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WILLIAM LAUREN RHOADES

The History of the Famous  
Sierra Madre Villa Hotel.

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The History of the  
Famous Sierra Madre Villa Hotel.

by Wm. Lauren Rhoades,

son of the proprietor Wm. Porter Rhoades.

I have been requested many times to write the true history of the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel, one of the most famous hotels in the State of California, its fame reached around the world as famous people gathered under its hospitable roof in the early days of California and spread the reputation of its fine cuisine and the beautiful grounds with the orange, lime and lemon trees and delicious grapes. These things found their way into the markets both in this country and abroad. Then there was the view of the San Gabriel Valley, not surpassed by any other view of this famous valley with its orange groves, great vineyards and pastures with large herds of cattle and bands of thousands of head of sheep, and in the distance loomed up the majestic Sierra Madre Mountains and Old Baldy with its snow cap and fifty miles away lay the broad Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island plainly seen by the naked eye.

Such were the surroundings of this beautiful spot nestled close to the Sierra Madre Mountains and I will try to give an actual account of the life of those early days and how it grew to become so well known.

In the year 1874 there lived in the village of Skanoateles, New York State, a family by the name of William Porter Rhoades, his wife, Jennie, and one daughter, Emma Isabella, aged six and a baby, William Lauren, aged three. One evening Mr. Rhoades told his wife he wanted to go to California and enter into some mercantile business. No sooner suggested than it was fulfilled.

Then began a ten day journey across the continent, with its changes and every one carried their lunch baskets fearing the delay of the train to reach the eating stations, and this often happened sometimes six to ten hours late. The pullman sleepers were a nightmare compared with today's, but after ten days we rolled into Oakland and went to the Grand Hotel, the Palace was just being built. A few days delay and we boarded the steamer Queen, then an old ship, but she is still afloat on the coast Wise Trade.

The morning of the third day out of San Francisco we anchored in the Wilmington Harbor and were lightered to a small dock, as the ship could not come to the dock. Then the San Pedro train to Los Angeles was boarded and the final lap of the journey was completed and we found ourselves in the Pico House, as it was called. Los Angeles was filled with pueblos. The hotel was located on the Plaza, where it stands today, known now as the International Hotel. There were eight thousand inhabitants, six thousand Mexicans and two thousand Americans. The business part of the town consisted of wooden sidewalks, muddy streets, adobes and possibly a few brick buildings. First Street was the end of the business section and the best residences were located on Bunker Hill and Fort Hill, at the end of what is now Broadway. Chinatown was one lively spot, for here the ranchers were gathering their farm hands and taking them to the

ranches. Such were the sights that we found.

My father soon realized that here was no place to open a mercantile general store, so he turned his attention to the fruit business and began driving into the San Gabriel Valley to look at ranches. My mother would accompany him with us children. They were impressed with the beauties of the Valley and the fine places already developed, but it was a difficult undertaking to select a spot there was so much wild country and water was a question that was of great importance. This seemed to be plentiful in the center of the valley where artisan wells were available, but along the foothills water was scarce.

Father met Phineas Banning. He had a band of twenty thousand sheep running in the valley where Pasadena stands and a lot of sheep and goats on the Catalina Islands. He wished father to go into the sheep business with him, but father told him there were enough mutton heads in the family without buying more. Then he met Mr. L. J. Rose, who owned one of the finest places in the Valley and he told father that he could not raise citrus fruits on the foothills, it was too high. He had cleared on his place the year before two hundred thousand dollars. He had a fine winery and grapes, oranges, lemons, a fine racing stables. All these things urged my father to go into ranching and so it happened one day he was taken up to see the Villa property. It was a long fifteen miles over a country road from Los Angeles and a long pull up the grade onto the mesa through the grease-wood or chaparral as it is known higher than your head and so thick a jack rabbit could not get through it, but at last they reached the spot the real estate man wished to show father. Here was a clearing owned by a man by the

name of Davis. He and his wife, with an adopted daughter, had come for his health from Massachusetts and he settled there and was just scratching out a living from the place.

From this vantage spot fifteen hundred feet above sea level Father got his first glimpse of what he later wrote to his sisters and said was going to be the most beautiful spot in Southern California. The immediate surroundings were all sage brush and chaparral, and the distant valley, with its orange groves and vineyards, were surrounded by the mountains, with a view of the Pacific Ocean which captivated him. Three quarters of a mile behind this mesa were the Sierra Madre mountains.

That view was all Father had to see, he was sold. The following day he brought Mother out to see the find he had made, and she was as enthusiastic as he was. The question of water for the place was easily settled as Mr. Davis owned the entire water rights in the canyon back of his place, a flow of three thousand miners inches. He sold half to my father for five thousand dollars. They simply put a box four feet square in the basin where the water fell over the falls and ran into a wooden flume with a division in the center of the box, so one half went into our flume and the other half in Davis'.

Then the property was selected consisting of the five points along the mesa with the background to Davis line and the lower strip leading to the Foothill Boulevard, then a county road. My grandfather, William Cogswell, the noted artist, went in with my father in this venture. They paid seventeen dollars per acre for the land on the mesa and five dollars for the lower land, and had five hundred acres in all.

The next move was to grub every foot of the land that was to be planted. It was covered with chaparral, or greasewood as the natives called it. This grew a little higher than a man's head on a slender branch or stalk that grows from a root a little larger than a large potato. This root makes the finest of fire wood. It is about six inches in the ground and is grubbed out with a machet. The stalk is cut off and I recall a pile of these roots in the back yard fully fifteen to twenty feet high and two hundred feet long by fifty wide. This pile lasted us for years.

To accomplish the grubbing of the place, Father got what was known as a Boss Chinaman. He gathered the rest. Father had about seventy-five Chinamen who came out there to work and they brought their own camping outfit. They paid the men one dollar per day and found. Their work was very satisfactory. Father bought a team of horses and lumber wagon to haul supplies from San Gabriel station on the Southern Pacific Railroad five miles from the Villa. Mother took me out one day with Father. We had bought a double seated spring wagon which was very comfortable. This day while Father was superintending the burning off my Mother wandered up the only road leading through the place when suddenly she saw the fire had gotten away from the men and was racing across the road, our only way of escape. It was impossible to get through the brush. She began to run with me for the opening, some of the men had seen her walking up the road and ran to tell my Father we were surrounded by the fire. Father took the team and drove up the road and found us, Mother about collapsed in the road. He got us into the wagon and drove us out just in time. Mother never did get over that fright.

The clearing for the house and out-buildings was first and soon the building of the home began. Mother drew the plans and we hired a carpenter and his force, who also boarded on the place, living in tents to build the house. I might add that the original house is still standing.

The following days were busy ones. The orange, lemon and lime orchards were planted as well as a large vineyard with grapes for the table and wine grapes were also set out during these days. My Mother was busy planning and planting the gardens and lawns, putting in the ornamental trees, six of which are still standing, two rubber trees now fully three feet in diameter and when she set them out they were just the size of a pencil, two North Fork Island pines close by and two Magnolia trees. She was a great lover of roses and had fine beds. The lawns were large and surrounded with gravel walks. From the veranda you looked directly down between the rows of orange trees, four rows had been left out so there was a clear view of the valley and the ocean, a beautiful sight.

The furnishing of a staff of servants for the house was up to my mother. We got a Chinaman by the name of Sue Chung, he was with us for years, and I have his name along with several others of our old servants in my autograph album and I would not give up their autographs for all the movie-stars in Hollywood, written in Chinese and a greeting with each one. One boy Saq, Mother got for a house boy. He was only thirteen years old. His duties were to do the housework, make the beds, sweep and answer the door bell, which was a joke in those early days. While we had one of those old kind of door bells that you screw around to make it ring, it is still on the door, the greetings one gave in those days were a cheerful "Hello, anyone home?"

well, and knew how to handle the men and how to care for the trees and what he said was law. This day he asked Father for some lumber, he wanted to fix up the house. My father was busy and told him to take what he wanted from a lumber yard where all kinds could be found. Imagine Father's surprise a few days later when he went up to see what he had used so much lumber for, to find in each bed-room bunks built up to the ceiling, four tiers high. All around the room furniture was removed and all wooden benches installed. An Eat explained China boy he no like sitty in chair or sleepy on bed, bench he much more like. If you visited the house at quitinz time as the men came home you would find a long wooden bench in the backyard occupied by the Chinamen, each with his individual foottub, a small wooden tub large enough for both feet. They wore cloths wrapped around their feet and high knee boots, but each man washed his feet at night, then he changed his clothes and when he entered the dining room he was scrupulously clean and each one had his own nail to hanz his tub and towels on at the back of the house. It was the ambition of my life to learn to eat rice with a pair of chop sticks and while they gave me many lessons I never mastered the art.

Sundays and eveninzs you would find them all around the table playing fantan and keeping count on a frame with brass rods the size of a pencil running inside the frame and on each rod was a number of round disks, these were slid up and down the rods as they lay flat on the table to keep tab on.

All the ranches employed the Chinaman, while some had Mexicans, and Father tried them for a short time. Mother was studying Spanish so Father would have to line the men up in the morning and get Mother to tell them what they were to do, but this only

lasted a short time, and during the trial we still held on to the Chinamen.

A social life was unknown to the settlers of these days. The families would exchange calls a few times a year. Mother had a saddle horse and she rode with a riding habit and tall silk hat. There were nothing but the jack rabbits and coyotes to see her, save a passing neighbor on the road, but she rode that way in Central Park, New York, so why not out here: All the women rode side saddles, and that was the way they made their calls, men and women on horseback mostly. I well recall how Mother would take me on her lap and it was there I learned to ride.

Then there were the days Mother or Father would have to go to town for supplies. This was a long day as it was thirty miles round trip, and the road lay down through what is now Pasadena, then had just been named the Indiana Colony. There were only a few scattered farms, large herds of cattle and sheep roamed the hillsides and valley.

The road to Los Angeles was what is now called Colorado Street, up to Orange Grove and down to Johnnies' Gardens, now Sycamore Grove. Here Johnny had a dance hall and saloon where the sheepherders, cattlemen and cowboys congregated on Sundays. It was a quiet Sunday if there was not a shooting affair or two. A cock fight was always on the program and the betting often ran high.

A little farther on you came to the ford of the Los Angeles River and this was not passable unless the river was reasonably low, so when there was any doubt we took what was known as the middle road, or what is now Mission Road. This led through Alhambra, and to take this road we went down what is today Fair Oaks, then a farming district.

This road had lots of adobe spots and some bad holes where you sank to the hubs. I recall once getting stuck and Mother and I had to stand up in the burry and call and wave to a man plowing on the distant hill. He saw us and realizing our trouble came down with his team and pulled us out. Over this road we crossed the river at Macy Street on what we called the covered bridge, a long bridge and quite dark especially late in the evening and Mother was always afraid to go through it. You see in those days there were cattle rustlers who lived in the mountains back of Santa Monica and they often raided the outside farms, drove off the cattle and they were a desperate gang of outlaws and it was considered impossible to get into their strongholds.

This drive to town was often made by my Mother, and she always took me for company. One night as we were coming along at dusk east of Pasadena, we discovered three coyotes following us. One was an extra big fellow and while they were seldom known to attack a person when they got hungry, they would attack a horse or cattle. This scared Mother and we whipped up old George, the horse, but could not shake off the coyotes. I well recall how scared we were till we reached the arroyo, now called Eaton's Wash, and here we struck the river which was about two hundred feet wide and running pretty full. We drove in the ford and when we reached the opposite bank we were relieved to find the coyotes had stopped on the other side. That scared Mother so Father got her a pistol to carry when she drove to town.

Another interesting point in those days was that tarantulas were very thick on the old Mission Road through Alhambra as the adobe was the best ground for their nests. We had brought with us a low phaeton and Mother was always afraid to drive this, fearing a

tarantula would jump into the bottom as you could drive along and see them all along the road.

So the next two years rolled around and the ranch was showing the work. The orange trees were growing, also the other citrus fruit and things looked promising. Then an important event happened -- my brother came into the world, and in due time the country side attended the christening at the Episcopal Church of the Savior in San Gabriel where Dean True officiated. We all attended church there, it being the only Episcopal Church near by. The baby was christened Frederick Cogswell and then Sam, the house boy, was made happy when he could wheel the baby about or play with him. The Chinamen adore a boy baby and Sam was very proud of this baby.

Another year rolled by and the first crop of oranges were shipped to the San Francisco market, where a good price was realized. Years later it was a grand sight to see the golden fruit being packed, great piles of it were on the floor of the big barn, here the Chinamen would stand at long benches and pack the oranges; then others would nail up the cases and stencil them "Sierra Madre Villa, San Gabriel, California." Then four horse teams with two big wagons would haul them to San Gabriel where they went to the Eastern markets and got the highest prices. A few years ago I read in the Los Angeles Herald column of Fifty Years Ago that "W. P. Rhoades of Sierra Madre Villa just received his returns on a shipment of two hundred thousand limes sent to the San Francisco market where he got two cents apiece for them." In those days oranges were just packed into the boxes, not wrapped nor graded, and the cases were wooden similar to those used now.

Now we had been on the place three years and both my father and mother were feeling the loss of the social life and friends they had always known, the local people had all been kind, calling and visiting, but the social life was a thing that was not cultivated. Every one was busy with their interests. Pasadena was just beginning to show life along this line; schools were started, then a church, and there was a growth in the development of the town. Mother would ride horse back all over the valley and I was taken along, sitting in her lap. Father was busy on the ranch and so life passed, then came the first break.

One day our family doctor brought up a gentleman and his wife and a small boy my age, a Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Crank and son, Albert. They had been spending the past year in Los Angeles living in the hotels and were tired of the accommodations. They had come from Denver for his wife's health and our doctor attended them. They had decided to return to Denver when the doctor told them he knew a family who were very lonesome in the country he thought, so the doctor brought them out to see if we could arrange to have them live with us through the Winter and it would be company for us all.

So it was that they were the first guests at the Villa. Mr. Crank was a man of means and influence. He soon got the ranch fever and wanted to make their home here. So in due time he purchased fifteen hundred acres in Altadena, north of Washington Street near Eaton Canyon, and built a nice home. While they were at the Villa, his brother-in-law, Mr. Bridglin and his wife came out to the west. They too lived with us. They were from our old home in New York. All this made it much more pleasant for my folks and it was at this stage that Los Angeles business people

and Father's friends persuaded him to place an addition of twenty rooms on the old home to accommodate visitors and the tourists who were flocking into the country. We had built an addition of a big room for a music room and a place for our billiard table about thirty feet from the original home, connected with a covered passage. This was a large room with a big fireplace and to it was added the twenty rooms and the long veranda enclosed in glass. The driveway came up the present road towards the mountains, then turned due east for about five hundred feet up to the west side of the original home and the loading platform and block to mount saddle horses was located there, then the road went under the passage and up to the stables.

There was a bridge across the ravine and a rose bower over this bridge covered it with roses and the drive up to the house was lined with roses and evergreen trees. The lawns were covered with flower beds and rare bushes. There was a fountain in the center of the lawn which is still there.

The cornerstones on which the success of the Villa was built and its fame spread around the world, were these: first, hospitality, second, the view and location in the famous San Gabriel Valley, third, the world-wide travelers and famous men and women of note in history, literature, and financial world who made the Villa their gathering place.

Its fame for hospitality was due to my Father's genial and cheerful disposition, always courteous and kind, a fine mixer among those who came to spend a day or several months. It was said when he died he was a man without an enemy and a host of friends in all walks of life. He was a good provider, the table was noted for

its fine foods, well prepared and plenty of it, for people in those days knew how to exercise and enjoy the good things of life. Then there was the social side of life where the Villa became known as a center for dinners, dancing parties, musicals and special gatherings. Many people had their friends cut from the east and they would drive up for the day or week and show the valley with its interesting sights to the tourist.

So it was that the hospitality of the Villa became wide spread, and the location once seen could not be forgotten. There were drives through the valley, mountain trails for horse-back riding and the hikers. There were the rabbit drives and the guests would join with the valley folks in a big drive spreading out over the country side and run thousands of rabbits into enclosures built for the purpose where they were killed. This was necessary as the rabbits would destroy a whole vineyard in a few days that had taken men, money and time to get started.

Many of the guests had their own horses, buggies and each morning you would find a party preparing for a drive or ride into the surrounding country, horse-back riding was one of the principal enjoyments of both sexes. Then there were the hunting parties who would go for a week back into the mountains for deer and bears, up the old Wilson trail into Pine Valley and the ranges back of Old Baldy where fine fishing also was enjoyed. Near by were plenty of rabbits, quail, dove shooting, and the hunters would often go out and bag enough game to supply the whole house. Then there were wild cats, coyotes and one could get a mountain lion in the hills. Almost any night you could hear the lions roaring in the

canyons back of the Villa as they roamed about looking for a stray horse or cow, or possibly a sheep. Many a morning you would be up early and hear Mr. Winston calling his pack of hounds with an old cow horn and start from his valley home, now the Oak Knoll district, back into the woods to get a wild cat or lion.

While the guests who loved activity were thus indulging, there were the elderly folks to be found on an afternoon sitting on the lawns under the trees or in groups under the highly colored Japanese umbrellas and swings, reading and chatting. These social groups showed the delight experienced by the guests.

Now the last but not the least reason why the fame of the Villa was spread so wide from the days when it was only a mesa covered with chaparral, fifteen hundred feet above the shimmering Pacific Ocean on the mountain side, was the fact that men of distinction and famous women found it out and flocked to it, this friendly home for the tourists in the Valley of San Gabriel, and here they could mingle with people of their own class and walk in life, rub shoulders with the finest brains in the world, the most distinguished musicians and writers and the wealthiest bankers of America and Europe.

As the word got about in the leading clubs and resorts in America, so it spread to Europe that to visit Southern California and not go to the Sierra Madre Villa was not seeing California. So it came about that people worth while gathered at the portals of the Villa to spend a few weeks or the entire winter, enjoying the society of the guests and the climate and surroundings, and they always returned and so it got to be a habit to spend the winters among the orange groves of the San Gabriel Valley and sojourn at

the Villa. Among those whom one would meet of note were General Grant and his family, Mr. Thomas, the famous band master of Chicago, Mr. Jacobs, the oil magnate, C. P. Huntington, A. N. Town, the Crocker family of San Francisco, the Mark Hopkins, and the leading financial men of New York City, Boston and Philadelphia, and many of the leading European statesmen and members of the ruling families of foreign countries.

One interesting guest was Helen Hunt Jackson. She spent some time while there gathering material for her "Ramona."

Among the old ranches and old Spanish grants there was a rich field for large loans on good securities and high interest which attracted many Eastern as well as European financiers, and they all stopped at the Villa. The men from Europe brought their families, sometimes three or four children, and some their tin bath tubs, all encased in a big leather box. This was a source of great excitement when unloaded, but, as it happened, there was no use for it as the rooms many of them were equipped with baths. These families returned year after year to attend to the loans made here for the Bank of England and other financial institutions in Europe. Then the Eastern people who returned year after year made it like a big family gathering for the holidays at a country home, and so it became the meeting place of people from both sides of the world.

When Christmas time rolled around the real fun began. I will describe a typical Christmas day in the late seventies. The day before Christmas was one of excitement for all were preparing the gifts, some driving into Los Angeles, a thirty mile drive, to get the last few gifts needed and to shop for all the

rest and only about two dry goods stores, two book stores and a few other places to purchase but that made it all the more exciting. There was a tree to sit up fully nineteen feet high, that was the height of the ceiling, and a spread of branches in proportion. Then the trimmings, popping the corn and putting on the cornucopias, hanging the glass balls and the angel on the top. That day the Chinese boy, Sam, made mysterious trips to Mother's room with packages coming from the servants and Chinese on the ranch.

Christmas morning was always the opening of an eventful day. I well recall Christmas of 1878. After breakfast I was taken out to the front of the house and there stood my donkey, which was given me two years before to ride and I named her after my Mother, Jennie, and there she was hitched up to a two wheeled cart made to order with a swell leather seat, the running gear was painted red and the body black, the harness was black with shining brass buckles. The guests all stood round enjoying my delight. I took Mother in at once and we drove off in style and many were the happy days I had with the children at the Villa in that turnout.

Christmas morning the coach that ran to the San Gabriel Southern Pacific Railroad Station daily for the mail and passengers, was ready to take any who might wish to go to the Episcopal Church in San Gabriel, as was the custom on Sundays. Then the day passed and all were in readiness for the big event in the evening with the Christmas tree.

After dinner we gathered in the parlor where the tree was already lighted with candles, a wonderful sight. Then there was a lull in the conversation as feet could be heard tramping down the long porch and the door opened and in marched a long line of Chinamen,

headed by Ah Eat, the head Chinaman on the ranch. There was Ah Lee, the laundry man and his helpers, Son Fuey, the cook and his assistants, Sam the house boy, and the boys who attended the rooms, waiters and all the farm hands. Quite an array, and all were dressed in their finest silks. Ah Eat was always arrayed, when he came to see Father on ranch business at night, in a gorgeous silk jacket with flowing pantaloons and handsome embroidered slippers, silk stockings into which were tucked the bottom of the pants, and so he was attired this night. All had their heads freshly shaved with their cues hanging down their backs with red ribbons braided into their hair. They made a fine picture as they filed into the room and lined up against the wall, standing there gazing at the American man's celebration.

Then Ah Eat stepped out and addressed the assembly with words about like this: "China boy much likey come Bossy man party and see his friends and pretty tree and China boy he likey give to Bossy man and friends some Chlismas too." Then he would say something in Chinese to the men and several stepped up to the billiard table and opened up their gifts, boxes and packages of sweet lichi nuts, Chinese wincer and dainty cakes, all in fancy packages and spread out to eat, looking very tempting. The guests were delighted by now with the show. It sure was an eye opener to the Eastern people but a custom followed for years by my folks to have the help in to see the Christmas tree and enjoy the festivities.

After the giving of the presents the singing of Christmas carols followed in which all joined. Then Ah Eat again stepped out and said, "Now we go home. We thankee all Bossey man friends zood time and Welley Christmas." They filed out and the stripping of the tree began and what a jolly time was had by all.

So the Christmas Day was spent and we always received from the Chinamen fine presents. Those Sam would slip into the house, and the older and principal servants got presents, but the big gift for the outside ranch hands was the big fat hog which made a real celebration, for a Chinaman loves a piece of roasted pig.

During the next three years it became more and more difficult to accommodate the growing population of the Villa. Each winter the regular guests arrived and had the best rooms engaged and hundreds had to be turned away. The Miller home at Riverside, which today is the famous Mission Inn, was experiencing the same thing that my father was going through. He, too, had been induced to add rooms to his own home to accommodate the ever-growing tourist travel through the valley. The Southern Pacific Railroad had completed its line from San Francisco and now the Raymond and Whitcomb excursions were being brought to Los Angeles where they were put up in the local hotels and boarding houses. Pasadena was on the map strong, the once Indiana Colony was blossoming into a real village with churches, schools, general stores, a post office and many nice homes on the surrounding farms.

Among the new arrivals in the valley were the Allen family, the ~~Bright~~<sup>Allen</sup> family, the Craig family and at this time Abbot Zingey, a man who was to figure in the future of Southern California in a large way, came to the Villa. He was the President of the American Tobacco Company. He wished to put up a tent on the Villa grounds, back of the house in the eucalyptus grove. This he did and equipped it with beautiful rugs and furnishings. He had a large sitting room and bedroom, taking his meals in the hotel, but most important he

had a colored man, Sam, for a valet and the first colored man my brother and I had ever seen. He was some mystery, but he liked us and we soon were pals. He would cut our hair and here lies a sad tale. He had a pair of clippers and one day my brother and I induced him to cut our hair. When he finished we were delighted and rushed into see Mother. I can see her expression of horror to this day as we broke into the room and shouted our joy. She threw up her hands and exclaimed, what had happened. As she beheld the two billiard balls, heads of her promising offsprings, her cries called Father to the room and she cried, "Look! They are ruined. See their hair," and she burst into tears. Father tried to comfort her and suppress a laugh. I can see him now, explaining we would survive and the hair would grow out again, but the shock of that sight I can picture through all these years.

Well, Mr. Kinney bought a place that an old hermit had owned for years, a man by the name of Seymore, he lived alone with a dog, and this dog could open the door and would go to a nail, take down the frying pan and slide it on the stove, preparing the dinner, and he also would come to our chicken house and pull off a lath, enter and help himself to a chicken. This place Mr. Kinney developed. He built a fine home and in time brought his bride and raised a big family.

Directly back of the villa property lived Mr. Job Davis and Catherine, his adopted daughter. He went into the tobacco business with a Mr. Biglew and they manufactured cigarettes. I think Mr. Kenney was interested too. The business ran on for some years then Mr. J. S. Vosburg from New York and his brother, J. O. Vosburg, bought the place and built a fine home.

Then another development started at this time. Mr. N. C. Carter, who had settled near Alhambra in the late seventies, bought the present site of Sierra Madre village and started this town, laying out the streets and dividing it up into city lots. He built a fine home on the site overlooking the valley and this was called Carter Higher and Kinney had called his place Kinney, Lower.

At this time the Raymond and Whittier people decided to build a hotel to accommodate their own excursions from the East coming here and they put up the well known and famous hotel Raymond in Pasadena.

With all this activity going on and people coming in to the valley, my father and grandfather decided to increase the rooms on the villa, so they built on fifty more rooms, placing the wings on the end with the tower on it and enlarging the dining room. By adding all these rooms it meant father had to have a manager to run the hotel in regular hotel style. This change was just what father felt would spoil the real success of the hotel, by taking away its home atmosphere, that genial life that all liked so well.

When Raymond excursions would bring as many as four hundred at a time to Southern California, they would leave Los Angeles in tally-hos, hacks, buggies and busses for the Villa where lunch was served. Then they would drive to Baldwin's ranch, visit the racing stables and the winery. Next to L. J. Rose's place, here more racing stables and another big winery would be inspected. Leaving here they went to Shorbs winery and down to the old San Gabriel church, with its old Mexican

settlement and adobe houses. Then they would take the middle road back to Los Angeles.

The hotel was soon full to over-flowing and among the guests was a Dr. Murry, a wealthy man who had brought his trained nurse and his valet, his coachman and tally-ho and four horses. He was an Episcopalian and on Sunday mornings would load up the coach and charge one dollar for each passenger and this money was used to buy the organ for the Church of the Savior. He also did a lot for the Sierra Madre Church, giving the altar to that church. Then he married his nurse and bought the first piece of property from the original five hundred acres of the Villa. This was one of the five points overlooking Pasadena. Then we sold the next point to a Mr. Whitening, who sold in later years to a Mr. Kellogg, and he sold to another man of the same name but no relation.

At this time Mr. Hastings, with his son, Charles, just my age, and daughter, Elizabeth, a girl of ten, came with their aunt, Mrs. Talmon, from New York City. He was coming for his health and they stayed at the Villa for two years, then bought the Hastings ranch where his son lives and still owns the place.

It was in the summer of 1888 that another arrival came to the family, my sister, Anita Jennie came to bless our home. There was a christening party and a trip to the Church of the Savior once more.

In spite of the modern Raymond Hotel and others that sprang up in the early eighties around Pasadena, the old Villa's fame spread and each year found the hotel filled to capacity, but my Father did not like the life as he missed the sociability

of the smaller place, its home atmosphere and friends. So, as time went on, he and Mother decided to give up their interest and then Father sold his to my uncle, William G. Cozawell, son of my grandfather, and he took over the run of the hotel and on the morning of October fourth we four boarded the old Queen at ten o'clock at San Pedro, exactly ten years to the day and hour we had arrived.

The taking over of the place by Mr. Cogswell and his wife, also two daughters, changed some of the social life of the Villa. They were both noted musicians. They had both spent many years in Europe on the concert stage and singing operas, also in New York City. Then Mr. Cogswell's health broke and he came to California, so they became interested in the musical life of both Los Angeles and the new life of Pasadena, where soon the musicals of the Villa were a feature of the social life.

Mr. Cogswell continued running the hotel till the latter part of 1887. At this date he sold and a Mr. Lyman of New York took over the place and he was going to revolutionize it, so he bought a large herd of fine cows, also a piano for every room in the place and started other wild ideas when the estate he represented stopped him and he rented it to a Doctor for a sanitarium.

This place was run for some years, then Thomas B. Wilson bought the remaining acres with the buildings in 1923 from the Lyman estate. He pulled down the hotel and left only the old original house built when we first went there.

Later Mr. Wilson sold to a Mr. Jerry C. Hockins in 1927. He held the place until 1931, when he had to give it up and Wilson took it back. During the time he owned it he cut down all the orange and lemon trees in front and cleared the land to put it on

the market in tracts of five acres. I had a life time ambition fulfilled at this time. I had desired for years to secure one of the old orange trees and have a cane made from the heart of the trunk, which makes a wonderful walking stick, so I got one of the old trees, measuring twenty-two inches in circumference. I had six canes turned out and twelve pin trays. The canes I presented to the men members of the family and the pin trays to the ladies, for souvenirs of the old place.

Another interesting point is the arrangement that had been made for the sale of the place with nothing left to do but sign the papers to pass into the hands of Will Rogers, when, unfortunately, he was killed, as he wanted it for his polo field.

At this writing Mr. Wilson is now living in the old home and the final end will probably be to sell the place in tracts of five acres.

As a finale to this history of the Villa, I will tell the following story to show while the old Villa, with its history making days of Southern California, has passed, its memories still cling to those who enjoyed its hospitality in the colorful days of romance.

I was visiting Honolulu some ten years ago when, one day in the lobby of the Young Hotel, I was chatting with an Englishman and he said: "So you are from California. I have a very pleasant memory of Southern California, but that was many years ago before your time there, I presume."

I let him continue. "You see in those days I was connected with the Bank of England and was sent to Southern California to negotiate loans with the growing business interests and large land owners. It was a very attractive field for loans and I used to take

my wife and two daughters . We went each year for several years and spent the Winter. We stopped at a hotel located up on the foothills back of Pasadena. It has since been torn down and all is changed. But the memories of those days will always remain with those who were fortunate enough to spend the winters in that hotel, it was called the Sierra Madre Villa and was run by a gentleman who ran it just as he would his country home. There were only about twenty rooms and the guests were very select and many of us came year after year to spend the Winter there, eastern financial men as well as guests from Europe. Here we would gather about at Christmas time and I never ate finer food. The old gentleman was a wonderful host, a jolly man with a long white beard and snow white hair. I can see him sitting in his office in the evenings with a bunch of us sitting around an open fire place and he would be dressed in an elaborate Chinese smoking jacket of embroidered silk and a skull cap with a tassel of silk. He always wore this outfit and it became him too. We used to tell yarns, and the one that could tell the biggest was to get the prize at the end of the season and I recall he got it. He gave him a Washington hatchet. Those were wonderful days and this place, with its fine hospitality and the grand view from the verandas of the valley, will long live in the memories of all of us who enjoyed it. But here, I will show you the picture."

And he went to the table where there was a book showing a picture of the Villa. As he stood looking at it I said, "Well, I am glad you did not roast the old gentleman, who you say so many nice things about, for you see he was my father."

Thus closes the authentic history of the famous Sierra Madre Villa, and its memories will live on for many years.