

Tracing Torrance History

Dates From April, 1910 Modern History of Land

In April, 1910, the Dominguez Land Co., first of several companies designed to administer the sprawling properties of the original Rancho San Pedro, was formed with 5000 shares of stock valued at \$100 a share. Other companies, since existing were formed by the various heirs of the huge Rancho as outlined in today's article in a series being published exclusively in the HERALD.

By R. C. GILLINGHAM
The year 1910 may be considered as the beginning of the "modern" history of the Rancho San Pedro. At that time a major change took place in the control of the lands held by the heirs of Manuel Dominguez. This came about because of the death in 1907 of Ana Josefa Dominguez de Guver, the oldest of the six daughters, at the age of 79 years.

Before her death, Mrs. Guver a widow with no children had willed her interest in the Rancho to her five sisters, in equal proportions. This represented almost 5400 acres, distributed among five of the tracts as partitioned in 1835.

This bequest raised the question of a new survey and accompanying expense in re-subdividing the existing tracts. On the advice of their attorney, Henry W. O'Melveny, in place of another partition, the surviving sisters agreed to the formation of a corporation, representing the Guver estate, in which they would have equal shares.

AS A RESULT, the Dominguez Estate Co. was formed on April 8, 1910, as a corporation under the laws of the State of California. The Guver lands were conveyed to the new organization, each of the sisters being given one-fifth of the stock. The total issue was 5000 shares, conservatively valued at \$100 per share; the estate having been appraised at more than a million dollars. Henry O'Melveny was elected president, a position he held for more than 25 years.

Within a few months after its incorporation, the Dominguez Estate Co. bought a parcel of 100 acres from John Carson, son of Victoria Dominguez de Carson. The price was \$40,000, an indication of the change in land values on the Rancho in 25 years. This tract had been deeded to John Carson by the will of Mrs. Guver as a separate bequest, and his trustee brought all of the lands of the eldest sister under the control of the company.

LESS THAN TWO years later, on Jan. 24, 1912, one of the unmarried sisters, Guadalupe Marcelina, conveyed all her property to the Dominguez Estate Co. in return for a payment of \$1000 a month for the remainder of her life. Guadalupe received this income less than a year, her death occurring on Jan. 2, 1915, at the age of 84 years. The assessed value of her estate was listed in the county records at \$803,610, which was less than half its market value.

The third large addition to the holdings of the Dominguez Estate Co. took place in 1928. In August of that year, Maria de Los Reyes Dominguez de Francis deeded her share of the Rancho San Pedro

1911, the year after its incorporation, the first wholly-owned subsidiary, the Dominguez Water Co., was organized to provide a better water supply for the Rancho lands, and to furnish water to the new town of Torrance, founded in the same year. Financed by a \$50,000 bond issue against the lands of the Dominguez Estate Co., this venture operated at a loss in earlier years. It was reorganized in 1925 as the Dominguez Water Corp. and with the development of industry in the surrounding area, has now become a profitable operation. With a staff of 60 employees, it has a pumping capacity of 23 million gallons a day, and services 18,000 outlets in an area of more than 30 square miles.

ON OCT. 16, 1928, a year after the organization of the Francis Land Co., a site was purchased on Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles, as one means of investing part of the assets of the Dominguez Estate Co. This resulted in the formation of the Dominguez-Wilshire Co., which then financed the construction of a 12-story office building at 8410 Wilshire Blvd. This entire property was recently sold, although the Dominguez Estate Co. and other family corporations still maintain offices in the building.

The interests of the other three sisters, Victoria, Dolores, and Susana, all of whom were married, have been administered

by separate family companies, organized in later years for the benefit of their respective heirs. These are the Carson Estate Co., the Watson Land Co., and the Del Amo Estate Co., each of which maintains its own offices. In 1923, Dr. Gregorio Del Amo, husband of Susana Dominguez, established the Del Amo Nurseries as a subsidiary of the Del Amo Estate Co. This business is located on the southeast side of Dominguez Hill. As previously noted, Dr. Del Amo was chiefly responsible for planting of hundreds of trees on the eastern brow of Dominguez Hill.

As will be related in a succeeding article, the properties of the Dominguez Estate Co. and the separate tracts inherited by the other Dominguez sisters have been reduced in size through the course of almost half a century. The recent pol-

to the company. This property included part of the rich oil-bearing lands on Dominguez Hill. Although materially reduced by previous sales of some tracts, the total estate had an assessed value of over a half million dollars. This acquisition brought an increase in corporation stock of 10,439 shares, valued at \$100 each. The added total of 5493 shares was then transferred to the Francis Land Co., set up as a subsidiary to represent the Francis properties.

ON MARCH 15, 1929, Mrs. Francis willed her home and other personal property in Los Angeles to the Dominguez Estate Co., reserving therein only a life estate. This property was valued at almost \$100,000. Mrs. Francis, the last surviving daughter of Manuel Dominguez, died at her home on June 6, 1932, aged 88 years. As to the passing of the other three sisters, Victoria Carson died on March 18, 1916, Dolores Watson on Sept. 18, 1924, and Susana Del Amo on June 21, 1931.

The Dominguez Estate Co., by the above accessions from

Teachers Attend 'Do It Yourself' County Meeting

Five Torrance industrial education teachers attended a quarterly meeting of the Los Angeles County Industrial Education Assn. at Compton High School last Friday. Attending the "do-it-yourself" sessions were: Mike Curtis of Newton Elementary School; John Olson of Evelyn Carr Elementary School; Don Norton of Casimir Elementary School; Frank Vogt of Flavian Elementary School; and Carl Wahl of Greenwood Elementary School. Following a tour of classrooms, the 300 educators participating in the quarterly meet individually constructed a project which could be taken home afterwards in an effort to share industrial construction techniques.

Brownie Troop 219
Sixteen Brownies of Troop 219 accompanied by their leaders spent an afternoon exploring Olvera St. recently. Also accompanying the troop were Mr. and Mrs. Borgenson.

At a recent investiture ceremony, held at the home of Trudy Campbell, Kay Hatch, Marilyn Blairville, and Leanne Iverson took their Brownie oaths and Mrs. Floyd Jones became co-leader. The investiture was performed by Mrs. James Kocis, leader, assisted by Mrs. Williams.

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