

The Ohlones and the Mission San Jose

The Ohlones were the indigenous people of this area and had a village called Oroysom east of this site. As hunters and gatherers they ranged far and wide. They wove baskets using various roots and willow branches and had lively commerce with other villages.



Acorns from oak trees provided sustenance for the Ohlones. Baskets were used to gather the acorns. (Museum of Local History)

A number of huge stones, some of them eight feet in diameter and each with several grinding holes,

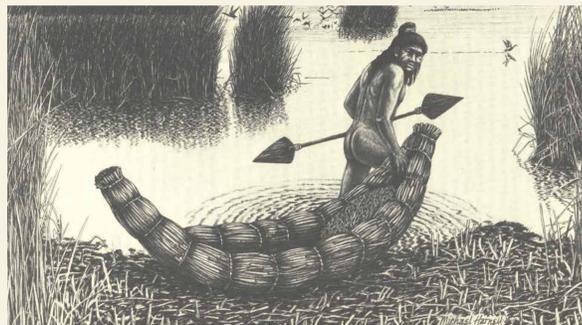


Motars and Pestles (Photo by Julianne Howe)

were once found along Agua Caliente Creek, which runs through this property. The Ohlones used them to grind acorns gathered from the oak trees that grew in the canyon.

Natural springs and creeks provided fresh water. There were edible plants and an abundance of animals, fish and fowl. The natives navigated the bay in boats they built with tule reeds.

A large Ohlone burial site was once located near the corner of Curtner Road and Mission Boulevard. The



An Ohlone fisherman drags a tule boat into the water. Illustration by Michael Harner (The Ohlone Way)

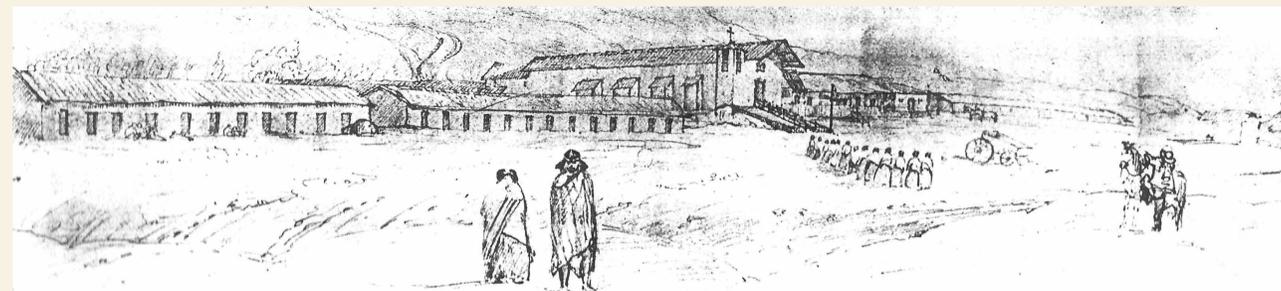
graves were carefully excavated and relocated to the Ohlone Cemetery on Washington Boulevard.

After the founding of Mission San Jose at Oroysom on June 11, 1797, this land became part of the vast mission lands. A road shaded by olive trees was built from Mission Santa Clara to the circular steps of Mission San Jose. The Higuera later built their adobe along this road. Portions of it still survive.



Founding of Mission San Jose (Painting by Hal Booth)

Life in Oroysom changed after the arrival of the Spanish Franciscans. They brought their religion and a new way of life as well as their cattle, horses and European fruits and vegetables. The founding of the mission had some negative consequences for the Ohlones who were brought to live, work and worship there. They learned new skills and built the adobe



1826 pencil drawing of the Ohlones at Mission San Jose by William Smyth (Bancroft Library)

mission church and other buildings, but their way of life was irrevocably changed.



1826 water color by William Smyth of vaqueros roping a cow. Mission San Jose and Mission Peak are in the background. (Bancroft Library)

Ohlone vaqueros (cowboys) managed the expanding mission cattle herds that roamed the hills and valleys, including this land of the Agua Caliente (Warm Springs). The cattle were a source of wealth for the mission, and later for the ranchos. Ships sailed down the San Francisco Bay to the Mission Embarcadero, near present-day Union City, where they exchanged manufactured goods from the East Coast for the dried hides (leather for shoes) and the tallow (fat for soap and candles) from the cattle.

An earthquake on October 21, 1868 destroyed the original 1809 adobe church. It was reconstructed and dedicated on June 11, 1985.



Mission bell in front of the reconstructed adobe mission church. (Photo by Lionel Goularte)

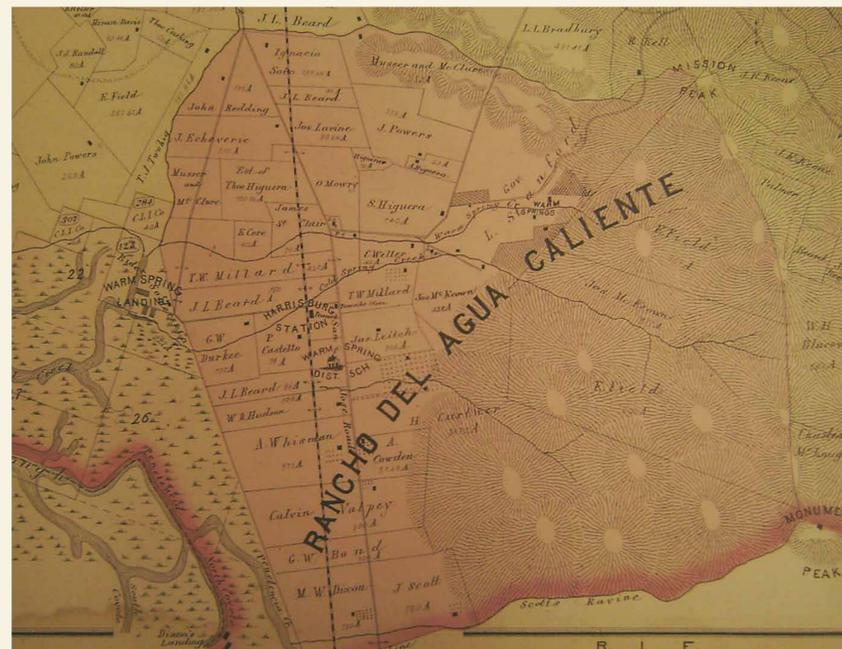
The Rancho del Agua Caliente and The Higuera Adobe

After the missions were secularized by Mexico, their lands were divided into huge ranchos, which were granted to the “Californios” who had served the Spanish



Fulgencio Higuera built several adobes and ran cattle herds on Rancho del Agua Caliente. (Museum of Local History)

and Mexican governments. In 1836 the lands around this park were granted to Fulgencio Francisco Higuera and his wife, Valentine



Map of Rancho del Agua Caliente. (Historical Atlas of Alameda County, 1878)

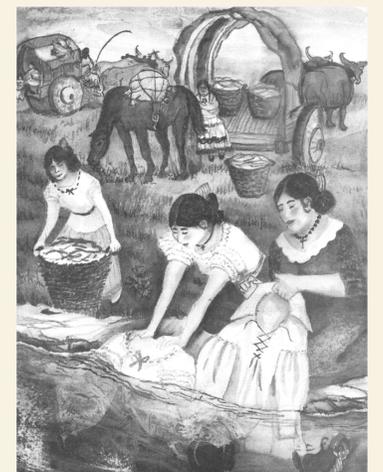
Higuera. Named after the hot springs south of Mission San Jose, Rancho del Agua Caliente (Ranch of the Warm Waters) originally had about 9,000 acres. The ranch supported 12,000 head of cattle, several hundred horses and many sheep.



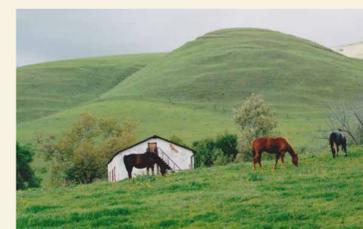
The branding iron and the brand believed to have belonged to the Higuera family. (Museum of Local History)

Fulgencio’s grandfather, Ygnacio Higuera, came to California with the Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition in 1776. Fulgencio’s father, Jose Higuera, was granted the Rancho Los Tularcitos in 1821. His restored adobe home is located in present-day Milpitas. Some of the olive trees that lined the road from Mission San Jose to Mission Santa Clara still survive near Jose Higuera’s adobe.

Fulgencio’s widowed sister, Marie Josefa Higuera Molina, married Robert Livermore. They lived at Rancho Las Positas, near present-day Livermore, but once a month she would bring wagonloads of clothes to be washed in the waters of the hot springs while she visited her family.



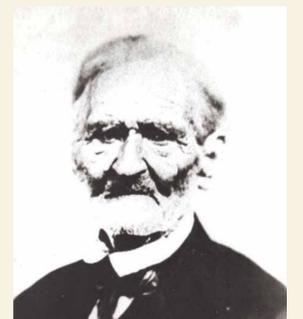
Typical washday at the warm springs. (Watercolor by Nancy Pratt)



The restored Higuera adobe in 1979. (Photo by Philip Holmes)

Seven adobes were originally on this rancho. This adobe, built about 1840 for use as a family home, is the only one that survived. It was surrounded by structures common to rancho life, such as corrals, a springhouse (to keep food cool), a smokehouse and an outhouse. The Agua Fria (Cold Water) Creek near the adobe and the springs in the hills above provided water.

This adobe is sometimes called the Galindo-Higuera Adobe because of its early association with Juan Crisostomo Galindo. He was the son of Nicolas Galindo and Maria Teresa Pinto Galindo who came with the Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition in 1776. He married Ana Maria Jacoba Bernal, and their children married into other prominent Californio families.



Juan Crisostomo Galindo in later life. (Museum of Local History)

The Curtner, the Silva and the Goularte Families

Henry Curtner, an enterprising American, arrived at Mission San Jose in 1852. He worked for farmers in the area. In 1856 Curtner returned home to Indiana to marry Lydia Kendall. By 1868 he was able to purchase the portion of Rancho Agua

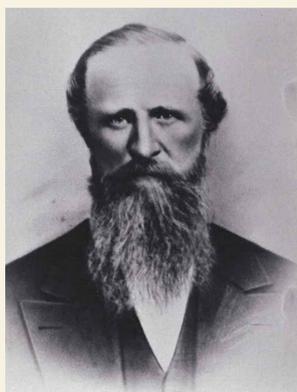


Henry Curtner, for whom Curtner Road is named, once owned 6,000 acres from "Mission Peak to the Bay." (Courtesy History San José)

Caliente that included the adobe. He continued to buy adjoining properties until he owned over 6,000 acres from "Mission Peak to the Bay."

He hired James Leitch, a skilled carpenter, and others to build a new ranch house, a bunkhouse, a

slaughterhouse, barns for storing hay, barns for horses and dairy barns. They built a concrete building where milk was cooled and processed and added a lean-to shed to the adobe.



James Leitch, a skilled carpenter, helped build many structures in the area. (Museum of Local History)

In 1869 the Curtners built a large, redwood, Italianate, seventeen-room mansion on the lower portion of their property (modern address is 45588 Wabana Common). They had six sons and two daughters. After Henry died in 1917, his son Arthur inherited the ranch and moved into the mansion.

From 1904 to 1918, the Joe Silva family moved into the ranch house and leased this property as a dairy farm. Each morning they took the milk in 10-gallon cans to the Warm



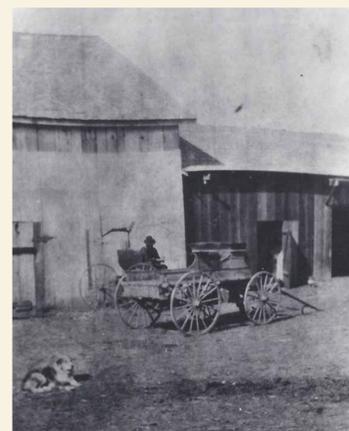
Manuel Silva rented the dairy farm from the Curtners. (Museum of Local History)



The Silva children holding flags. (Museum of Local History)



The Silva children with a steer. Note the barn in the background. (Museum of Local History)



This wagon, hitched to a horse, was used to deliver milk in large 10-gallon cans. (Museum of Local History)

Springs Train Depot, which was on the southwest corner of present-day Warm Springs Boulevard and Warren Avenue. The "Peanut Train," a small freight train dropped off empty milk

cans from the day before and picked up the filled milk cans and mail sack and delivered them to Oakland.

Joaquin "Jack" Goularte, an immigrant from the Azores, worked as a foreman for the Curtners. In 1927 he and his wife, Adelaide, purchased this property and moved their



The Goularte family used the Higuera adobe for storage. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)

growing family into the ranch house. They had many farm animals, including work horses, saddle horses, milk cows and many calves.



Dr. Stanley Innes (left) bought the farm from Jack Goularte (right) in 1945. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)



The dirt road to the Goularte farm from Curtner Road. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)

In addition to large walnut, prune and apricot orchards, they grew hay and corn and a great variety of vegetables. They sundried the fruit and stored it in the adobe until it could be sold.

Apricots were cut, sulphured and sun-dried on large trays in the fields. Many neighboring families helped with the work. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)

Their fifteen children worked hard and enjoyed exploring the hills and playing with friends who lived on neighboring farms. They attended the original Warm Springs Grammar School, which is gone, but its replacement is still on Warm Springs Boulevard.



The Joaquin "Jack" and Adelaide family in 1924, with nine of their children. They later had six more children. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)



Three generations of the Goularte family picnic near Agua Fria in the 1930s. Note the "oilcloth" tablecloth on the table. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Goularte)

Five Goularte sons served their country during World War II. Unable to find enough help to work the farm, Jack sold it to Dr. Stanley Innes in 1945. Without the care and protection of an onsite owner, the buildings and equipment suffered. The farmhouse burned down in 1947, and the adobe fell into disrepair.

Preservation Efforts, The Land Developer, and Reconstruction of the Higuera Adobe

The adobe slowly deteriorated and a large crack developed in an end wall. The roof caved in, exposing the vulnerable adobe bricks which began to disintegrate. Local historian and preservationist, Robert B. Fisher M.D., raised an alarm, and in 1970 volunteers



The Higuera adobe about 1977. It was badly deteriorated prior to the beginning of reconstruction. (Museum of Local History)

erected a temporary roof over the adobe that was made of canvas and suspended between telephone poles.

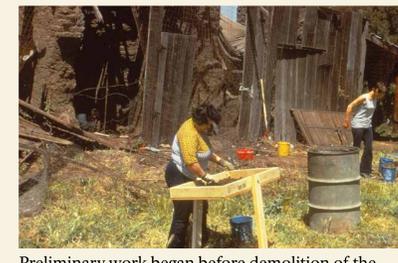


The 7,500 adobe bricks were authentically made by hand on site. (Museum of Local History)

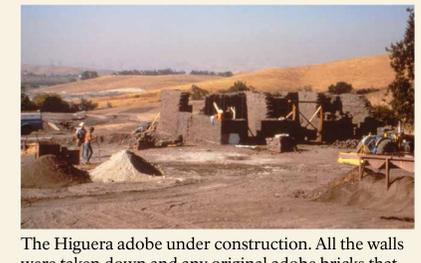
Several years later, when Ponderosa Homes developed the property, the city negotiated with



Wet adobe bricks were laid out in the sun where they took 30 days to dry. (Museum of Local History)



Preliminary work began before demolition of the adobe. Here a worker sifts the soil. (Museum of Local History)



The Higuera adobe under construction. All the walls were taken down and any original adobe bricks that were in good shape were incorporated into the new walls. (Museum of Local History)

them to donate about twenty acres of land for the Rancho Higuera Historical Park and requested that they fund the restoration of the Higuera Adobe.

In 1977 the City of Fremont contracted with architect Gil Sanchez to restore the adobe. Workers made 7,500 new, sun-dried adobe bricks onsite for

reconstructing the building. The surviving portions of the wall were taken down and, where possible, the original adobe bricks were reused.

Jacquee Cook and Alberta Nunes George, owners of the Sand Fleas Workshop, handcrafted the redwood, period-style furniture for the adobe.

By 1979 the Higuera Adobe had been authentically reconstructed on its original foundation. On September 30, the Goularte family gathered, along with local historians, residents and civic officials, to celebrate with a colorful dedication ceremony.

Today the adobe stands as a silent sentinel from the past. Memories of the people who once lived and worked here and loved this land slowly fade, but their legacy lives on.



The arrival of a mounted color guard marked the beginning of the dedication ceremony. (Museum of Local History)



Father William Abeloe, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Mission San Jose, was a strong advocate for saving the Higuera adobe. (Museum of Local History)



The dedication ceremony on September 30, 1979 included a mariachi band. (Museum of Local History)

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