

DOMINGUEZ RANCHO HOME
- San Pedro History

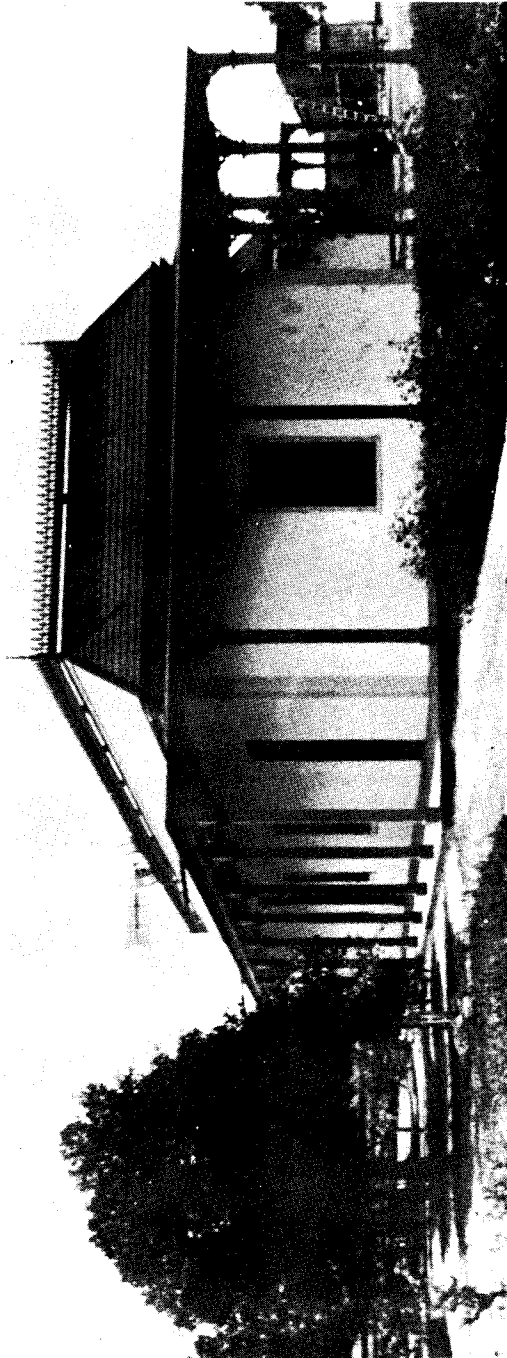
San Pedro High



A History of the Development of the

DOMINGUEZ RANCHO HOMESITE

at Rancho San Pedro
Near Carson, California



Original adobe home of Don Manuel Domínguez at Rancho San Pedro, built in 1826. The same walls remain intact today, but the remainder of the present building has since been added and restored. It was the scene of romantic Spanish days and of the Battle of Dominguez Hill, fought in 1846.

**A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
DOMINGUEZ RANCH HOMESITE
AT
RANCHO SAN PEDRO, NEAR CARSON, CALIFORNIA**

By

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**Edited by
a Claretian Father — L.J.B.**

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**DOMINGUEZ SEMINARY
1974.**



Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary stands in the rose garden between the Domínguez Homestead and the 1927 seminary building.



The bronze plaque at the archway entrance to the Domínguez Home briefly details the history of the Rancho San Pedro and the Battle of Domínguez Hill.

THE DOMINGUEZ HOMESITE ON THE RANCHO SAN PEDRO

In Los Angeles County, one of the very few surviving reminders of domestic family life during the early rancho days, when California was still under the control of Spain and Mexico, is the homesite of Don Manuel Domínguez. Located about twelve miles south of downtown Los Angeles, the long-time residence of the most distinguished member of the Domínguez family is still well-preserved.

The colorful story of the Rancho San Pedro, and of its successive owners, dates back more than 200 years, to the original Spanish settlement of California. The record begins with Juan José Domínguez, a veteran leather jacket soldier, guide, and interpreter, who was a member of the pioneer expedition which marched wearily into San Diego on June 29, 1769, having travelled overland more than 400 miles from the Presidio of Loreto in Baja California. Domínguez also took part in the first exploratory expedition to the north that same year, under the command of Captain Gaspar de Portolá.

In the decade which followed, Juan José Domínguez served as guide and one of the military guards for Father Junipero Serra during the laborious founding of the early Franciscan missions. He made at least four journeys on foot from San Diego to Monterey. Upon his retirement in 1782, after thirty years of military service in Mexico and Alta California, Juan José Domínguez was given a sizeable tract of more than 75,000 acres of land, including all of the harbor area south of the Pueblo de Los Angeles. First known as the Rancho San Pedro, and later as the Domínguez Ranch, this was the first land concession made in Southern California under Spanish control. Almost three-quarters of a century later, it had the further distinction of being the first of the original rancho grants in Los Angeles County to receive a clear patent of title from the United States Government, signed by President James Buchanan on December 18, 1858.

The Earlier Domínguez Homes: The first house built on the Rancho San Pedro, other than primitive Indian huts, was that of Juan José Domínguez, erected late in 1784, soon after his coming north with a herd of cattle from San Diego. This first building was constructed on a gentle slope on the northeastern side of Domínguez Hill, approximately two miles south of the present central business district of the City of Compton. This site appears to have been chosen because it overlooked some of the best cattle-grazing land on the Rancho, with fresh water readily available from small springs on that corner of the hill and from flowing artesian wells to the north. It also had sufficient elevation to be safe from winter floods which occurred on the Los Angeles River a half mile to the east, and which was the easterly boundary of the Rancho.

The home of Juan José Domínguez, a bachelor, was a plain, rectangular structure of three rooms and a storage closet, with thick walls of adobe brick and an earthen floor. Typical of others in that early day, its total area was approximately 800 square feet. The flat roof, made with rough logs or planks from the trunks of willow trees, which grew in profusion on the bottom land along the river channel, was sealed with adobe clay. Tar for the roof was obtained from the brea pits west of the Pueblo de Los Angeles, and the entire surface then covered with sand. A rustic fireplace provided the only facility for cooking and heating. Smaller buildings for the Indian vaqueros and other laborers, together with several stock corrals, were located farther down the slope of the hill to the north. This Domínguez home served as the main base of operations on the Rancho San Pedro for more than forty years.

Juan José died in 1809 leaving no direct heirs, and during the ensuing litigation this early ranch-home continued to be occupied by Manuel Gutiérrez, the mayordomo or foreman. It was not until 1825 that the title to the property was adjudicated and ownership handed over to Juan José's grandnephews Manuel Domínguez and his brothers, Pedro and Nasario, who took over that year and started construction of a new adobe, part of which is still existing. After 1825 the primitive ranch-house had no regular occupants, being used principally for storage. By 1890, it was in ruins, most of its adobe bricks and wooden timbers having been removed and used for other construction. This first Domínguez home has now disappeared completely with no existing marker to designate its exact location, but the homesite itself is known to have been approximately 300 yards north of the seminary property.

Following construction of Manuel's adobe in 1825, his brother Pedro built his own house in 1828, followed by Nasario in 1832. Both were rambling, single story structures, much larger than the adobe of Juan Jose. They were located within a few yards of each other, slightly to the northwest of the home of their granduncle, on more level land now traversed by Artesia Boulevard. At that time, a small lake, extending eastward almost to Alameda Street during the rainy seasons, bordered the homes on the north side. The lake was fed by Compton Creek, which flowed from the northwest, and then partly emptied into the Los Angeles River. These homes were abandoned before 1850 and have long since been demolished. By that year, Pedro and Nasario had sold or transferred their shares of ownership in the Rancho San Pedro and moved to Los Angeles where they spent their later years.

Home of Manuel Domínguez: The surviving rancho-home of the family, much of which has remained intact for nearly 150 years, is now called the

Domínguez Homesite, the enlarged residence of Don Manuel Domínguez started in 1825. Luis Gonzaga, Policarpio, Manuel, Antonio y Fernando Domínguez, as he was formally baptized, was born at the Presidio of San Diego on January 3, 1803. His Spanish father, Cristóbal Domínguez, a native of the Province of Sinoloa in northern Mexico, was the ranking sergeant of La Campanía de Cuera, the military garrison stationed at the Presidio. It was Cristóbal who inherited the Rancho San Pedro from his uncle, Juan José, but who, after a long struggle to secure confirmation of his title, was destined never to see or live on his heritage. When Cristóbal died on January 6, 1825, it was Manuel, then just 22 years of age, who took charge of the family affairs for his ailing mother and his five brothers and sisters. Six months later, accompanied by Pedro and Nasario, Manuel Domínguez travelled north to take over control of the Rancho, and of the several hundred head of cattle which were a part of the family inheritance.

During their first months on the Rancho San Pedro, the Domínguez brothers occupied the old adobe built by Juan José. Their mother, María de los Reyes, and the three sisters, Victoria, Francisca Marcelina, and Elena Ramona, remained in San Diego. Soon Manuel began construction of a separate home for himself, on a site approximately 300 yards to the southeast. It was to this new home that Manuel brought his bride, María Engracia Cota, the eldest daughter of the local Prefect for the Los Angeles area, Guillermo Cota, soon after their marriage at the Mission San Gabriel on December 7, 1827.

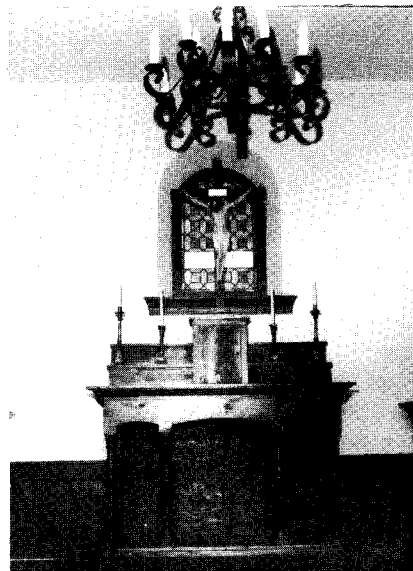
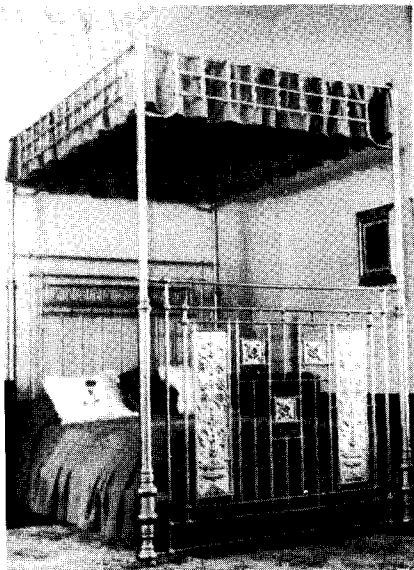
Now preserved as an historical landmark, this long-time residence of Manuel and Engracia Domínguez is located on a low knoll just below the east brow of Domínguez Hill, being sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds and overlooking the meandering streambed of the Los Angeles River. In terms of present-day boundaries, the house is centered in the north end of a triangular tract of seventeen acres, which terminates at Domínguez Junction on the south. The property adjoins Alameda Street along the east side, with the Carson homesite to the north, and the former Pacific Electric Railway right-of-way to the west.

When first built, this home was of adobe, one story in height, L-shaped in plan, and contained six rooms of good size. The longer portion, measuring over 80 feet from north to south, faced toward Alameda Street and included a parlor, a sitting room, and two bedrooms. The dining room and kitchen were in the wing, which extended more than 70 feet west from the southern end of the main building. The total area of the original house was over 3,000 square feet.

As was customary in that early day throughout Southern California, the walls were made of large adobe blocks, with a thickness of almost two feet, and were reinforced at points of stress with heavy planks. Covered patios or colonnades, ten feet wide, eventually surrounded the building. The original flat roof was no doubt built of hewn timbers, topped with tules from the nearby marshes, then tarred and sanded. At a later date, sawed redwood boards and joists were substituted and remain today, but the flat roof disappeared some time after 1880 when the house was first photographed. It is known that these sawed redwood boards only became available by ship from Santa Cruz after 1835. Solid panelled shutters at the deeply-recessed windows, and panelled doors and milled trim were probably installed at this later period, perhaps replacing earlier wood or iron bars installed by Don Manuel to provide protection for his wife and family, especially necessary during his absence from



The "sala" or sitting room (upper) was elaborately furnished in Don Manuel's time. An original portrait of Dan Manuel hangs above the square grand piano on loan from Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Burns. Canopied bed of brass (lower left) was in use during Don Manuel's time. White embroidered pillow cover was made by Don Manuel's granddaughter. Scene of many regular family Masses conducted by Claretian Fathers in this small altar (lower right) and memorial window with date of building (1826).

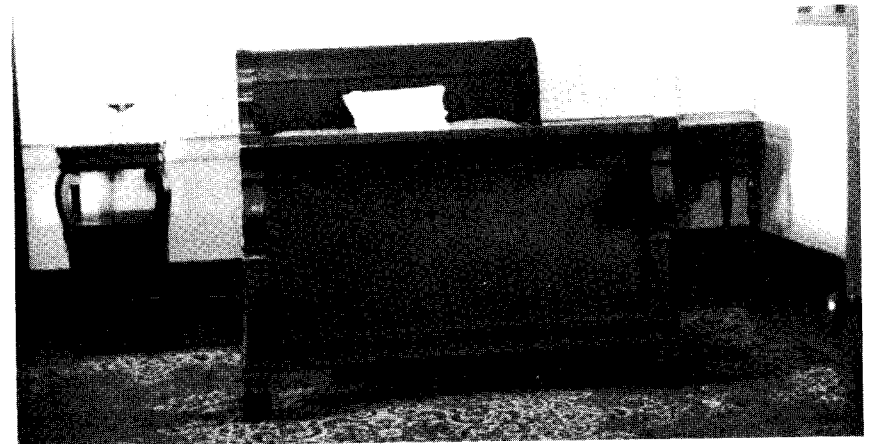


the Rancho for extended periods during his long public career. The adobe walls were whitewashed over and over, not only for appearance sake but to provide necessary waterproofing.

To the east and south of the home itself, smaller buildings were erected for the housing of domestic servants and rancho workers, along with laundry, storage, toilet facilities, and a barn. In 1827, water for household purposes came from a number of artesian springs which flowed steadily out of the lower slope of Domínguez Hill, both north and south of the homesite. When these springs dried up during the extended drought period in the 1860's, water was obtained from a well drilled a few yards south of the entrance to the kitchen. This well and its windmill was in regular use for more than seventy years, the volume being sufficient to provide for all household needs, and to maintain the surrounding gardens and fruit trees.

Enlargement of the Home: Don Manuel and Doña Engracia lived in their home on the Rancho San Pedro for more than 54 years, a span of married life which was quite unusual for that day. Blessed with continuing good health throughout most of their lives, they experienced both happiness and sorrow in their life together. After a real struggle to make ends meet in earlier years, the family finances improved steadily, and Don Manuel Domínguez was rated as quite wealthy in later life. Don Manuel and Doña Engracia had ten children, of which two sons and two daughters died in infancy or in early youth. The other six daughters all survived their parents by many years, and were privileged to enjoy wealth and comfort well beyond that of many of their neighbors. With the exception of one daughter, Susana Delfina, all of Manuel's family are buried in a large and imposing plot in Calvary Catholic Cemetery, on the east side of Los Angeles.

As the Domínguez family increased in size through almost twenty years, the home itself was progressively enlarged. By January 6, 1847, when the youngest child, Maria de los Reyes, was born, the original building had been materially expanded. It was enlarged 25 feet to the north, with a new wing



Restored bedroom containing bed used by Doña Susana Domínguez de del Amo.



View of restored kitchen showing the various kinds of utensils in use at that time.

extending some 30 feet to the west, and the older east-west wing to the south was also extended westerly. A colonnade was erected all around and the building took on the shape recorded by lithograph and photo taken about 1880.

Don Manuel's Public Service: At about this time, the Domínguez homesite and the rancho San Pedro played an important role in local military history. In 1846, during the Mexican War, the home was occupied for two days by a company of United States Marines, during the running skirmish since known as the Battle of Domínguez Ranch. Earlier the same year, at least three military councils of Spanish Californians were held at the Domínguez home. As it turned out, Don Manuel Domínguez was not personally involved in any of the fighting, although he had served two years earlier as Captain of a local military company. Then past forty years of age, Don Manuel found himself in an involuntary dual role, being forced on the one hand to provide supplies for the United States troops, and on the other to take part in the military councils called by officials of the Pueblo. The record indicates that he managed to retain the respect of both sides, including the majority of American settlers in the Los Angeles area.

Still another variation in the routine of family life on the Rancho resulted from the public career of Don Manuel beginning in 1828 and extending through 1857. Having early gained the respect of his fellow Californians as a competent young ranchero, and becoming fluent in both Spanish and English, Don Manuel was one of the very few citizens in his day who held public office under three successive governments in California; Spain, Mexico, and the United States. Among other early positions, he was elected three times as Alcalde or Mayor and Judge of the First Instance for El Pueblo de Los Angeles. As the executive officer of El Ayuntamiento or City Council, his authority included jurisdiction over the harbor area and the Rancho San Pedro in addition to the Pueblo. In his capacity as Judge, he presided at many trials, some of which were held at his home on the Rancho. In one such trial for murder, the death sentence was

pronounced and executed on the Rancho. In another far less serious case, a dispute over a horse race, involved a bet of "five pesos in silver, two gentle horses, and one full barrel of aguardiente". After hearing the evidence, Judge Domínguez ordered the loser to pay the bet in full within one month, or suffer a penalty of ten pesos in silver.

In 1843, during the period of Mexican control, Manuel Domínguez held the office of Prefect, or local deputy for the Governor of Alta California, and represented the Los Angeles District at provincial assemblies convened in Los Angeles, Monterey, and San Diego.

After California became a part of the United States in 1848, Don Manuel was one of the seven delegates from Southern California to the convention at Monterey which drew up the first State Constitution. He rounded out his public service in 1857 after completing one term as Supervisor of Los Angeles County. Throughout a career of almost thirty years, the Domínguez homesite was the setting for many meetings of public officials, with Don Manuel continuing to serve as an advisor to local officials for more than a decade after his retirement from public life.

Later Rancho Days: By 1860, with an increase in income from Rancho operations and from land sales in the harbor area, it was possible to make substantial improvements in the interior of the Domínguez home, including the purchase of furniture, dishware, and a grand piano. The open hearth in the kitchen, with its array of heavy pots and pans, was supplemented by a large iron stove and less cumbersome cooking utensils. Eventually, a separate cookhouse was built near the back door of the original kitchen, with two large-sized ovens. During the latter part of her life, Doña Engracia was fortunate in having plenty of domestic help to keep up the household, including Chinese cooks.

Along with these domestic improvements, Rancho operations after 1860 were made more profitable through the use of better equipment, stimulated by the economic changes then under way in California. The old ox-carts and crude hand tools were replaced with four-wheeled wagons, steel plows, hayrakes, and metal hand tools, reflecting the transition from cattle and sheep-raising to dairy operations and large-scale agriculture. In 1881, the year before the death of Don Manuel, the total Rancho income, including land sales and miscellaneous operations, was almost \$100,000.00 with more than 100 employees on the payroll. The Rancho San Pedro was one of the few original Spanish grants which made a financially successful change from the easy-going pastoral era to the more competitive age of farming and industry.

While making his home more comfortable, Don Manuel also took pride in the development of the patio and surrounding gardens, which were put to good use during periodic social gatherings. Tested during the first years with family disputes as to land ownership and heavy expense in securing verification of the Rancho title, Don Manuel not only proved to be a successful ranchero, but a respected public official as well. The Domínguez home became well-known throughout the county, and Don Manuel had many visitors on business and political matters. It also may be noted that the frequency of callers was no doubt enhanced by the fact that the six Domínguez daughters grew into attractive and wealthy young women who became the center of attention for the eligible caballeros at the Pueblo and on the nearby ranchos. Prior to the completion of the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad in 1869, the home of



West front view of entire Domínguez Home as it appears today. The adobe portion is on the right and the 1898 addition on the left.

Don Manuel often served as a convenient and hospitable stopover for travelers by stage or on horseback between San Pedro Harbor and Los Angeles.

Following the death of Don Manuel on October 11, 1882, and of his wife less than six months later, several changes took place in the occupancy and use of their home. Three of the six daughters had been married for some years and had separate homes on other parts of the Rancho. Before her death on March 18, 1883, Doña Engracia transferred the family home and a surrounding tract of 200 acres, in undivided ownership, to her three unmarried daughters, Guadalupe Marcelina, Susana Delfina, and María Jesús de los Reyes. This was done to make sure they had a place to live until they married and moved elsewhere. This separate grant, thereafter known as the Homestead Tract, was held for almost thirty years by the Domínguez sisters without change in ownership. These three unmarried daughters, the youngest then being past 35 years of age, continued to live in the family home until after a final partition of the estate, which was not concluded until 1885. However, their occupancy was only intermittent since each had acquired more elaborate homes in Los Angeles.

During the ensuing years, until 1907, except for occasional visits by the Domínguez sisters, the only residents in the Domínguez home were the caretakers, with less than half of the building in regular use. Supervision and maintenance of the property became the responsibility of Victoria Domínguez and her husband, George Henry Carson, who lived in their large two-story house less than 100 yards north of the old home. George Carson, a native New York State, had married Victoria in 1857, and was the capable manager of Rancho affairs during the last years of Manuel Domínguez.

In the spring of 1907, the second eldest Domínguez sister, Guadalupe Marcelina, decided to move back to the family home on the Rancho, to live out her remaining years. She was then past 77 years of age and had never married, was in fair health, and quite wealthy. She sold her spacious two-story residence

at the corner of Sixth and Main Streets in Los Angeles, and returned to the old homesite, accompanied by her housekeeper and two maids. There she lived quietly until she passed away on January 2, 1913.

The eldest Domínguez sister, Ana Josefa Juliana, who was to have accompanied Guadalupe in 1907 and reside with her in the home, was not in good health, and died a few months later. She was twice married, with no children, and had outlived both of her husbands. The disposition of her sizeable estate resulted in the organization of the Domínguez Estate Company in 1910, with the surviving Domínguez sisters as equal shareholders.

In 1914, another Domínguez sister, Dolores Simona Watson, the widow of James A. Watson for more than forty years, informed the other surviving sisters, Susana and María Jesús de Los Reyes, that she wanted to spend her remaining years at the old family home. Dolores had no ownership right in the home or the Homestead Tract, but was permitted to live there until her death on September 17, 1924, at more than 86 years of age.

Following the death of Guadalupe Domínguez in 1913, several offers to buy part or all of the Homestead Tract, along with other property in the area, were made to the surviving Domínguez sisters. At that time, Susana was married to Dr. Gregorio del Amo, a physician and surgeon who was wealthy in his own right. María Jesús de los Reyes was then the widow of a banker, John Fillmore Francis, who died in 1902. Both sisters had elegant homes in Los Angeles, and had no desire to return to the home on the Rancho. They disliked the thought of selling the property, and the probability that their birthplace would be converted to some commercial use, or demolished. Furthermore, at that time the homestead was being occupied by their widowed sister, Dolores Watson.

However, negotiations now began which culminated in the decision to dedicate the Domínguez home for a more worthy purpose. As a result, on January 22, 1922, that portion of the Homestead Tract which included the

home, together with a surrounding tract of 17.4 acres, was deeded as a gift from the Domínguez family to the Congregation of Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a Catholic order more commonly known as the Claretian Missionary Fathers. In an accompanying document, it was provided that actual transfer of title would not take place until after the death of Dolores Domínguez Watson.

During these years from 1883 to 1924, many substantial changes were made in the old adobe, including extensive additions made of wood frame construction with brick veneer on the exterior, and plastered both inside and out. Chronology of these changes cannot be found in available records so must be deduced from the several extant photographs and a study of the construction itself. The adobe, as added to by Don Manuel before his death in 1882, was first embellished by a pseudo-mansard roof consisting of a shingled sloping fence-like structure with a cast iron grillage at its top to conceal the flat adobe and brea roof which continued to serve to keep out the inclement weather. In connection with this, the porches were rebuilt with piers topped off with jig-saw brackets and a carefully detailed porch ceiling. This condition can be observed in two photos made just prior to 1900, which portray a family reunion posed in front of the embellished earlier east entrance to the original large sala.

It may well be that these changes undertaken by George Henry Carson, manager of the Rancho at this time, were spurred by deterioration of the original colonnades requiring replacement and a desire to conform with the Victorian styles then in vogue. It is unlikely that they were accomplished by any of the three sisters to whom the homesite was deeded by their mother in 1882, since none of them lived there permanently during that period, and all were individually involved in the complex affairs of the Rancho distribution.

Subsequent changes made after 1900 included the demolition of the two adobe additions made by Don Manuel to the north and west, as described above, the addition of the brick veneer structure extending an additional 80 feet northward and thence 50 feet westward, and the enclosing of the open porch at the southeast corner for additional bedrooms. These additions were accompanied by the demolition of the mansard roof embellishment, the placement of an interlocking-type tile roof over the entire structure including a revised wooden colonnade on the east, and a concrete arcade in the new courtyard or patio now created to the west. It is known that in 1910 the northerly room of the original adobe was altered and made into a family chapel, as will be mentioned later.

The foregoing chronology tells us who lived there and when, but not when these changes actually took place in the first quarter of the 20th Century.

Claretian Fathers: The Claretian Order was founded in Spain on July 16, 1849, by Archbishop Anthony M. Claret, who was officially proclaimed a Saint in 1950 by Pope Pius XII. Members of the Order, or Congregation, are engaged in religious, educational, and charitable activities throughout the world. Claretian missionaries first came to the United States in 1902, beginning their work in Texas. They came to California in 1907, when the parishes of San Gabriel Mission, in San Gabriel, and Our Lady Queen of the Angels, the Mother Church of Los Angeles, were placed under their charge.

The gift of the Domínguez homesite grew out of long-time family association with the Plaza Church and its ministers and through support of other Catholic projects in the Los Angeles area, which began with Manuel and Engracia

Portraits of Dr. Gregorio del Amo and Doña Susana Domínguez de del Amo which hang in the Del Amo Room.



Domínguez. All of the six daughters remained devout Catholics, and were regular contributors to parish and mission activities. The first contacts with the Claretian Fathers dated back to 1910, when Father Emeterio de Diego, C.M.F., was a dinner guest of Guadalupe Domínguez and her sisters at the old home, following their attendance at an Easter Mass in Los Angeles. It was Father de Diego who arranged for a renewal of the earlier custom of holding Mass in the family sitting room on Sunday mornings, and which was continued regularly thereafter for almost fourteen years. This relationship obviously had a definite influence on the decision of the Domínguez sisters to donate the homesite to the Church. It was a most timely acquisition for the Claretian Fathers, who were in need of a suitable location for a training school.

Formal transfer of the Domínguez homesite took place on October 23, 1924, less than a month after the death of Dolores Watson. At an outdoor ceremony, which was well attended by prominent Church officials, formal presentation of the deed to the property was made by James J. A. Watson, one of the four sons of Dolores, as spokesman for the Domínguez family. The Very Reverend Andrew Resa, C.M.F., then Provincial Superior for the Claretian Congregation in the western United States, acknowledged the gift of the home, and announced that a school for the training of candidates for the priesthood would be established immediately, to be known as Domínguez Memorial Seminary. The two surviving Domínguez sisters, Susana del Amo, then past eighty years of age, and María Jesús de los Reyes de Francis, three years younger, were present and participated in the program. The next day, the home was occupied by two Claretian priests and twelve students, who had been in residence at Mission San Gabriel.

As a token of appreciation for the generosity and kindness of the Domínguez and Del Amo Families, the Claretian Fathers have obligated

themselves to offer a daily Mass in perpetuity for the members of these families.

Development of the Seminary: In its first year of operation, 1924-1925, Domínguez Memorial Seminary had a total enrollment of just fourteen young seminarians. They were boys of senior high school age who were in preliminary training as candidates for the priesthood. Classes were held in the Domínguez home, along with use of the family chapel for religious purposes. The need for more classroom space was partly met by additions of space to the east at both the north and south extremities of the building.

During the first three years, enrollment at Domínguez Memorial Seminary grew steadily. In June, 1927, there were 34 seminarians in attendance, with a faculty of six priests and two lay brothers. The first major expansion of the school began late in 1927, following completion of a large two-story building, erected directly across the open plaza to the west of the Domínguez home with the material assistance of the Del Amo family. This school building contains a handsome chapel with a crypt in which the bodies of Dr. Gregorio del Amo and his wife Susana Domínguez were subsequently laid to rest.

In 1941, another large seminary building was built nearby and thus need for the use of the old homesite became less and less pressing, and it has now been virtually unoccupied for some years except for special services and family gatherings.

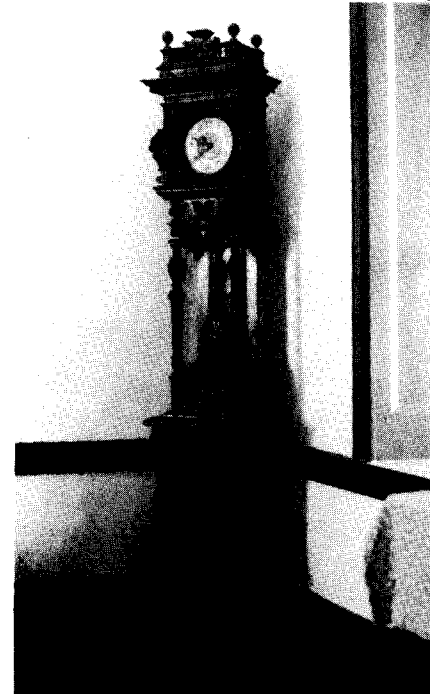
The Domínguez Homesite in Later Years: The home of Manuel Domínguez has undergone a number of changes in structure and in use since the year 1924, when it first came under the control of the Claretian Missionary Fathers. Mention has been made of the classrooms which were added in 1926 to the northeast and southeast corners of the Domínguez home. During the next four years, some internal alterations were made in the rooms in the north wing for classroom and office purposes, along with the installation of plumbing. The building sustained some damage in the severe earthquake on March 10, 1933, principally to the roof and window glass. The original adobe portion of the house survived as well or better than part of the later additions. However, when repairs were made, the adobe walls were reinforced by the placement of sturdy concrete buttresses at intervals along the exterior walls. All of the damaged areas were finally restored by 1936, including further interior renovations.

In 1944, and again in 1947, other changes were made in the interior arrangement of both the north and the south wings, providing a total of thirty rooms in the entire house.

Recognition of its place in the history of California was given the Domínguez home near the close of World War II. On April 25, 1945, the homesite was formally dedicated as California State Landmark No. 152, with the accompanying ceremony being in charge of Parlor 247, Native Daughters of the Golden West, of the City of Compton. The Seminary report for that year made the following notation: "April 24, 1945. Ceremonies of the presentation of a landmark by the Native Daughters of the Golden West took place on the Seminary grounds. A plaque was set on the south front of the homestead, which commemorates the Battle of Domínguez Ranch, October 8th and 9th, 1846. The plaque is made of redwood, and will be replaced by one of bronze after the war is over. People from outside attending the ceremony numbered some 75 persons". In November 1954, the bronze plaque was duly installed, this time on



View of outdoor "horno" or oven located just outside the kitchen on the south end of the home.



Grandfather clock used in the del Amo home and donated to the seminary now stands in the "sala" or sitting room.

the facade at the west entrance to the home, where it remains today. The redwood plaque has since disappeared.

Another smaller metal plaque, honoring Manuel Domínguez, also has been installed at the west entrance to the home, with the following inscription: "Don Manuel Domínguez, 1803-1882. Alcalde, Statesman, Soldier, Progenitor & Prototype Clamper. Dedicated on October 4, 1970, by Platrix Chapter #2, E Clampus Vitus". Members of this unique historical society conducted special ceremonies in advance of the dedication.

Along with changes in building structure, the Domínguez home has been used for a variety of purposes during the past half century. When first taken over by the Claretian Fathers, as has been noted, it provided classroom space for students for the priesthood. Throughout most of this period, one or more rooms were being used as living quarters. The re-partitioning of some rooms provided space for small study groups and for individual offices.

Other changes are noted in the Seminary records. The report for 1947, in referring to the status of the Seminary buildings, makes the following statement: "The Domínguez homestead has been remodeled for the Brother Postulants. The south end was altered into a tailor shop. The north end has been changed into a print shop. The work of the printers was greatly lightened with the installation of a new press last year, that has an automatic dryer. Two rooms have been set aside for use of the class in ceramics."

The 1969-1970 Seminary report stated: "At present the house contains a museum section, a tailor shop, laundry, parents' club office, and storage rooms, as well as living quarters."

Since 1942, four of the original six rooms in the Domínguez home were set aside and are being used as the historical or museum display area, which may be seen by visitors. The family sitting room is still furnished as a small chapel, with the commemorative window on the east side. The Chinese furniture in the room to the north of the chapel came from the Los Angeles home of Don Gregorio and Susana del Amo. The two rooms to the south contain some of the bedroom furniture used by Don Manuel and his family, along with clothing, pictures, the lemon-shaped branding iron of Don Manuel, and other mementos of rancho life more than a century ago.

As can be seen, the home of Don Manuel, like many other buildings of an earlier day, has had difficulty in maintaining its proper role as an historical landmark. However, it is now planned to open the Domínguez home and grounds for regular visitation by the general public.

The Domínguez homesite, as it stands today, continues to be an impressive monument of early life on the Rancho San Pedro, and to early events in the local history of the Los Angeles area. The mixture of the old and the new, as reflected by adaptations in original building structure and in contrasting types of domestic facilities, all testify to the variety of changes in every-day living experienced by several generations of the Domínguez family. The contrast in living conditions through more than one hundred years is further underlined by a look into the home itself. Even in its present condition, the general atmosphere serves as a reminder of the quiet and easy-going life which was typical of early rancho days, and brings a pang of regret that a unique period in California history is gone forever.

The general setting of the Domínguez home today, with the mission-style Seminary building across the rose garden and the open plaza to the west, and the variety of trees and shrubbery to the south and east, provides a scene which is in sharp contrast with the operation of the modern industrial plants a few blocks to the north intersected by the busy Artesia Freeway. Along the east boundary of the homesite, the rush of traffic on Alameda Street continues unceasingly; the automobile and truck drivers being almost completely oblivious of the modest sign at the entrance to the home and the Seminary.

The house of Don Manuel Domínguez thus stands as a poignant memorial to a distinguished pioneer family, and to the record of one of the most successful Spanish ranchos in all of California. It is hoped that it will remain that way. At the same time, as one of the oldest buildings in the entire harbor area, the home of Don Manuel represents a significant milestone along the road of tremendous progress in the on-going development of Los Angeles County.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHIEF EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE RANCHO SAN PEDRO

1769	June 29th	Arrival of Sergeant Juan José Domínguez in San Diego, as part of the guard accompanying Fr. Serra.
1784		Original grant of the Rancho San Pedro to Juan José Domínguez by Governor Fages in the name of Charles III, King of Spain.
1803	Jan. 26th	Birth of Manuel Domínguez in San Diego.
1822	Dec. 31st	Rancho San Pedro re-granted to Cristóbal Domínguez, nephew of Juan José and father of Manuel.
1825		Manuel assumes control of Ranch on father's death.
1827		Marriage of Manuel Domínguez to María Engracia Cota, granddaughter of Manuel Nieto.
1838		Allocation of "One Spanish League" in north east corner of the Rancho San Pedro to Rosario and Manuel Ferrer, (Niece of Manuel Domínguez); later purchased and known as the Temple & Gibson Tract, out of which the city of Compton was sub-divided.
1846	Oct. 8th	Battle of Domínguez Hill takes place.
1849	Sept.	Manuel served as a delegate to the First Constitution Convention in California.
1854	Dec. 22nd	Sale of 2400 acres comprising the original townsite of Wilmington.
1857	July 30th	Marriage of George Carson to Victoria Domínguez.
1857	Dec. 18th	Confirmation by the United States patent signed by President Buchanan, of the title of ownership by the Domínguez Family to the Rancho.
1869	Oct. 9th	Sale of right-of-way through the Rancho to the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad.
1882	Oct. 11th	Death of Don Manuel Domínguez.

1883	Mar. 16th	Death of Doña Maria Engracia Cota de Domínguez.
1885	June 26th	Partition of Don Manuel's Estate to his six surviving daughters.
1891		Sale of Rattlesnake Island to the Terminal Railway.
1901		Death of George Carson.
1910	Jan 10th to 20th	The Domínguez Air Meet, the first International Aviation Meet in the U.S. was held on Domínguez Hill not far from the site of the Seminary.
1910	Dec. 26th	Father De Diego, the first Claretian Father to visit the Domínguez Homestead, says Mass in the little Chapel.
1911		Sale of 3500 acres to Jared S. Torrance and Assoc. comprising the site of the city of Torrance.
1921		Oil first discovered in Domínguez Hill.
1924	Oct. 24th	The Claretians occupy the Domínguez Homestead and found the Seminary.
1927		Building donated by Dr. and Mrs. del Amo.
1929	July 25th	First Ordination to the Priesthood in new chapel.
1931	Jan. 18th	Susana Domínguez de del Amo dies.
1933	Mar. & Oct.	Earthquakes.
1941	Sept. 10th	Dr. Gregorio del Amo dies.

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**The Claretian Fathers
of Domínguez Seminary**

Hope you have enjoyed your visit to the Domínguez Ranch Home and that you will return and bring your friends for a brief look into the past of nearly 200 years ago.

"VAYA CON DIOS"