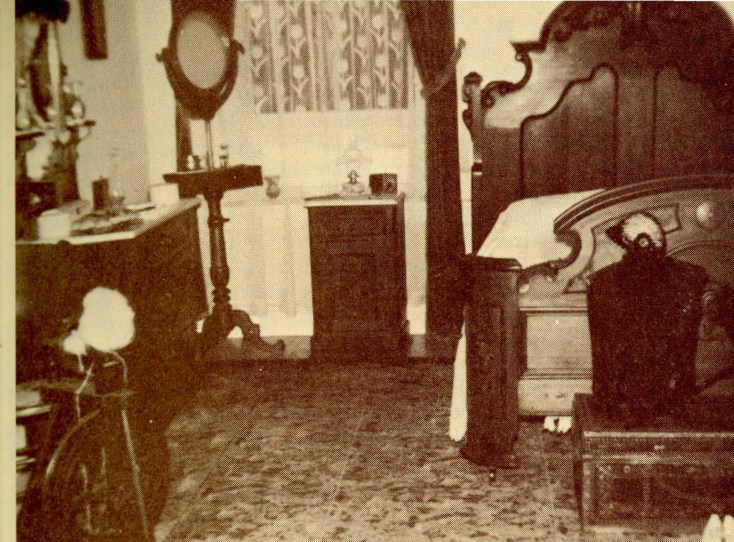
Members of the Encino Historical Society guiding the group through the park

a great white oak tree to make camp, and told them to bring it to us at the Camp, and so they did. On a hot August afternoon it was a pleasant place to stop."

About 25 years after the explorers visited here, Francisco Reyes, who had been the alcalde (mayor) of the Pueblo de Los Angeles, staked out a small rancho near other famous springs in the vicinity of the present site of the San Fernando Mission. After three years, the Franciscan Fathers exchanged the 4,460-acre Encino Rancho for this land to make it part of the mission grounds. Francisco moved to the Encino Rancho and built a small one-room stone hut, the first house in the area of Encino. The stone structure is believed to be one of those which stands on the park grounds.

In time the mission fathers complained that Reyes was not dealing justly with the Indians he employed as ranch workers. Hence, the rancho was granted to three Indians by the names of Ramón, Francisco, and Roque, who raised cattle and some corn using water from the springs for their crops. The Indians sold it to Don Vicente de la Osa. The United States Land Commission approved title for patent on January 8, 1851. Vicente de la Osa built an adobe there in 1849. The nine-room house is similar to mission-type construction with walls two feet thick and outside connecting doors. The adobe is now 120 years old and still stands in a fine state of preservation. De la Osa married Rita Guilian. They raised 15 children in the adobe.

As early as 1858, Rancho Los Encinos became a stage station where the Butterfield Stage Lines entered the San Fernando Valley. The ranch station served both Santa Susana Pass and the Calabasas route of El Camino Real. In 1867 the rancho was sold to James Thompson when de la Osa acquired a large landholding near Chatsworth and became keeper of the Chatsworth Stage for the Butterfield Lines two years later. Thompson sold the rancho to Eugene Garnier.



Garnier bedchamber



The Amestoy parlor