

Los Rios Street - Our

By Jerry Nieblas, as told

Join me on a journey. The road is narrow, there are no sidewalks to be found, trees are aged & rugged and the air is heavy with the perfume scents of early Californio Castilian roses and fruit trees in bloom. Walk with me back to a time when all was protected and good - full of family, sharing, feasting, gathering in times of both joy and sorrow. Come walk with me on a street that is defined by one word, HOME. Listen closely and you might just hear the voices from the past greeting each other with "mi casa es su casa". This is historic Los Rios Street, the oldest neighborhood in California that some historical families still call home. Allow me to introduce you to those families who are pre-Mission and early Californio Rancho descendants. From being baptized at the Mission to being laid to rest in the Old Mission Historic Cemetery, each one is a vital part of the history of San Juan Capistrano. Their homes radiate warmth, peace and tranquility, taking you back to a time long, long ago. I am honored to share with you the history of some of those homes and their stories that stand out in my memories.



The Olivares Home (Board & Batten); "A Step back in time" It will be your perfect first welcome and invitation to Los Rios Street

I will begin this journey with the unique and beautiful 19th century Olivares home. This historic Board & Batten was the first residence of Viviana Ricardes Olivares and her family. The town was honored to also have Viviana as their very first Matriarch. Now, the family of Olivares and Yorba call it home. This is a proud, loving, gracious family. Their Native and early Californio roots remain steadfast and strong in San Juan Capistrano. They are members of the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, members of the Historical Society and strive to keep the Native American culture and traditions alive. On warm sunny days, you'll find them weaving and sharing their handcrafted, traditional Juaneno baskets on the south side of the home for all visitors to enjoy. And, as the day ends and nightfall comes, they are the protectors of Los Rios Street.



The Olivares Home Today; "The Welcome continues"

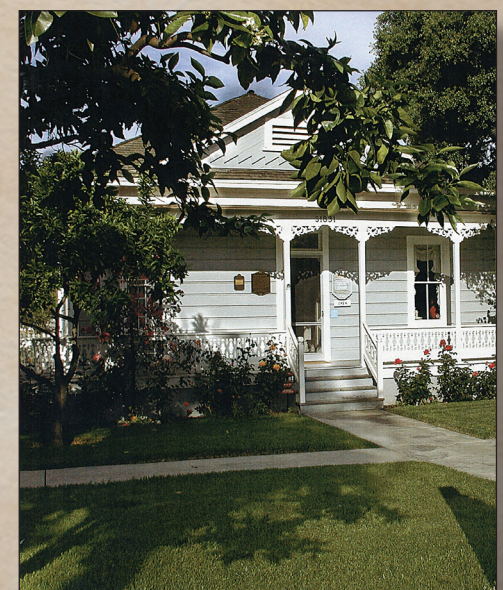
As a gift to his wife, San Juan Capistrano's first Victorian style home was built between 1870-1880. Jose Dolores Garcia traveled by horseback to northern Orange County seeking ideas because his wife, Maria Refugia Yorba Garcia, having been born in an Adobe on the great Rancho Yorba, had her sights set on something different...and, it couldn't be found in San Juan Capistrano. Jose was the great grandson of Maria Bernarda Chigilia (a Juaneno woman from the ancient village of Putuidem). Jose provided well for Maria, he was a merchant and saloon keeper in town. During their time



The Garcia-Pryor (Victorian) "Home of memories"

in the home, you often found Jose & Maria sharing early California hospitality. From local musicians playing traditional early Californio music to meals that overflowed on the tables, many families gathered in the warmth that emulated from its walls. Tragically, on a warm summer evening in 1897, Jose Dolores Garcia was murdered with one shot from a Winchester rifle. The man who shot him was Jose Manuel "Mestizo" Foleros. Generations old family stories say Mestizo was paid by three local land owners to assassinate Jose in order to get his vast land holdings - a local priest documented the term "assassinado" in the death record at Mission San Juan Capistrano. In 1903, Maria sold their home to her brother Miguel and his wife, Theresa Pryor Yorba. Because of the generosity of many historical families, a plaque now hangs at the entrance of the home honoring their memory. It is recognized as the Garcia-Pryor home on the

the home, you often found Jose & Maria sharing early California hospitality. From local musicians playing traditional early Californio music to meals that overflowed on the tables, many families gathered in the warmth that emulated from its walls. Tragically, on a warm summer evening in 1897, Jose Dolores Garcia was murdered with one shot from a Winchester rifle. The man who shot him was Jose Manuel "Mestizo" Foleros. Generations old family stories say Mestizo was paid by three local land owners to assassinate Jose in order to get his vast land holdings - a local priest documented the term "assassinado" in the death record at Mission



The Garcia-Pryor Home today; "Living history"