

Chapter IX – EL RANCHO GRANDE

Orange County's First Rancho

In the golden days of the great ranchos bordering El Camino Real, there was little need for hotels or inns. Less than a day's journey would always see the traveler within reach of some hacienda. Nor was the hospitality stinting; a weary traveler could always expect food, lodging, a change of horses and even cash if the need arose. No vain boast was the motto of the Spanish *dons*, "*Mi casa es su casa*." In those distant days, scarcely a few days passed that a traveler journeying along that portion of El Camino Real did not enter the gates of the Nietos. The first Nieto adobe was located near the crossing of El Camino Real and the San Gabriel River, a day's ride from Mission San Gabriel. On the way from Mission San Juan Capistrano to San Gabriel there was always a welcome at "Los Nietos", the headquarters of the greatest rancho in California.

San Felipe y Santiago in Sinaloa, Mexico was the birthplace in the late 1740's of José Manuel Perez-Nieto (usually known as Manuel Nieto), who became the first Nieto ranchero in Alta California. He was the son of José Perez and Manuela Nieto. Manuela Nieto was born about 1720, and was living with Manuel in 1790, listed as an *española*, but no further record is found of her. Manuel and his brother are recorded as *mulatos*, so perhaps his father José was from one of the Negro families who were the skilled workers of the Royal Mines of Sinaloa. Like most of his class, he began as a common *soldado de cuera* of the Company of Loreto. In 1769 he was part of the Portolá expedition but when Father Serra founded the Mission San Fernando de Velicatá he was left there as part of the *escolta*. In 1771 he appeared as a *padrino* at San Borja, Baja California, but in February 1773 his first appearance in Alta California records is as *padrino* at



Msn San Buenaventura
1782



Bartolo
1847



Rancho los Cerritos
1844



Rancho los Alamitos
1839

Mission San Carlos. In May of 1774 he was at San Luis Obispo, but returned to Loreto soon after that.

In June 1774 an accounting was made of unpaid wages, the items each soldier had charged against his account and the balance still owed the soldier. Little has been written about the way of life of those soldiers who served under Portolá and in Alta California for the next five years. Manuel Nieto's account signed by Governor Fages provides a glimpse of his life. [Items of a similar nature, regardless of time, have been grouped together. Some items, difficult to translate, have been omitted.]

1 sword	5 <i>varas</i> of plush
1 musket and case	1 piece of lamé
2 parts of a gun hammer	2 1/2 <i>varas</i> ribbon of " <i>Itla</i> " of silver
1 piece for bridle	15 1/2 <i>varas</i> silver braid
1 mule (credit)	2 dozen gold buttons
	8 1/2 <i>varas</i> first quality linen thread
1 St. Christopher's medal	1 pound thread " <i>munequilla</i> "
2 rosaries	11 <i>varas</i> lining material
3 hats	6 <i>varas</i> broad blanket
1 silk kerchief	4 1/2 <i>varas</i> striped blanketing
1 pair of linen hose	1 blanket
1 pair of silk hose (flesh colored)	
1 curved razor	11 pounds of tobacco
	17 pounds fine chocolate
31 1/4 <i>varas</i> of Puebla coarse cotton	8 pounds sugar
36 1/4 <i>varas</i> of coarse cotton	3 pounds panoche (hard brown sugar
6 1/2 <i>varas</i> of flannel	cones)
6 <i>varas</i> sackcloth	15 pounds of soap
8 <i>varas</i> fine wide linen	2 quires and 4 packs of 25 sheets of
1 1/4 <i>varas</i> of linen	paper
3 <i>varas</i> woolen cloth	
2 <i>varas</i> coarse woolen cloth	
1/2 <i>vara</i> silk	

That last item for paper, if correctly translated, is strange as Manuel was illiterate, did he have to pay for stamped paper for official reports made for him? The majority of the list is for materials for clothing. Did he make his own clothing or were there Indian servants that did this without pay? There are no needles listed, did he bring them with him or did the tailors provide them? The amount of thread listed appears to be sufficient only for repairs. Although he had need to buy three hats, there is no charge for boots. Perhaps the military provided regular replacements.

The military items listed at the beginning were actually charged in his later years. It might be assumed that these items were replacements for standard issue whose loss was held the responsibility of the soldier. Note that there is no charge for lead for bullets, replacement gun flints or powder.

While the list of clothing materials include silver ribbon and fancy materials and braid, another side is seen in the charges for a Saint Christopher's medal and two small rosaries. Finally, there are the charges for tobacco, but none for spirits or cards, both forbidden by the military command.

The summary accounting in June 1774, gives the following:

credit to his account	215 pesos 1 6/8 reales
charged against his account	153 pesos 6 reales
balance due to Manuel	61 pesos 3 6/8 reales

As of 1786, letters were still flying back and forth in the higher levels of the government ordering that the soldiers be paid, requests for invoices and requests for the actual cash to be deposited into an account to pay these arrearages.⁵⁶ Fortunately for Manuel, by this time he had a rancho to help pay his own bills.

On 1 March 1780 Manuel Nieto was detached from the Company of Loreto and transferred to the Company of San Diego. In 1784 he was assigned to the *escorta* of Mission San Gabriel, where he served until at least 1796. He was buried 13 December 1804 as a *soldado invalido* and a resident of Rancho Los Nietos.

Becoming a ranchero in the days of Spanish rule was far different from the procedure under Mexican rule. All land was the property of the King of Spain, King Carlos III at that time. In 1773 Viceroy Bucareli had authorized the assignment of lands by the *commandantes* of the Presidios of Monterey and San Diego. In 1784 *Teniente* José de Zuñiga, *commandante* of the Presidio of San Diego, recommended to Governor Pedro Fages three such grants. Manuel Nieto was one of those first three, and his petition and

⁵⁶AGN Microfilm "*Indiferente de Guerra, Legajo 3, 167A*".

grant are typical for the times. His petition as given by W. W. Robinson in "Land in California" (1948:9) reads as follows:

Sir:

Manuel Perez Nieto, soldier of the Royal Presidio of San Diego, before Your Worship with the greatest and due honour, appear and say: That in attention to the fact that I have my herd of horses, as well as of bovine stock at the Royal Presidio of San Diego, and because they are increasing and because I have no place to graze them, and likewise because I have no designated place, I request Your Worship's charity that you be pleased to assign me a place situated at three leagues distance from the Mission San Gabriel along the road to the Royal Presidio of San Carlos de Monterey named *La Sanja*, contemplating Sir, not to harm neither a living soul, principally the Mission of San Gabriel, nor even less the Pueblo of the Queen of the Angels. I humbly request of Your Worship's superior government that it see fit to decide as I have requested, for if it is so, I shall receive a gift, and shall consider myself most favored; and therefore:

To Your Worship I humbly beg and request that you be pleased to decide along the tenor of my petition or as it may be to your superior pleasure, and I swear to all the necessary and that this my petition is not done in malice, nor least of all to injure any one, and not knowing how to sign I made the sign of the Cross. +

Attached as a marginal note is:

San Gabriel, October 21, 1784

I grant the petitioner the permission of having the bovine stock and horses at the place of *La Sanja*, or its environs; provided no harm is done to the Mission San Gabriel nor to the Pagan Indians of its environs in any manner whatsoever; and that he must have some one to watch it, and to go and sleep at the aforementioned Pueblo.
Pedro Fages

The grant covered some 300,000 acres of land grandly described as from the San Gabriel River to the Santa Ana River and from the mountains to the sea. In 1803, however, that portion of the property nearest the mountains was returned to the Mission San Gabriel, thereby reducing the Nieto lands to a still very sizable 167,000 acres.

Rancho de los Nietos was by far the largest land cession in Alta California in either Spanish or Mexican times, and much of it was some of the finest land to be had. The other two 1784 cessions were 74,000 acres to Corporal Juan José Domínguez, noted Indian fighter

and a member of the original Portolá expedition of 1769; and 36,000 acres to Corporal José María Verdugo. Both were "*Españoles*", that is, of more or less pure European blood. Both were descended from or married into other prominent families. Both had participated in major campaigns or expeditions. Manuel Nieto was neither a Corporal nor *español*.

While stationed at the Presidio of Loreto, Baja California, Manuel Nieto had married María Teresa Morillo about 1775. Both were *castas*, that is not of pure Spanish ancestry; Manuel was a *mulato*, and his wife Teresa was a *coyote*, that is of Negro, Indian and perhaps some European blood. Manuel was illiterate and never rose above the rank of common soldier. His participation in the Portolá expedition was brief, leaving it in June of 1769 at Velicatá, and his only minor exploit occurred after his grant had been made. Why was Manuel Nieto given the largest land grant in Alta California? Perhaps we will never know.

One son, José Ygnacio Ceslao Alejandro del Carmen, had been baptized on 17 July 1776 at Loreto, but apparently he did not survive as no later mention of him is found. Juan José María Nieto was baptized in San Diego on 26 February 1781, and then an intriguing entry appears in the baptismal records of Mission San Juan Capistrano. Ignacio Alvarado, Sergeant of the Company of San Diego, reported to the priest on August 22, 1784 that he had personally baptized a child in danger of death with the name José Antonio. Then, written in Latin, the father is recorded as Lieutenant José de Zuñiga, Commander of the Presidio of San Diego and the mother is only given as "the wife of the soldier Manuel Nieto."

Un escandalo! José de Zuñiga was of the very best families of the City of Mexico, and his mother had contacts with all the people who mattered. He was known for his fine tastes, pious devotions and excellent education. He had personally directed the construction of the Presidio Chapel, done much of the decoration of it and ordered some of altar appointments himself from his own purse. He had written at least one religious tract, and ordered a copy in English of the journal of Captain Cooke's voyages. As the sergeant of his company had baptized the child and reported the parentage to the Father at San Juan Capistrano, the matter could hardly be ignored. Was this event, near the time that Manuel Nieto submitted his petition, unrelated? The case is unproven. The fate of that child, by the way, is also unknown. It can only be stated that no further record has been found of him, and his burial is not recorded at San Juan Capistrano or San Gabriel within a year of his birth.

Soon after Manuel Nieto joined the *escolta* of San Gabriel, there was an attempted uprising of some of *neofitos* and *gentiles*. As the story is told Toypurina, a *gentile*, claimed that she had magical powers so that she could cast a spell over the Padres and the Indians could then attack and take over the Mission. The *escolta* became aware of the scheme and asked the Padres to sleep elsewhere on that night in October 1785. Two of the soldiers donned cassocks over their clothes and stretched on the Fathers' beds. The other soldiers

then lit candles at the head and foot of the pallets, and concealed themselves. One Indian, probably named Nicolás, snuck in and seeing the Fathers apparently dead, signalled for the others to come in. The *escolta* then appeared and the Indians were so startled as the "Padres" rose from their pallets, that they were overpowered without significant violence.

Whether that was quite how it went or not, about twenty Indians were taken into custody. Four ringleaders, including Toypurina, were placed in jail, and the others were released after fifteen or twenty lashes. The matter was referred to higher authority and about two years later, judgment was passed. Two were released for time served; Nicolás was sentenced to labor in one of the Presidios for six years, followed by exile to a distant mission; and Toypurina was exiled to a distant Mission for life (Bancroft 1963, XVIII:460).

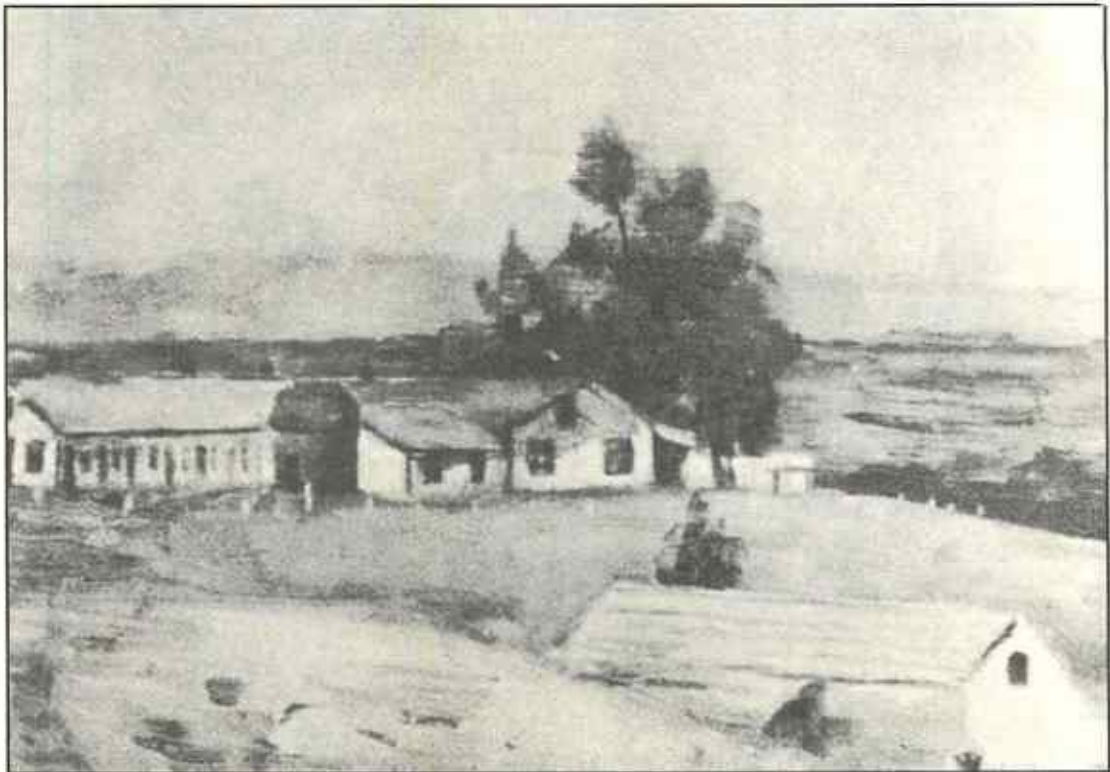
After seven months in jail, Toypurina produced a son, baptized Nereo Joaquín on 12 May 1786. He died at the age of 15 months. During her two years in jail, Toypurina was given instruction in the Catholic faith and was baptized into the Church on 8 March 1787 with the Christian name Regina Josefa. Although she had had a *gentile* husband, she was not permitted to marry him. At the end of that year she was transferred to the Mission San Carlos, perhaps to keep her under the eye of the Monterey Presidio. About two years later on 26 July 1789 Regina was married to Manuel Montero, a soldier of that Presidio. They had three known children including a son who was killed by a fall from a horse while a soldier of the artillery, and a daughter who married the soldier José María Benavides and left descendants. Regina herself was buried 23 May 1799 at Mission San Juan Bautista.

After his many years of garrison duty in the army, Manuel Nieto moved his family to the new lands of Rancho la Zanja, now called Rancho de los Nietos. He built his home, managed a successful ranch, and lived in the manner of the California Dons. The house sufficed for the Nieto heirs and their many guests as long as they possessed the land, and in fact it survived until it was finally washed away in the floods of the winter of 1860-1861. Manuel Nieto and Teresa Morillo had six known children:

- José Ygnacio Ceslao Alejandro del Carmen, baptized on 17 July 1776 Loreto, died young;
- Juan José María, baptized 6 February 1781 San Diego Presidio, married Tomasa Tapia 28 November 1806 San Gabriel, buried 3 August 1850 Plaza;
- José Antonio María, baptized 14 August 1785 San Gabriel, married Catarina Ruíz 12 August 1804 San Gabriel, buried 2 December 1832 San Gabriel;
- "Antonia" María de los Santos, baptized 2 November 1788 San Gabriel, buried 28 May 1796 San Gabriel;

María Manuela Antonia, baptized 5 August 1791 San Gabriel, married Guillermo Cota, widower 14 July 1805 San Gabriel, died between 1836 and 1844; and Antonio María, baptized 14 July 1796 San Gabriel, married Josefa Cota, daughter of Guillermo Cota and his first wife, 25 January 1815 San Gabriel, buried 7 December 1832 San Gabriel.

When Manuel Nieto was buried on 13 December 1804 at the recorded age of 56, his widow and offspring remained at the rancho, now usually called Santa Gertrudis without dividing the grant. All of his children built homes on the vast ranch. María Teresa followed her husband to the grave on 21 September 1816 at the age of 59. With the change of government from Spain to Mexico in 1822, Juan José, the eldest son and administrator of the estate began the process of converting the old Spanish cession into a firm grant to the heirs. In 1834 the holdings were confirmed to the heirs and broken into five ranchos: los Alamitos, los Coyotes, las Bolsas, los Cerritos, and Santa Gertrudis.

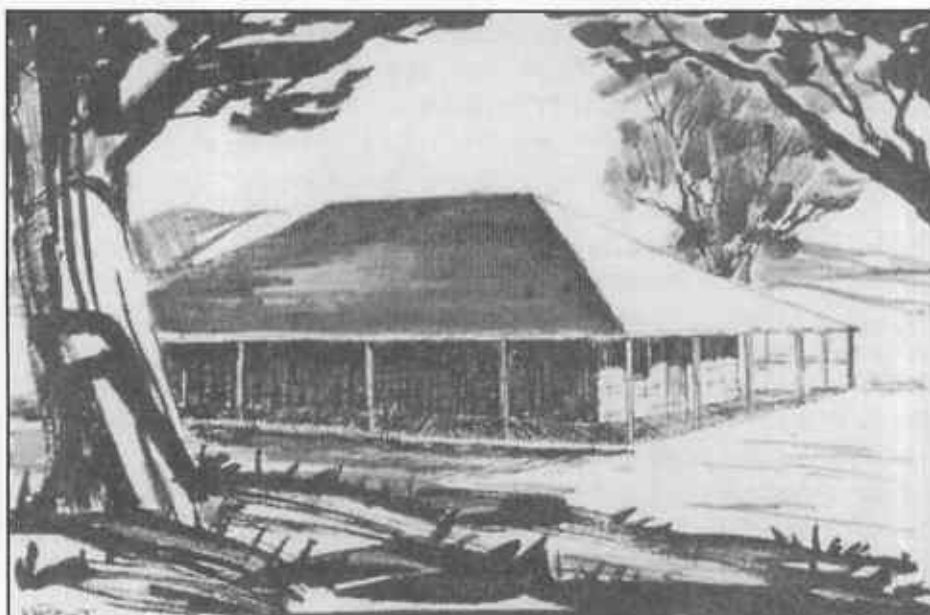


Rancho los Alamitos Adobe
As painted by a ranch sheepherder about 1880.
(Courtesy of Los Cerritos Museum)

Los Alamitos and Los Coyotes

Juan José Nieto, eldest son of Manuel received as his portion Rancho los Alamitos and Rancho los Coyotes as well as a small *sitio* called Palo Alto located in the hills northeast of the old homesite. The cities of Seal Beach, Los Alamitos and the eastern portion of Long Beach would eventually occupy Rancho los Alamitos. Rancho los Coyotes later developed into the cities of Buena Park, Cypress, Cerritos, and Stanton. Shortly after the 1834 division Juan José sold Rancho los Alamitos to Governor Figueroa. Less than ten years later Abel Stearns purchased the property.

Long before the legal partition of Rancho de los Nietos had occurred, Juan José Nieto had constructed his Los Alamitos Adobe among the little cottonwoods on a hillock beside the San Gabriel River about two miles from its outlet to the ocean. He also constructed an adobe on his Rancho los Coyotes. First called *Buena de Esperanza* (Good Hope), later, "Half-way House", its location on the lower portion of El Camino Real made it ideal as the overnight stop for travelers en route to Los Angeles, as it was still a day's ox cart drive from Nieto's home to "town."



Buena de Esperanza Adobe
(Sketched from an old photograph by Harold L. Kent)

Juan José had married in 1806 Tomasa Tapia, baptized 8 March 1787 San Luis Obispo, daughter of José Bartolomé Tapia and María Francisca Villalobo. There were no children although he and his wife had adopted María Nieves, born about 1817, an *hija natural* of Patricia Rodriguez. Nieves appears to have been a disappointment and a constant sorrow

to them. The intentions of Nieves and Julian Vargas of Taos, New Mexico were filed at San Gabriel on 22 September 1833, but apparently the marriage did not take place. In 1844 Nieves was living with Juan Rivas and had assumed the last name of Bustamante, the name of her natural mother's deceased husband. Juan Rivas was buried 22 October 1848 Plaza. Sadly, her profession was listed as "*mala vida*", that is, "the bad life", a euphemism for prostitute. Nieves, using the last names Nieto, Bustamante and Ruíz, had the following known children:

María de la Merced "Juana", born about 1832, living in 1844;

Juan Arenas, born about 1840, son of Luis Arenas, married Refugio Marron 22 December 1862 Plaza, living in 1873;

Conception Rivas, baptized 9 August 1842 San Gabriel, married Samuel Hunter 4 April 1867 Plaza;

Francisco Rivas, born about 1844, married Beatrice Canas 22 June 1869 Plaza;

Margarita Foster, baptized 14 October 1849 Plaza, daughter of Steven C. Foster (per marriage), married James Heffner, widower, 2 February 1867 Plaza;

Hilario, confirmed 27 December 1855 Plaza, son of Cayetano Martínez;

María Eloísa Ruíz, baptized 9 April 1855 Plaza; and

Francisca Ruíz, baptized 9 November 1856 Plaza.

In spite of receiving the largest share of his father's estate, when he was buried in 1850 at the Plaza Church, Juan José Nieto had little to show for his inheritance except a mortgage owed to him. Juan José's marriage also had not survived, for his will indicates that his banns to Tomasa were dissolved in 1847. She too was buried at the Plaza church only a few months after him on 29 March 1851. Thus this eldest son left neither heirs to the Nieto name, or any land to Nieto heirs.

Rancho los Coyotes passed from Nieto ownership in 1840 to Juan Bautista Leandri, an Italian, who bought it on credit for a mere pittance. Strategically located, it continued to be a stopover for travelers. Leandri was born about 1807 in Magdaline, Sardinia and was in northern California by 1830, but came south to marry Francisca Uribes 9 February 1839 at San Gabriel, dying within five years. Francisca had been baptized 5 October 1815 San Gabriel, the daughter of Tomás Casimiro Uribes and Marcela Cota (a cousin of Guillermo). After Leandri had died, Lieutenant William Emory visited the adobe as a member of General Kearney's troops. In his log for 7 January 1847 he notes: "We came to the Coyotes, a *rancheria* (sic) owned by a rich widow lady, who had just married a handsome young fellow, who might well pass for her son." He referred to Francisca Uribes de Leandri and her new husband, Francisco O'Campo from Tepic, Mexico, seven years her junior, who

she had married 17 November 1846 at San Gabriel. They were living in the Capistrano area in 1851 with no children in the home (Emory, 1949:184).

Las Bolsas

Although Manuel's oldest son had no children, José Antonio Nieto, the second surviving son of Manuel Nieto and Teresa Morillo, did a little better. Two days short of his 19th birthday in 1804, José Antonio married 12 year-old Catalina Ruíz, who had been baptized 25 November 1791 at San Gabriel, daughter of Efigenio Ruíz and María Rosa López. José Antonio Nieto and Catalina Ruíz had only two known children, both girls:

María Cleofe, baptized 6 April 1806 San Gabriel, married Justo Morillo about April 1819, living in 1851; and

María Rita del Rosario, baptized 2 October 1815 San Gabriel, died after 1831.

These Nietos made their home in the southern part of the great Rancho de los Nietos lying west of the Santa Ana River's mouth. Through the years the river changed its course to the ocean, leaving pockets of grassland between old river beds and marshes. This well-watered, rich land was the portion inherited by José Antonio Nieto's widow in 1834. It was called the Rancho las Bolsas. With the finest grazing land available, José Antonio had built up a sizable herd of cattle and bred magnificent riding horses.

In this society on horseback, even small children looked forward to the day when they would be allowed to ride alone on one of the horses for which they had cared. Only the old, the infirm, the expectant mothers, and the very youngest children traveled in the clumsy *carretas*. Travel frequently involved long distances merely for the sake of a visit. Even "washday" was an occasion. A California señorita described (Saddleback Ancestors 1969:120-1) one of these excursions:

It made us children happy to be waked before the sun was up to prepare for the washday expedition. The night before, the *carreta's* great wheels were soaped to quell the squeaking. Lunch was packed in baskets and the gentle oxen were yoked to the pole. We climbed in under the green cloth which was used as an awning and the white-haired Indian driver plodded along beside with his ox goad. The great piles of soiled linen were fastened on the backs of horses led by servants, while the girls and women who were to do the washing trooped along by the side of the *carreta*. Our progress was slow, and it was generally sunrise before the spring was reached. Our watchful mother guided the whole party, seeing that no one strayed too far after flowers, or stayed too

long. Sometimes we heard the howl of coyotes and the noise of other animals. Then none of us were allowed to leave the *carreta*. We watched the women unload the linen and carry it to the spring where they put the ranch-made soap on the clothes, dipped them in the water, and rubbed them on the smooth rocks until they were white as snow. Then they were spread out to dry on the tops of low bushes growing along the warm side of the spring. After a happy day, the younger children were all asleep in the slow *carreta* as the linen-laden horses were driven home to the ranch.

José Antonio Nieto was buried 2 December 1832 at San Gabriel, leaving his widow Doña Catalina to occupy the family home which lay somewhat south of the eventual site of Midway City. It was not until two years after his death that his widow gained separate and permanent title to Rancho las Bolsas. To confirm the exact area of her title, Doña Catalina had an official survey made by Rafael Guirado.

Of the two daughters of José Antonio Nieto, Rita remained unmarried, but about April 1819 María Cleofe married Justo Morillo, the son of Francisco Xavier Morillo and Lucia Perez. Francisco Morillo was a soldier of the Royal Presidio at Loreto in Baja California, where Justo was born about 1794. As a child Justo had come with his parents to the new pueblo at Los Angeles about 1811.

By 1836 Justo Morillo was the actual manager of Rancho las Bolsas. Justo and Cleofe had only two known children:

María Encarnación, baptized 25 March 1819 San Gabriel, buried 22 May 1819 San Gabriel; and

José Antonio, baptized 20 December 1820 San Gabriel, married Rafaela Romero 11 February 1843 San Gabriel, buried 21 August 1886 Yorba Cemetery.

Justo Morillo also had at least one and possibly two *hijo naturales* by Dolores Valenzuela⁵⁷ who had been born about 1818 daughter of José María Valenzuela and María de Jesús Rodríguez. These children may include:

⁵⁷The editors, the Bandy's, have several recipes handed down in the family from Dolores Valenzuela through her daughter Guadalupe Urquidez.

Eduardo, baptized 1 July 1844 San Gabriel, died after 1886, son of Justo Morillo;
Manuel Justo, baptized 24 July 1851 Plaza, son of Gabriel Ramos but confirmed
2 January 1856 Plaza as a son of Justo Morillo, and used the last name
Morillo the rest of his life, still living in 1886.

José Antonio Morillo married in 1843 Rafaela Romero, who had been baptized 16 July 1826 at Santa Barbara, the daughter of Manuel Romero and Gregoria Ontiveros. Rafaela Romero de Morillo was buried on 5 November 1906 in the Yorba Cemetery, next to her husband. Six children were born to José Antonio and Rafaela:

José Susano Antonio, baptized 27 May 1844 Plaza, buried 18 October 1849 San Gabriel;
José Alfonzo Susano, born about 1846, married Juana Martínez;
Magdalena Lucia, baptized 5 September 1848 Plaza, buried 18 December 1940 Capistrano, unmarried;
José de Jesús, baptized 19 January 1851 Plaza, married Francisca Yorba (daughter of Juan Yorba and Isabel Serrano) 2 May 1885 Capistrano, buried 14 January 1916 Yorba Cemetery;
José Justo de Jesús, baptized 25 November 1852 Capistrano, married Feliciano Duarte on 26 May 1876 Yorba Chapel, buried 1 January 1908 Yorba Cemetery; and
María Guadalupe, baptized 19 February 1855 San Gabriel, married Rosendo Peralta 19 July 1879.

Magdalena never married but moved to San Juan Capistrano with her widowed mother. They lived for a time in the old Don Juan Avila house. Serving for many years as housekeeper for Father St. John O'Sullivan of Mission San Juan Capistrano, Magdalena was the source of much of the folklore described in his book "**Capistrano Nights**." Tragically, this great-great-granddaughter of a ranchero who once owned 300,000 acres of land died in poverty with only five cents to her name. She was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Capistrano Mission on 18 December 1940.

Of the five ranchos which had been formed from Rancho de los Nietos, only Rancho las Bolsas remained in the control of the direct heirs of the original grantee when California became a state. Its fate was a checkered one. Doña Catalina Ruíz de Nieto early sold an interest in her property to Ramón Yorba, one of the owners of the neighboring Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. During the fifties Catalina Ruíz de Nieto and Ramón Yorba had to prove their claim. It was presented to the commission by Doña Catalina's son-in-law,

Justo Morillo, and defended by Abel Stearns. He lent the Land Commission fee of fifty young cows. Stearns also lent money to the Nieto heirs and Yorba at the rate of 5% compounded monthly. Although commonplace, such an interest rate caused a debt to double in little more than a year. On 14 February 1861 Rancho las Bolsas was sold at public auction to satisfy a \$28,043 note held by Stearns against José Antonio Morillo, his wife María Rafaela Romero, and his mother María Cleofe Nieto de Morillo. Abel Stearns secured title to the ranch for a bid of \$15,000.

Thus the expenses necessary for establishing title to their claims before the United States Government proved too much for the heirs of Manuel Nieto. They, like many of their friends and relatives, were gradually reduced from land owners to tenants. The history of the Nieto property is typical of many California land grants which were lost one by one in a shifting political and economic climate where hard cash talked.

Thus this second son of old Manuel Nieto, had only one surviving daughter, who also had only one daughter. Again there were no heirs to the name, and only five Morillo descendants, who lost their share in 1861.

La Bolsa Chica

The rancho la Bolsa Chica was not part of the old los Nietos grant, but its history and that of its grantee, Joaquín Ruíz is so closely tied to the Nietos of Rancho las Bolsas that it is included here.

Catalina and Joaquín were two children of Efigenio Ruíz, born about 1745 at El Fuerte, Sinaloa, Mexico, and María Rosa López y Sánchez, born about 1753 in los Alamos, Sinaloa. Efigenio reached California as a soldier accompanying the first *Pobladores* to found the Pueblo of Los Angeles in 1781, bringing his wife and their first three children (Temple 1931:114). They had eight known children before Efigenio was buried at Santa Barbara on 13 June 1795 and Rosa at San Gabriel 23 September 1828:

María Ursula, born about 1771 Presidio of Buenavista Sonora, married Eugenio Rosalio Villavicencio 19 July 1786 Ventura;

José Pedro, born about 1774 El Fuerte, Sinaloa, married María Ignacia Lugo 7 October 1798 Santa Barbara, buried 28 April 1849 Santa Barbara;

José (Hilario), born about 1780 San Miguel Orcasitas, Sonora, married Julia Sinova 7 January 1798 Santa Barbara, buried 9 March 1854 Santa Barbara;

María Dolores Dominga, baptized 28 May 1783 Santa Barbara, married Antonio María Lugo (of Chapter X) 17 January 1796 Santa Barbara, buried 14 March 1829 San Gabriel;

María Cirilia Procopia, baptized 8 June 1785 Ventura, married first Estanislao Cordero 15 April 1798 Santa Barbara, married second Teodoro Arrellanes 3 January 1802 Santa Barbara, buried 6 September 1804 San Gabriel;

Rosa María, baptized 4 May 1789 Ventura, married Antonio Ignacio Avila (of Chapter III) 6 February 1803 Santa Barbara, buried 1 March 1866 Plaza;

María Catarina, baptized 25 November 1791 San Gabriel, married José Antonio Nieto 12 August 1804 San Gabriel, buried 11 January 1855 Plaza; and

José Joaquín, baptized 29 January 1794 Santa Barbara, married first María Antonia Quirina Ybarra 9 January 1814 San Gabriel, married second Eulogia Higuera 26 September 1856 Plaza, buried 18 February 1858 Plaza.

Joaquín began his adult life as a *soldado de cuera* of the company of the San Diego Presidio, in which he served until about 1827. Soon after that Catalina Ruíz de Nieto allowed him to use a portion of Rancho las Bolsas as a grazing pasture for a herd of sheep. With his sister's permission, Joaquín built a home and corrals in the southwest corner of the rancho.

Doña Catalina Ruíz de Nieto encouraged her brother Joaquín to petition the governor for a grant adjacent to her holdings. In 1841 Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado issued full title to him for the Rancho la Bolsa Chica, an 8,100 acre area that would later embrace Sunset Beach and Wintersburg. The expense of proving his claim before the U.S. Land Commission forced Joaquín Ruíz to borrow several hundred dollars from Abel Stearns. Joaquín was buried at the Plaza Church 8 days before the land claim was approved 26 February 1858. None of his heirs were to benefit from the award. Unfortunately, they had insufficient cash to repay the loan plus interest. The ranch became part of the Stearns empire when he foreclosed.

Joaquín's wife, Quirina Ybarra, a native of San Diego, was baptized 8 June 1794, daughter of Juan Antonio Ybarra and María de los Angeles Velasquez of Mazatlán de los Mulatos, Sinaloa, Mexico of Chapter VII. Their children included:

Antonio de los Reyes, born about 1812, married Celedonia Farias (*informaciones* 14 June 1835) San Gabriel, died by 1837;

José Anselmo, baptized 24 April 1814 San Gabriel, living in 1860;

Juan Agaton, born about 1816, married Francisca Cañedo 2 September 1838 Capistrano;
Francisca, born about 1818, married José María Ocana August 1835 San Gabriel, living in 1851;
Andrés, baptized 18 April 1822 San Diego, married Saturnina Cristan, buried 7 April 1870 Plaza;
José Eustaquio, baptized 29 March 1824 San Diego, died December 1846 Pauma;
María Josefa, baptized 18 February 1826 San Diego, married José Dolores Sepúlveda (son of Enrique, Chapter VIII) 1 May 1844 San Gabriel, died by 1870;
Joaquina, baptized 18 February 1826 San Diego, buried 20 February 1826 San Diego;
José Rafael, baptized 17 April 1828 Plaza, married Francisca Lisalde 31 August 1850 Plaza, died 1851-1852;
José María Antonio, baptized 20 March 1830 Plaza, married Francisca Lisalde (widow of Rafael above) (*informaciones* 22 September 1852) San Gabriel;
José Dolores, baptized 27 June 1832 San Gabriel, married Ramona Lugo 4 March 1862 Plaza, living in 1871;
María Teodora, born about 1834, living in 1851; and
José Ramón, baptized 10 March 1838 Capistrano, living in 1851.

Quirina Ybarra de Ruíz was buried 20 June 1853 at Capistrano. Joaquín married a second time in the Plaza Church in 1856 María Eulogia Higuera, the widow of Antonio Duarte, but died a year and a half later, being buried 18 February 1858 at Plaza. There were no children by Joaquín's second wife, Eulogia.

Rancho Los Cerritos

The only daughter of the founder of the Nieto family in Alta California to reach adulthood was María Manuela Antonia Perez-Nieto. "Manuela," as she was called, became the second wife of Guillermo Cota in 1805 at San Gabriel. Guillermo Cota was a member of the prominent and active Santa Barbara Cota family. Born about 1768 at Loreto, Baja California, he was a third generation soldier to serve Spain in the Californias. His father, Roqué Cota, had been a member of the *escolta* which escorted the *pobladores* when they founded the town of Los Angeles in 1781, and his grandfather Andrés Cota was a soldier of the Presidio of Loreto. Guillermo served in many positions, among them Corporal and

Sergeant of the Santa Barbara Company stationed at Mission San Fernando, later in public positions as *comisionado* and *alcalde* of Los Angeles (Bancroft 1963, XIX:769).

Guillermo Cota's first wife, Manuela de Jesús Lisalde, was the first child of the soldier families to be baptized at Mission San Gabriel on 30 May 1777, daughter of Pedro Antonio Lisalde and María Tomasa López. Guillermo Cota and Manuela Lisalde were married there 29 November 1794. Their children were:

José Manuel María, baptized 1 January 1796 San Gabriel, married Barbara Machado 25 January 1815 San Gabriel, buried 15 September 1840 Plaza;
Josefa Alvina, baptized 17 February 1798 San Gabriel, married Antonio María Nieto 25 January 1815 San Gabriel, buried 10 November 1847 Plaza;
María Magdalena Josefa, baptized 8 April 1800 San Gabriel, married José Francisco María Ortega, widower of Francisca Yorba 23 April 1817 San Gabriel; and
Miguel Gregorio, baptized 9 May 1802 Santa Barbara, married María Manuela Antonia Ortega 9 August 1835 Santa Inez.

As her share following the division of Rancho de los Nietos, Manuela Nieto de Cota received Rancho los Cerritos, which covered the future townsites of Lakewood, North Long Beach, Paramount, Bellflower, and Signal Hill. She and her husband Guillermo had thirteen children, of whom at least eleven survived to share in her estate when she died about 1840:

María de Gracia, baptized 1 July 1806 San Fernando, married Manuel Domínguez (*informaciones* 7 November 1827) San Gabriel, died about 1882 Los Angeles;
María de Jesús, baptized 3 March 1808 San Fernando, married Pedro Domínguez (*informaciones* 7 January 1832) San Gabriel, buried 5 March 1863 Plaza;
María Viviana, baptized 2 December 1809 San Fernando, buried 30 April 1812 San Gabriel;
María Antonia, baptized 7 July 1811 San Gabriel, buried 4 May 1859, unmarried, Plaza;
José María de los Angeles, baptized 29 July 1813 San Gabriel, buried 10 June 1862 Plaza;
María Asención, born about 1815, married Rafael Gallardo 19 January 1843 San Gabriel, living in 1851;
Leonardo, born about 1817, married Inez Dolores Yorba 27 November 1847 San Gabriel, died 15 October 1887, buried Santa Monica;

María Magdalena, born about 1819, buried 19 September 1820 San Gabriel;
Raymundo, born about 1821, living in 1844;
Francisco, born about 1823, married Martina Machado 6 February 1850 Plaza,
living in 1872;
María Loreta, baptized 12 September 1824 San Gabriel, married Juan Bautista
Bouet 16 November 1847 San Gabriel, living in 1860;
María Luisa, baptized 29 August 1828 Plaza, living in 1851; and
Benito, baptized 21 March 1830 Plaza, buried 24 September 1863 Jurupa.

The seventh child of Manuela Nieto and Guillermo Cota was Leonardo, born about 1817. Among the civic offices he held in the pueblo of Los Angeles were *alferez de defensores*, *regidor*, *comisionado*, and *alcalde*. At the battle of San Pasqual he was Captain of the Lancers under Generals Flores and Pico. Leonardo Cota married María Inez Yorba, who was baptized 28 January 1827 Capistrano, daughter of Bernardo Yorba and María de Jesús Alvarado, in 1847 at San Gabriel. Don Bernardo Yorba bought Rancho Rincon for his daughter, and the Cota Adobe at the upper end of Santa Ana Canyon became one of the best-known homes in the area (Hoover, 1962:35). Leonardo and Inez Yorba de Cota became the parents of:

Manuela del Refugio, baptized 5 November 1848 Plaza, married José Juan
Machado 28 January 1878;
Guillermo, baptized 6 October 1850 Plaza, probably died by 1856;
María de Jesús, baptized 10 June 1852 Plaza, married Marius Meyer, widower of
Victoria, 16 December 1884 Jurupa;
Victoria, baptized 24 February 1854 San Gabriel, married Marius Meyer 22
September 1880 Jurupa, died by 1884;
Guillermo, baptized 25 October 1856 Plaza, married Carmelita del Castillo 25
October 1883 Jurupa;
Leonardo, baptized 26 June 1859 Plaza; and
Teofilo Prudencio, baptized 15 February 1862 Plaza, married Erolinda López 28
January 1887 Jurupa.

The heirs of Manuela Nieto de Cota did not keep Rancho los Cerritos. In 1843 they sold it to Juan Temple. Since cattle brands were the hallmark of any ranch, Temple paid \$25 extra for the right to use the old Nieto brand, which was conveniently shaped roughly like the letter "T".

Manuela, as a daughter, of course left no heirs to the Nieto name, and also had lost her share of Rancho los Nietos before 1850. However the Cota grandchildren living in 1850 generally were better off than their cousins. By marriages into the Domínguez and Yorba families, most were still members of ranchero families for many years. In fact, the last of Domínguez Rancho lands did not pass out of the family until the latter half of the twentieth century.

Rancho Santa Gertrudis

The youngest son of the original grantee of Rancho de los Nietos was Antonio María Perez-Nieto. In 1815 he married his sister's step-daughter, Josefa Cota. Antonio installed his bride in Los Nietos Adobe, the home of his parents before him. There he spent his days until death claimed him in 1832. His widow received the grant to these lands in the 1834 division of the property. Her share was known as Rancho Santa Gertrudis, which ultimately became the site of the cities of Norwalk, Artesia, Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, and a part of La Habra. The children of Antonio María Nieto and Josefa Cota were:

- María Petra, baptized 16 September 1816 San Gabriel, married Martín Alipas 4 November 1840 San Gabriel, buried 4 March 1861 Plaza;
- María Guadalupe, born about 1818, buried 17 March 1833 San Gabriel;
- María Concepción, born about 1820, living in 1851;
- José Antonio, baptized 19 January 1822 San Gabriel, buried 30 September 1845 Plaza, *soltero, soldado*;
- José Diego, baptized 13 November 1823 San Gabriel, married Isabel Yorba, daughter of Teodosio Yorba and Inocencio Reyes, 13 January 1864 San Gabriel;
- José Ramón Pedro, baptized 16 January 1826 San Gabriel;
- José Antonio Trinidad, baptized 17 January 1828 San Gabriel, living in 1844;
- María Dolores "Trinidad," baptized 23 January 1830 Plaza, married Guillermo Dryden 30 November 1851 Plaza, died by 1868; and
- José de Jesús, baptized 27 November 1831 Plaza, married Alvina de Jesús Reyna 26 June 1861 Plaza, living in 1871.

Soledad, born about 1835 was also in the home 1844 and 1851 and was living in 1866, but her relationship to the family has not been established.

By 1843 Josefa Cota de Nieto was destitute and unable to provide for her family. Josefa's eldest daughter, Petra married Martín Alipaz in 1840; and she, her husband, and their children, living next door, also were dependent on the income of the rancho. The reason that Josefa was destitute is not known. Regardless, in an attempt to salvage something for herself and family, Doña Josefa Cota de Nieto asked permission of the governor to sell Rancho Santa Gertrudis. Granted, the *alcalde* of Los Angeles was ordered to do so. It was sold to Lemuel Carpenter about 1843. After Josefa died in 1847 her heirs so regretted her action that they filed a claim in October 1852 to recover it. They lost the case.

The heirs of Antonio María Nieto, this youngest son and last child of old Manuel, who had died before the first partition of Rancho de los Nietos, also were without a patrimony by 1850. However this last child did finally fulfill the dream of there being Nieto heirs to the name. At least two of his sons lived to marry and father another generation of Nietos to build homes within sight of Old Saddleback.

Rancho Paseo de Bartolo

Manuel Nieto, did not live to see the birth of any of his grandchildren. Indeed, in an era when large families were commonplace, there were fewer descendants of this patriarch than of most of his Saddleback neighbors. There was however, probably a brother who helped expand the family circle.

Juan Crispin Perez-Nieto, was born about 1752 near Villa de Sinaloa. Crispin's family chose to carry on the name of his father José Perez and dropped the Nieto. Crispin married María de los Reyes Armenta, who had been born in the 1750's at the Presidio of Buenavista, Sonora. By August 1781, he was a soldier of the San Diego Company, having brought his wife and two daughters with him. He was transferred to the *escolta* of Mission San Gabriel by 1784 and retired after 1798. After that he served as *mayordomo* for the Rancho Los Nietos owned by his brother, although it appears likely that he had run stock there from the time of the original grant.

Only four children of Crispin Perez are known, spread over twenty-four years, in 1772, 1778, 1793 and 1796. The marriage record of the daughter born in 1772 listed María de los Reyes Armenta as her mother. Considering the fifteen year gap between 1778 and 1793, there exists the possibility that María de los Reyes may have been a second wife. The known children of Crispin Perez were:

Juana María, born about 1772 Buenavista, Sonora, married first Guillermo Soto, *viudo* of Nicolasa Ramírez, 17 January 1787 San Gabriel, married second Miguel Saez, *viudo* of Encarnación Varelas, 20 May 1822 San Gabriel, buried 12 March 1832 San Gabriel;

María (Juana) Gertrudis, born about 1778 Loreto, married Vicente Villa del Rodríguez 15 January 1793 San Diego, buried 18 February 1806 San Gabriel;

Juan (Antonio Lázaro) "Crispin", baptized 18 December 1793 San Diego, married Tomasa Ontiveros 16 February 1813 Capistrano, buried 20 May 1847 San Gabriel; and

(Antonio) Ireño, baptized 7 April 1796 San Gabriel, married Vicenta Lugo 3 November 1822 San Gabriel, died 1846-1847.

Crispin Perez' eldest, Juana María, married Guillermo Soto in 1787, who had been born about 1751 Cozala, Sinaloa, the son of Juan Soto and Francisca de Leon, and by then the widower of Nicolasa Ramírez who was buried at Ventura January 1786. Guillermo Soto was a soldier recruited in 1781 to accompany the *pobladores* in the founding of Los Angeles, and was a soldier of the Santa Barbara Company at the time of his marriage to Juana María in 1787. They then disappear from the records until 1793 when their second known child was born. Where he may have been stationed is unknown. What is recorded is that in 1793 he is a *vecino* de Los Angeles. The known children of Guillermo Soto and Juana María Perez included:

Eulalia, born about 1792, married Francisco Villa 23 April 1809 San Gabriel, buried 30 September 1831 Plaza;

María de Jesús, baptized 16 December 1793 San Gabriel, married Maximo Valenzuela 18 January 1812 San Gabriel, buried 20 March 1815 San Diego Presidio;

José María Antonio, baptized 7 February 1797 San Gabriel, married Crecencia García 25 January 1815 San Gabriel, died 1829-1836;

Casilda, baptized 8 April 1799 San Gabriel, married Cecilio Villalobos 2 November 1812 San Gabriel, buried 8 September 1854 San Gabriel;

María (Francisca) Trinidad, baptized 2 March 1809 San Gabriel, married Ricardo Véjar 7 November 1825 San Gabriel, living in 1851 (see Chapter VII);

Serafina, baptized 22 August 1813 San Gabriel, married Ygnacio Talamantes (*informaciones* 8 July 1843) San Gabriel;

Joaquín, born about 1815, married Petra Rodríguez, buried 17 January 1864 Capistrano;
Bruno Antonio, born about 1817, married Tomasa Alvarado 20 September 1841 San Gabriel, buried 6 June 1859 Plaza; and
Estefana, born about 1819, married José de la Cruz Bermúdez 15 April 1842 San Gabriel, living in 1851.

Francisco Villa and Eulalia Soto had at least thirteen children, two of whom relate to our story. Their fourth child was María del Rosario, baptized 2 October 1814 San Gabriel, and married Domingo Félix 2 June 1829 at San Gabriel. She was the one who was executed 7 April 1836 with her lover Gervasio Alipas for the murder of her husband (Chapter VII). Their fifth child María Antonia, born about 1816, married Blas Aguilar 18 January 1831 San Gabriel (Chapter II).

The second known child of Crispin Perez, María Gertrudis, married Vicente Villa de Rodríguez in 1783. He was born about 1768 Cozala, the son of Pedro Pablo Rodríguez and Cayetana Ortega. Records for this family appear under both Rodríguez and Villa. Their story is a tragic one. This couple was initially blessed with the baptism of five children:

María Visitación, baptized 3 July 1794 at San Diego, married Miguel Valenzuela 24 July 1810 San Gabriel, living in 1844;
Juana Gertrudis, born about the same time, buried 27 February 1806 San Gabriel;
Juan de Jesús, baptized 13 November 1796 San Gabriel;
Juan Bautista, baptized 30 August 1799 San Diego Presidio, buried 25 February 1806 San Gabriel; and
Pedro Antonio, baptized 23 October 1804 at San Gabriel, buried 27 February 1806 San Gabriel.

Then came the epidemic of 1806. While much has been noted about the death rate of the neophytes at this time, the affect on the family of Vicente Villa was also disastrous. The mother, Gertrudis Perez, was buried at San Gabriel 18 February 1806; Juan Bautista seven days later on 25 February, and two days later on 27 February, both Juana Gertrudis and Pedro Antonio were buried. This fine young family was reduced to a grieving widow-father and one surviving daughter, their eldest, María Visitación. There is no further record of Juan de Jesús, so he probably died before the epidemic. Vicente Rodriguez lived for at least twenty-five years more but did not marry again. That sole surviving child Visitación, at eleven years of age, left with no mother and neither brother nor sister, may have remained to keep house for her father, or may have gone to the home of her maternal

grandmother, who was also her godmother. In either case she was married 24 July 1810 at San Gabriel to Miguel Valenzuela, by whom she had fifteen children.

Crispin Perez was briefly transferred back to headquarters in the San Diego Presidio in 1793 and 1794 as shown by the marriage there of his daughter and the baptism of his third child and first son, Juan Antonio Lázar. He was a sickly child at birth and was baptized immediately on December 18, 1793 by Corporal Juan Olivera. In later records Juan Lázar was known as "Juan Crispin", causing much confusion in the records with his father. The Perez family soon after returned to Los Nietos and remained there. Juan Lázar grew up on the great rancho and ranching was his life. At San Juan Capistrano on 16 February 1813 he was married to fifteen year old Tomasa Ontiveros, born about 1798 Baja, daughter of the *mayordomo* of San Juan Capistrano, Patricio Ontiveros and his wife Antonia Rodríguez of Chapter V. Juan Lázar "Crispin" Perez and Tomasa Ontiveros had the following known children:

Francisca María de Jesús, baptized 10 October 1813 Capistrano; married Mariano Silvas on 17 January 1832 at San Gabriel, living in 1851;

María (Rafaela) Crisanta, baptized 25 October 1815 Capistrano, married Bernardino López 2 August 1832 San Gabriel, living in 1854;

María Antonia, born about 1817, living in 1838;

Pedro, born about 1819, married María Rosario Pantoja 15 January 1841 San Gabriel, living in 1851; and

Juan, born about 1821, living in 1851.

Juan Lázar Perez had numerous *hijos naturales*, of whom six have been definitely identified. By Concepción Navarro, who had been baptized 11 December 1810 San Gabriel, *hija natural* of María del Carmen Rochin, the *viuda* of Clemente Navarro, he had:

Felicitas Leonor, baptized 15 July 1839 Plaza, married José de Jesús Ballesteros 5 February 1856 Plaza; and

José de Jesús, baptized 6 October 1841 San Gabriel, probably died young.

By Cristobala Romero (*neofita* of San Gabriel) he had:

José de los Santos, baptized 29 October 1842 San Gabriel, confirmed 20 March 1843 Plaza; and

Francisco, baptized 14 December 1845 Plaza, married first Eulalia Valencia 27 January 1868 San Gabriel, married second Francisca Lisalde 26 February 1875 San Gabriel.

By Gregoria Villa (*neofita* of San Gabriel) he had:

José Antonio Lázaro, baptized 24 August 1847 San Gabriel, married Francisca Baker 27 September 1916 San Gabriel, legitimating their children; and Angustias, confirmed 29 August 1950 San Gabriel.

Juan Lázaro's eldest daughter, Francisca, had only one known child, an *hijo natural*, baptized 6 May 1831 at San Gabriel, named José Luis Lugo. His father was Felipe Lugo, soon to be married to Francisca "Pancha" Perez, daughter of Esteban Perez, of an unrelated Perez family. Thus has arisen the assumption that Luis was a legitimate child of Felipe and Pancha, and that he died young. Luis in fact grew up in the home of his grandfather Juan Lázaro Perez. Luis married first Concepción Verdugo 4 July 1850 San Gabriel, and married second María del Sacramento Olivas 21 November 1870 Plaza.

Francisca Perez, daughter of Juan Lázaro, married Mariano Silvas in 1832, but they had no known children and he died before 1850. At the time of the 1850 census Francisca is living next door to her widowed mother with her son Luis Lugo and his new bride Concepción Verdugo, daughter of Joaquín Verdugo.

Juan Lázaro "Crispin" Perez served as *alcalde auxiliar* for Rancho Santa Gertrudis from 1831 to 1836 and *mayordomo* of ex-Mission San Gabriel in its declining years. He had been granted Rancho Paso de Bartolo Viejo on 12 June 1835, as part of the secularization of the Mission. This rancho was on the south side of the San Gabriel River roughly where Santa Fe Springs and Whittier are today. In the 1836 *Padron* of Los Angeles Juan Lázaro is listed as a proprietor with his son-in-law Mariano Silvas as a rancher, although their residence is given as Rancho Santa Gertrudis. Apparently the Nietos and the Perez' continued to run their herds together.

Ownership of Rancho Paseo de Bartolo Viejo was a complex matter. It was later divided between Juan Lázaro, by then called Crispin Perez, Bernardino Guirado, Joaquina Sepúlveda, and Pío Pico. The claim before the United States Land Commission was filed by Pío Pico, et al. Final patent to the nearly 9000 acres was issued in 1881 to Pío Pico and the Perez heirs. The Rancho adobe has survived as the Pico adobe and may be visited at the Pío Pico State Historic Park in Whittier (Hoover, 1962:19). Juan Lázaro Perez was buried in 1847 at San Gabriel, but Tomasa lived for some years more and the record of her death has not been found.

The fourth and last child of the elder Crispin Perez and María de los Reyes Armenta was baptized in 1796 with the name Antonio Irenio. Always known as Irenio, he married in 1822 Vicenta Lugo, who had been baptized 7 April 1805 at Santa Barbara, daughter of Antonio María Lugo and Dolores Ruíz. For the first few years of their marriage Irenio was a militia soldier of the San Diego Company, but after that his occupation was always just laborer or field hand. He hopefully had generous employers perhaps among his or his wife's family, as they had a total of fourteen children:

- María Francisca, baptized 5 October 1823 San Gabriel, married Ignacio Reyes March 1842, died before 1861;
- María Andrea, baptized 31 January 1826 San Gabriel, married first Rafael Linares 14 June 1847 San Gabriel, married second Guadalupe Valdenegro 15 February 1858 Plaza;
- María Candelaria, baptized 1 February 1828 Plaza, living in 1844;
- María Dolores Marcela, baptized 10 February 1830 Plaza, probably died young;
- José del Patrocinio, baptized 24 April 1831 Plaza, married Francisca Sánchez-Colima 29 May 1868 San Gabriel;
- José Ireneo, baptized 25 March 1833 Plaza, buried the same day;
- José Ireneo, baptized 5 March 1834 Plaza, living in 1844;
- José (Antonio) Timoteo, baptized 24 January 1835 Plaza, living in 1844;
- María (Francisca) Dolores, baptized 23 April 1837 Plaza, buried 13 December 1837 San Gabriel;
- José Teodosio, baptized 4 February 1839 San Gabriel, married Francisca "Trinidad" Véjar 1 May 1865 San Gabriel, living in 1872;
- José Dolores, baptized 2 November 1840 San Gabriel, living in 1844;
- Modesta, baptized 24 April 1842 San Gabriel, living in 1844;
- Vicenta, baptized 28 February 1844 San Gabriel, buried 14 August 1848 San Gabriel; and
- Adolfo, baptized 24 May 1846 San Gabriel, married María Antonia Lugo 24 June 1866 Los Angeles County.

Ireneo, like his elder brother Juan Lázaró, also had a wandering eye. He had at least three *hijos naturales* by Josefa Domínguez, who had been baptized 2 March 1810 San Gabriel, daughter of Mariano and Venancia Sotelo. Their known children were:

María Casilda, baptized 11 April 1830 Plaza, buried 21 March 1836 Plaza;
José María Damaso, baptized 25 November 1832 San Gabriel, married Josefa
Sánchez 13 November 1855 Plaza; and
Juan, born about 1835, living in 1844.

With this large family of Irenio, old Crispin Perez did indeed have many "*nietos*" (grandchildren). Manuel Nieto would have been proud of his brother.

