

# CLYDE BROWNE COMPLETES ABBEY SAN ENCINO AFTER NINE YEARS OF LABOR

Nine years of love and labor, of dreaming, planning and working have gone into the construction of the Abbey San Encino, and although not yet entirely completed have brought it to such a point that its builder and owner, Clyde Browne, has been able to move his workshop into the left wing and take up his residence in the living quarters.

Mr. Browne has conducted a painting studio in the frame dwelling which faces Marmon way and Arroyo Glen street for many years. Long ago he conceived the idea of erecting on the property a replica of one of the old Spanish missions which were built by the padres along El Camino Real (the King's highway) from San Diego to Santa Barbara.

Work was started July of 1915. The building just completed is the

plodding oxen hauled the creaking carretas along the olden mission road, where laughing caballeros rode in silver saddles, and sandaled friars strode, and dusky neophytes, and braggart soldiers, and sodden pobladores, and rollicking vaqueros—all these and more—here, lies a fragment of that old road, hard by the ferry.

"The lower side of this old highway was heavy with boulders, and they littered the plain below. Then came the builder, and he gathered the rocks and sorted them, and mined for more, and rode far afield to the Calabassas hills for the white chalk slabs, to the canyons for the flags of schist, and into the highways and byways for the stones he needed. Mount Washington yielded a yellow stone, half sand and half shale, and Monrovia Canyon paid a heavy toll in granite.

"Black-frocked custodians of missions made repairs and cast away loads of Indian-made brick of priceless worth, replacing it with cement. These were gathered into the faithful Ford and brought to the gathering place—and so were procured the stones for the walls of the Abbey of San Encino, that gray old pile which stands upon the margin of the King's Highway beside the gate to the ferry.

San Encino itself is an anachronism—a throw-back to another century—for its lines are the lines of the padre builders, and of the early buildings of all Spanish America. The tower is a replica of Carmel's campanile; its arches are those of all the missions had after the first few years of thatch and the fires that occurred therefrom. But one phase of San Encino antedates the missions, for the high-eaved south wall has the buttresses of Holyrood, Mary of Scotland's chapel.

"San Encino is old before it is finished. In the dark crypt beneath the great hall are dank dungeons, and mouldy cells, and quaint flat arches, and stein shelves, and niches for candle of saint, and rusting jack lanterns and the smoky smells of candles long burned away.

"Up from its depths iron rungs in the tower wall lead to the Great Bell of Garvanza, which called the old settlers to school two score years ago, and around the great throated master of the flock, four quaint Spanish bells are now being gathered, which will lace on the gray old beams with raw hide from an old mission ruin.

"And here at San Encino are a strange array. Bricks and stones from Westminster Abbey, Charlemagne's Tower, Old Manila, from castles and ruined churches in France and Italy, nails, keys, locks, hinges and bits of broken glass from cathedral windows. Crucifixes from Metz and Cavite, bells from Switzerland, pirate chests, skulls, and old ship lanterns, and a pipe organ from Frieberg I. Baden, all these among the flotsam of a great world are the contributions of students and friends and the gatherings of the abbey builder, as well as pistols, swords, and a cartload of artifacts of the Indian—metates, mortars, pestles, etc.

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Clyde Browne

main edifice round which it is intended to group a number of smaller ones, such as outbuildings and Zuni cliff dwelling in the back, an industrial court along the north side walls and shops upon the south and a few small buildings in front along the main entrance which will be at Pasadena avenue, opposite the Arroyo Seco library. It will take several more years to complete the work, Mr. Browne estimates.

In constructing the Abbey, Mr. Browne attempted wherever possible to employ the materials used by the padres in the construction of the original missions. How he gathered together over a period of nine years old bricks and stones from missions under repair, how he rode for miles to collect white chalk slabs from the Calabassas hills, how he collected stones and rocks, how he burned bricks for the walls in his own kilns are better told by the builder himself. The following story of the construction of the building, the uniqueness and beauty of which have already become known throughout Southern California is told in the following paragraphs taken from an article written by Mr. Browne for a recent issue of "Sabretooth," the literary magazine for Occidental College:

"One hundred years ago the Camino Real, or the king's highway, dragged its sinuous way down from the Presidio of Santa Barbara. It passed Missions San Buenaventura and St. Ferdinand, and bore away more or less directly for the broad fields of the Mission of St. Gabriel the Archangel, but while the mission bells were yet faint at the hours of prayer, the herd-strewn road crossed the present campus of Occidental College and skirted the swamps of York Valley till it dipped into the arroyo across from the present Arroyo Seco Branch Library—and now begins our tale.

"Here where the feet of



Front View of Abbey San Encino