





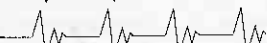
OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 12

WINTER 1994

FRANKLIN MEDIAN

BLEEP 
BLEEP 
BLEEP 

Bleep . . . bleep . . . bleep . . .
 What has been keeping the Franklin Avenue Median landscaping project alive, anyway?

Well, one reason might be that landscaping the median is a wonderful idea. Another reason is that much has been happening behind the scenes, including the fact that numerous grants have been applied for, and two have been awarded, increasing our budget to just under \$8,000.

But we all still wait in disbelief, because our beautiful median island is just a quagmire elsewhere in town: Downtown!

The issue at hand is the steep slope across the width of the median, along 400 feet of its 600 feet of length. We have received approval to landscape the remaining flat portions of the strip, and we could opt to proceed with that anytime. A second phase for the steep areas could be planned for a later time, pending

See MEDIAN, page 9



The D.W. Griffiths *Intolerance* movie set towers in the west behind undeveloped Franklin Hill, as seen in 1917 from above Griffith Park Boulevard near the intersection of Fountain and Hyperion Avenues

A STRONG INFLUENCE ON FRANKLIN HILLS

Once upon a time, when all the cars were big and American, a young man cruising the narrow confines of Sunset Drive between Mayview and Sanborn had to swerve to allow an expensive car to proceed. As the two passed, the man in the expensive car rolled down his window and said, "The son of a bitch that laid this street out ought to be in jail." The young man approvingly replied, "He sure should be."

That story, told to the Overview by Rose Dee Tavella, illustrates the wit and wife of Frank R. Strong (see photos), the man in the expensive car. He's also the man who subdivided parts of the Franklin Hills and laid out some of our narrowest streets. The theory was, "the smaller you made the streets the more lots you'd have to sell," according to Ms. Tavella. She grew up admiring the humor and generosity of Mr. Strong, her mother's boss. The family still lives on one of the Franklin Hills lots that he gave her mother, Pam Hanrahan, over 50 years ago.

Mr. Strong and his photographer, Alvaro A. Pratt came out to take pictures of the still naked Franklin Hills in March 1917 (see accompanying photos). Three years later surveyor Horace N. Taylor had mapped tract # 3594 encompassing all the lots from the north side of Cumberland south

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the risk of unseating our bard Bruce Carroll as resident curmudgeon, I am going to mention something that has been bothering me lately: *Scavenging*.

Some of us worked long and hard to get the City of Los Angeles to institute a city-wide recycling program so we don't end up filling in every canyon in the county with our refuse. Just about all of us dutifully fill our yellow bins weekly and set them out on trash day, hoping the city will take the recyclables away and that income derived from recycling will (at least partially) pay for the process.

However, by the time the green truck rolls around many, if not most, bins are empty of anything of recyclable value and much of the remainder is trash on the street. The culprits? Scavengers driving through our neighborhood, ripping off every last thing of value in the yellow bins, dumping them in bulging vans or packed cars, then selling the goods on the recycling market for cash.

Now, of course, you say "so what's the problem? The stuff is getting recycled! Right?" Right—and, if these people were really good at this, it might be the most practical and efficient way to achieve our goals. However, note the key works above: "Many, if not, most bins are empty..." Not all bins, not all neighborhoods.

I predict if we do not get control of this issue soon, the impact of the scavengers will grow. The City will find it is not cost-effective to send trucks to pick up nearly empty recycling bins in some neighborhoods.

We should combat this decay by putting our bins out at the last possible moment—no earlier than the morning of pickup. And there will soon be a hot line to report scavenging, which by the way, is strictly illegal.

Don Waldrop

Dear Editor,

At last night's community meeting on the Los Feliz Branch Library, held at the John Marshall High School Auditorium, there were copies of the Overview available on the sign-in table. I helped my self to one, being curious about the publication but unfamiliar with it, as I live outside the boundaries of your Association.

Let me congratulate all of you who have worked on this publication. It's filled with lots of neighborhood news, as well as historical and current features. I found the photographs and the drawings of the MetroRail station to be an especially nice touch. Moreover, it's handsomely produced, with a good balance of text and illustrations on each page, advertising which hopefully defrays some of the production cost but doesn't dominate the news portion, and exclusive use of black and white, showing that color, while adding a nice touch, is not necessary to produce a first class publication.

Best wishes on your future issues!

Sincerely,
Franklin Tom
Los Feliz

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The Franklin Hills OVERVIEW is published as often as possible. We invite your comments on matters relating to articles and the community and, space permitting, we will publish letters mailed to *Editor, OVERVIEW, Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90027*

THE CURSE OF LOS FELIZ

by *Thelma Jasber*



The moment one steps into the old adobe house, a landmark located in the heart of Griffith Park, a chill runs through his veins and the walls seem to quiver with the soft anguished moans of a young woman.

Is it one's imagination, or is it truly the "Curse of Petranilla Feliz," still demanding retribution? You would have to know the history of the land now known as Griffith Park before you could make your own assessment.

Maybe this story—which a living descendent of Petranilla has to tell—will shed some light on the mystery.

Most of the facts he speaks of are documented by the city, old newspapers, and family heirlooms. After reading his account, I've wondered to myself "what do you think?"

In the early seventies, Spaniards and Indians roamed and fought bloody battles over all that land. Then, in 1796, for outstanding service to the Crown, the victorious King of Spain awarded eight thousand acres of beautiful terrain to Corporal Jose Vicente Feliz.

The land was known as "Gran Rancho de Los Feliz," and because there was plenty of room, eleven of the related Feliz families came to settle. They loved and cared for the land, and it was as if the land loved them.

The grand oak trees grew taller, the grain fields flourished, and the streams filled with fish. When Corporal Jose Feliz became the first "Comisionado" (city manager of the Pueblo de Los Angeles), all the many members of the Feliz families joined in a fiesta of music and dancing to celebrate his appointment.

Jose Feliz and his wife devoted their life to the City of the Angels. They vowed that their ranch would always belong to the Feliz family, and when Corporal Feliz died, the ownership passed to his eldest heir, Don Antonio Feliz.

For many years, Don Feliz lived in a rambling adobe house with his sister and beloved niece, Donna Petranilla. However, it was soon apparent that Don Antonio was not like his father. Being a carefree bachelor, he loved to gamble and drink.

In payment for gambling debts, he gave acres of land to hustlers; the other Feliz families tried to convince him to change his ways, but he wouldn't. They were all heart-broken but could do nothing to stop him.

But the worse was yet to come. In 1863, Don Antonio Feliz fell victim to smallpox and lay dying. His niece had gone into the city for supplies, and while she was gone, an opportunist named Don Coronel came to the house



See CURSE OF LOS FELIZ, p.9

THINKING AHEAD

by Violet Weber

Except for a few unfortunate instances we, who call the Franklin Hills home, escaped the very worst of the mean consequences of the 1994 January earthquake. Most of us simply rebuild the chimneys and the walls and just hope we're going to get by with no more harm the next time.

What most of us should be busy doing is retrofitting our homes so we can breathe a little easier, as well as making it possible to get insurance (eventually.)

Surprisingly, the government is willing to help us do just that and with their (our) money through the Federal Emer-

gency Management Authority. Although FEMA will be ending its program on January 20, 1995, it is still possible right now to get a grant or a loan to shore up your walls, bolt down the foundation, strap your water heater and, just in general, allow us to ride out the next one. And seismologists, warning us every day that there will be another earthquake, keep finding new faults.

Anyone wanting to take advantage of the government's program must contact FEMA to establish eligibility, which means you must have received sufficient damage to your house or business to

need repair and to prepare for the next one.

Not everyone is eligible, of course, but it takes only a little bit of time to stop in at a FEMA office, make application and get the help one needs. Our nearest office is in Hollywood, at 6385 Hollywood Boulevard, (800) 726-4995.

FEMA support will be discussed in full at our anniversary meeting on January 17, when a representative from FEMA will give us the last word on this opportunity for government help. Remember, the FEMA deadline for application is January 20, 1995.

Dear Editor:

A copy of your well-written and informative newsletter came into my hands, bringing back memories of living and going to school in what was then called "East Hollywood."

My family lived at 2468 Lyric Avenue, the address mentioned in the article about Bernice Fletcher and Clarabelle Westberg. Bernice was a good friend of my mother's and, as a teenager, I used to babysit her children when she lived elsewhere.

From 1937 to 1949 or '50, my family owned their Spanish-style house which must have had an interesting history, although I never heard any tales about it. The house had three stories down the hill, a high-domed ceiling living room with storage area in a short



2468 Lyric Avenue and Marshall High School in 1940

tower. Details of the bedrooms were carefully planned, with beds that pulled out from the walls and good looking cabinetry.

Beside our house was a vacant lot where we had an elaborate "Victory" garden, which was periodically raided by my pet lamb that was being raised for meat because of rationing. (We could never get ourselves to eat a bite of him.) These two pictures are the only ones I could pry out of my scrapbook. Both were taken above Lyric Avenue, I believe.

I graduated from Starr King in 1939 and from Marshall High in 1943.

Sincerely,
Catherine Titus
La Quinta, CA

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See page 23 for details

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**Happy Holidays to our Friends in Franklin Hills
from Ted Bayless and the gang**

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• community phones •

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Security: (310) 557-5354.
- CITY ANIMAL REGULATION:** (213) 222-7138
- COUNCILMAN JOHN FERRARO, 4th District-**
(213) 485-3337
Room M-30, City Hall, 200 Spring St., L.A. 90012
- DEPT. OF ANIMAL REGULATION:** (213)485-5761
Barking Dogs: 222-7138 or 731-8281
- ENVIRONMENTAL:**
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- FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency 911;**
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- GRAFFITI :**
LAPD-NE Graffiti Cleanup (213) 237-0511
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- HOMELESS, Food and Shelter** (213) 974-1234
- LOS FELIZ PUBLIC LIBRARY:** (213) 664-2903.
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Sr. Lead Officer Richard Kanzaki: 847-3138
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- RECYCLING INFO:** (800) 773-2489
- SANITATION:** (213) 485-4906
- STREET LIGHTING:** (800) 303-5267 or 485-3461
- STREET MAINTENANCE:** (213) 485-5661
- SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE:** (213) 381-5111
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS:** (TV Cable) 485-2751
- TRASH RECEPTACLE INFO:** (800) 248-9726
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- WATER & POWER:** (800) 722-1122

DOES GRAFFITI BUG YOU?

FHRA NEEDS YOUR HELP in fighting grafitti in our area. We need someone to organize paint outs and people to work. We provide all materials. Call the Hotline to volunteer. 664-7247

FRANKLIN FOTOS

As you have no doubt noticed, the editor of the Overview has an affinity for photographs taken in the early years of the Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake areas. We are trying to assemble a pictorial history of our district and would like to hear from anyone with such photos. If you grew up here, or if your parents built a house here, or if you inherited some photographs, please give us a call on the Hotline or send them to our mailbox.

We guarantee they will be handled very carefully while we have a copy negative made. The originals will be returned to you in their original condition. Look for your old photographs and give us a call!

Disaster Preparedness

FHRA Disaster Preparedness needs to know about the trained professionals living in our area. There is a clear need for doctors, nurses & trained emergency personnel in a disaster. If you are willing to assist in such an event, please contact the Hotline: 664-7247

Please Patronize "Our" Advertisers

Traveling to other areas to shop is troublesome now that the population and traffic have increased so much. The businesses that are advertising in this newsletter are charged the absolute minimum possible advertising fees. Their ads pay for the paper and any surplus supports FHRA on-going projects.

Please support our advertisers and Tell them you saw their ads in the "Overview."



1st ANNUAL END OF SUMMER FESTIVAL



Photo: Jim Trull

At high noon on Sunday, September 25, 1994, we cranked up the amplifiers, stepped up to the microphones and began 6 hours of nonstop music, games, movies and prize giveaways. The 1st annual Franklin Hills End Of Summer Festival had begun. After five years in the dream stage, this year it really happened.

The location was perfect — under the shade trees on the historic campus of L.I.L.A., the French American School.

Those attending were a cross section of our community ranging from families with young children to older retired residents. It was a day to picnic, mingle, meet your neighbors and be entertained. And there was lots of entertainment. It consisted of 5 musical

BELOW: During the Water Balloon Toss a youngster learns the right and wrong way to catch.



Photos: Jim Trull

TOP: Rachelle, lead singer with Me, Myself & I and A Small Crowd, kept our crowd entertained. LEFT: Big Blue Can was the first group to play during 6 hours of entertainment. LOWER LEFT: Michael Simmons and Patrick Weathers played guitar and sang ballads.

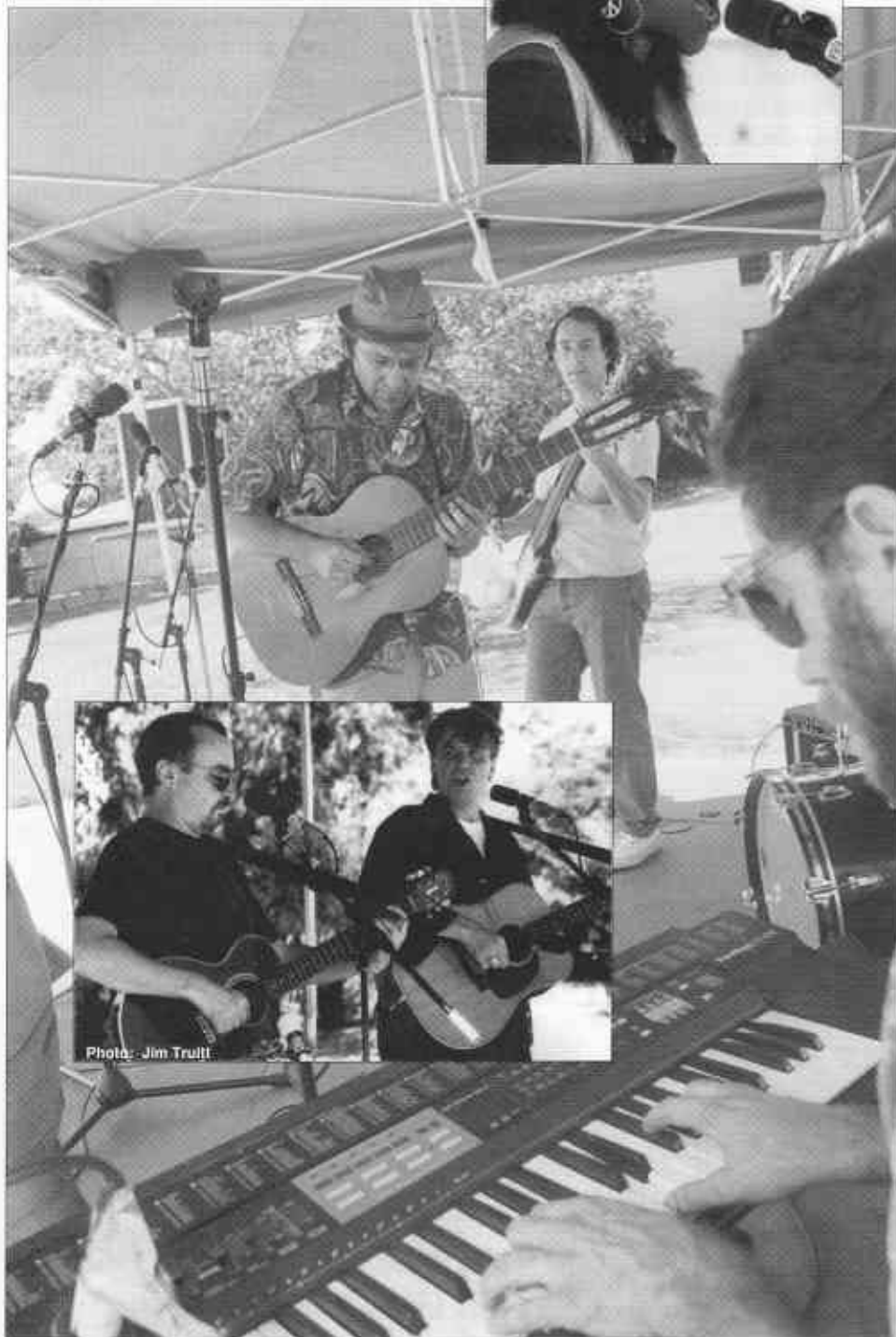


Photo: Jim Trull

Photo: Laura Regan

acts with 25 professional musicians who were engaged for the event by Penny Layne.

To keep the musicians from melting in the midday sun, Chris Boutelle and Glenn Patterson devised and rigged up an ingenious stage awning that was much appreciated by the bands.

Tim Cutler became our own Pied Piper as he led a troop of kids from the soccer field, where they played Kick Ball, to the bandstand, where they had Skunk 'N Possum Sack Races and Water Balloon Toss. Some of the kids got prize ribbons, some just got wet and all had a great time.

With prizes donated by local businesses, there was a late afternoon raffle with 22 prizes being awarded to lucky ticket holders.

Film Historian, David Fertik, brought a collection of old time movies filmed in our area. Included were: Our Gang Comedies, Mack Sennett Comedies, Laurel and Hardy, D.W. Griffiths' Intolerance and a documentary on Bunker Hill.

As the sun set and the last musicians left the stage, everyone headed home having had a memorable day at an event that truly captured the spirit of our neighborhood.

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION THANKS THESE VOLUNTEERS AND BUSINESSES WHO MADE THE FESTIVAL POSSIBLE:

FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

Chris Boutelle	Glenn Patterson
Bruce Carroll	Laura Regan
Eugene Cheltenham	Bunny Riley
Jeanne Cogswell	Carol Skinner
Tim Cutler	Jim Truitt
David Fertik	Don Waldrop
Sandra Harper	Adam Weisman
Penny Layne	

ENTERTAINMENT

Clark Branson (MC)	Me, Myself & I
Michael Simmons & Big Blue Can	Ye Olde English
Patrick Weathers	Blue Barron

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STRONG, from p. 1

to Fountain and not dead-end at Sanborn, those who live on Delongpre would be residing on Felice Street, and the folks on Fernwood would call Mildred home instead. While the city had no problem with most of Mr. Strong's plans, including naming his daughter Mildred, they did object to a street by the same name. Perhaps they still harbored hope that some day the ten mostly non-contiguous blocks of Fernwood Avenue, stretching from Bronson to Micheltorena, would one day be joined.



Frank Strong

Frank Strong was an active developer with interests from San Diego to Idyllwild (where he did manage to name a street after himself) to Los Angeles, where he owned property at Hollywood and Vine. He subdivided Moreno Highlands in Silver Lake, as well as much of Wilshire Boulevard east of Vermont Avenue. He had planned to build a home on the Bullocks Wilshire site, but that plan, like the one to build in Franklin Hills, didn't happen. He had a huge house on Occidental, near Third, and what Ms. Tavella describes as a "castle, sort of a Swiss chalet" in La Cañada.

Among his other pursuits were an insurance agency, an oil company, and all women. "He had a philandering eye," said Ms. Tavella, "and as wonderful as he was, he couldn't pass any woman." He was married three times.



Developer Frank Strong at the intersection of Sanborn and Fountain, surveying Franklin Hill in 1917

According to Ms. Tavella, his only problem was, "He couldn't keep his eyes on his own fireplace and, outside of that, I can't think of an evil thing the man ever did." When he divorced his first wife, Pearl, he married her former best friend, Helen. Three months after Helen died, he married Betty, the widow of his daughter's brother-in-law. When asked how he could have remarried so quickly, he replied, "Helen couldn't have been any deader."

Frank Strong died about 1955. All the Franklin Hills lots were sold by then, but Rose Tavella does remember one near her house selling for \$1500 in

1953. And she remembers her mom's last encounter with the man she termed, "the most generous giving man I've ever known."

"He was such a tease. The last night she saw him, he let her out of the car and he looked at her very sweetly and said to her, 'Come here a minute.' She walked over to him and he says 'Hold out your hand.' She held out her hand and he put his chewing gum in it. It was so typical of him. She came in the house laughing with this chewing gum. And that night he had a heart attack. He was 80 years old."

Ms. Tavella was interviewed by Bruce Carroll and Don Waldrop.

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MEDIAN from p. 1

those permit approvals. This is a real option, but we have not chosen it yet.

But here's how it goes, working with the City. Back in February of this year, the City of Los Angeles authorized its Department of Public Works to prepare a geological report. This investigation would determine the effects of landscaping and irrigation upon the stability of the upper roadway. The report was faxed to us in the middle of June. After five months of (no doubt) intensive investigation by Public Works, we were being advised to have a geological report to determine the stability of the slope! The geological study would cost FHRA \$2000 to determine what the City had already ordered Public Works to do.



But don't lose hope yet! Our independent search has put this cost at \$850, and we anticipate that the findings will be conclusive and favorable to the project as designed.

If we don't use the grant money we have been awarded by the end of 1995 we will lose it, so you can be sure that we will all have a greener thumb soon. Keeping in mind the long history of this project, you may not believe it, but you should be hearing from us during the first couple of months of the new year. Then, we hope, you won't have to listen to us anymore, just to the living heart "bleep" of a landscaped median.

Riccardo Accorsi, Median Project Director

CURSE OF LOS FELIZ, from p. 3

with his attorney.

They brought with them a will, and when he refused to sign it (according to a relative who was peering into a window), they threatened to kill Don Antonio by pressing a large plank of wood against his throat. In severe pain, he nodded. After they pulled him up, he reluctantly signed the will.

Petranilla returned to the house just as the two men were about to leave, and when she discovered that the will had left nothing for her, only small bequests to several relatives and the lion's share to Don Coronel, her screeching pledge—which ever since has been known as "The Curse of the Feliz"—is still on record: "A blight shall fall upon the face of this terrestrial paradise; the cattle shall no longer fatten, but sicken on its pastures; the field shall no longer respond to the toil of the tiller, and the grand oaks shall wither and die! The wrath of heaven and the vengeance of hell shall fall upon this place."

Predicting disaster for Coronel, his lawyer, and all who dared possess the ranch, she ran out of the house and stood on the front steps. Suddenly, her lovely face contorted with pain and, within seconds, she died of a broken heart. Witnessing all that happened...and frightened by Petranilla's words, Coronel quickly conveyed the ranch to his lawyer, who scoffed at the curse. But a short time later, when the lawyer sold the valuable water rights for \$8,000, true to Petranilla's prediction, disaster struck. During a celebration of his good fortune, the lawyer was shot and killed. The first actual purchaser of the rancho was Leon Baldwin, but before he could enjoy the life of a country squire, disaster

struck again. His cattle sickened and died. Fire destroyed his crops and a mortgage, necessary because of the misfortunes, fell due. Baldwin was then forced to sell the ranch to Col. Griffith J. Griffith.

For a while, all was quiet...until March of 1884, when a giant storm sent walls of water rushing down the Los Angeles River and through all the canyons and creeks. When water-soaked field hands swore they saw the ghost of old Antonio Feliz riding the waves, Col. Griffith paid no attention to their ravings. But the men were terrified and fled the ranch.

Moreover, for the next decade, there was nothing but trouble. Strange, inexplicable events such as reported sightings of Petranilla riding a white stallion through the hills—and much more—took place. There were floods and fires and Griffith couldn't keep help to work his fields.

Finally, out of desperation, in 1896, Col. Griffith donated 3,000 acres of his ranch to the city of Los Angeles, which purchased the balance of the ranch from Griffith for \$40 an acre.

From the time he had originally purchased the ranch until after he no longer owned it, Griffith's life was one of tragedy. He was sent to prison for shooting his wife because he suspected her of infidelity.

In accordance with Col. Griffith's bequest to the city, the land was developed into a park and named after the donor. For a while, life was calm again, and the terrain was filled with joyous visitors, most of whom were unaware of its past. But in 1933, Don Petranilla's curse struck again when a brush fire flared up in the

See CURSE OF LOS FELIZ, p. 11