

Palms Chamber of Commerce

AND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

PALMS, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

THE STORY OF PALMS

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Palms Chamber of Commerce

Many new residents have moved here in the past few years and know nothing about the background of their community, so it has been decided to publish a brief history of Palms which will appear in a number of installments in this space.

Under orders of King Carlos III of Spain, the pueblo of Los Angeles was established in September 1781 by Governor Felipe de Neve. Some 38 years later, settlement of the great valley west of the pueblo began with the rancho known as La Ballona. This was a Spanish grant to Augustin and Ygnacio Machado and Felipe and Tomas Talamantes in 1819. Upon lands of this rancho and the adjoining rancho Rincon de Los Bueyes, established in 1821, the present community of Palms is located.

Palms Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary civic organization established in 1907 and devoted to the development of the community.

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The 13,920 acres of rancho La Ballona were divided among various heirs and claimants in 1868 and subsequently, a 500 acre parcel sold in 1883 for \$35.00 per acre. This parcel sold again in 1886 for \$75.00 per acre and a few months later for \$80.00 per acre. This acreage was subdivided as "THE PALMS" in December 1886, the owners at that time being C. G. Harrison, Joseph Curtis and E. H. Sweetzer. Considering that Los Angeles County had only 33,391 population in the 1880 census, the growth of this area in the following years is nothing short of miraculous. The present population served from Palms Station of Los Angeles Postoffice is in excess of 33,000 or equal to the 1880 population of the entire County of Los Angeles which then also included Orange County.

Palms Chamber of Commerce was the first civic organization of the community. It was established in January 1907.

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Harrison, Curtis and Sweetzer sold the first acreage in "THE PALMS" subdivision on December 27, 1886 for \$200 per acre and sold town lots at \$200 for a 50X150 ft. lot. Before the subdivision of Palms a postoffice had been established in this area in 1874. This was named Machado for Augustin Machado, one of the owners of rancho La Ballona. After the townsite was laid out the postoffice was changed to Palms.

The first railroad in this area, and the second to be built in Southern California, was constructed in 1875 by John P. Jones, founder of Santa Monica. It was known as the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad and connected Santa Monica with Los Angeles. In the local area a station was established and called "Bay View". This station, like the postoffice, was changed to Palms after the community was subdivided. It is upon part of the old station grounds that the Great Western Biscuit Co. is now building a large, modern plant for making crackers and cookies.

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What reason the subdividers had in 1886 for selecting the name "PALMS" is unknown at the present time. It was probably that the palm tree is so typical of Southern California. There were no palm trees in Palms when it was subdivided but the promoters planted the date palms that are still growing opposite the old Southern Pacific depot at National Boulevard and Vinton Avenue.

The Palms School District was established in January 1888. It spread from the National Military Home to the Baldwin Hills. The first Palms School was built from the proceeds of a \$10,000 bond issue. Today, the Los Angeles Board of Education is preparing plans for a \$600,000 Junior High School to serve the Palms area. The new Junior High School is a project sponsored by Palms Chamber of Commerce, oldest civic organization in the community.