

RANCHO CAMULOS A WALKING TOUR

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

STATE HISTORIC LANDMARK
VENTURA COUNTY LANDMARK



Photo: Bancroft Library

[1] Ygnacio del Valle Adobe

The 10,000 square foot u-shaped adobe, with its two-foot thick walls and long corredores is an outstanding and rare example of the rural domestic vernacular style of Spanish-Mexican Colonial architecture.

The original L-shaped four room section built in 1853, evolved into a one-story u-shaped plan organized around a central courtyard by 1880 to accommodate the growing Del Valle family. The corredor and courtyard serve as the central organizing elements and circulation between rooms is minimized in the traditionally hispanic fashion.

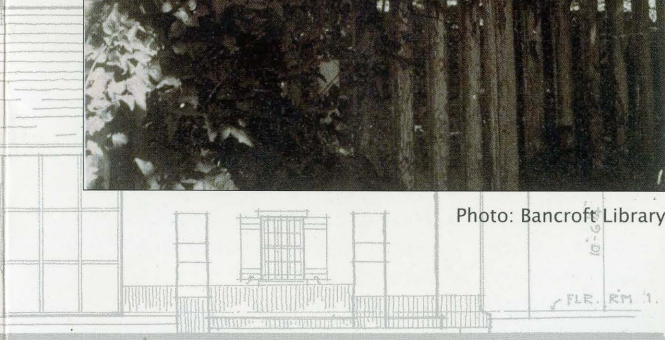
The main adobe was the first building constructed when Ygnacio del Valle established the ranch in 1853. Living in Los Angeles, Del Valle's foreman managed the ranch until the Del Valle family moved to the ranch in 1861, after the birth of their fifth child. Between 1862 and 1870 seven more children were born at Camulos with only six of the twelve living until adulthood.

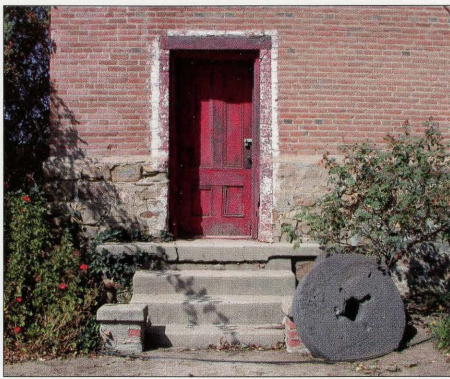
[2] Chapel

Built circa 1867, the chapel features an unusual barrel vaulted wood ceiling under the long gabled porch whose gable end displays a Gothic gingerbread semi-circular verge-board. A decorative stained glass window features a heart surrounded by



Photo: Bancroft Library





roses and pierced with a sword.

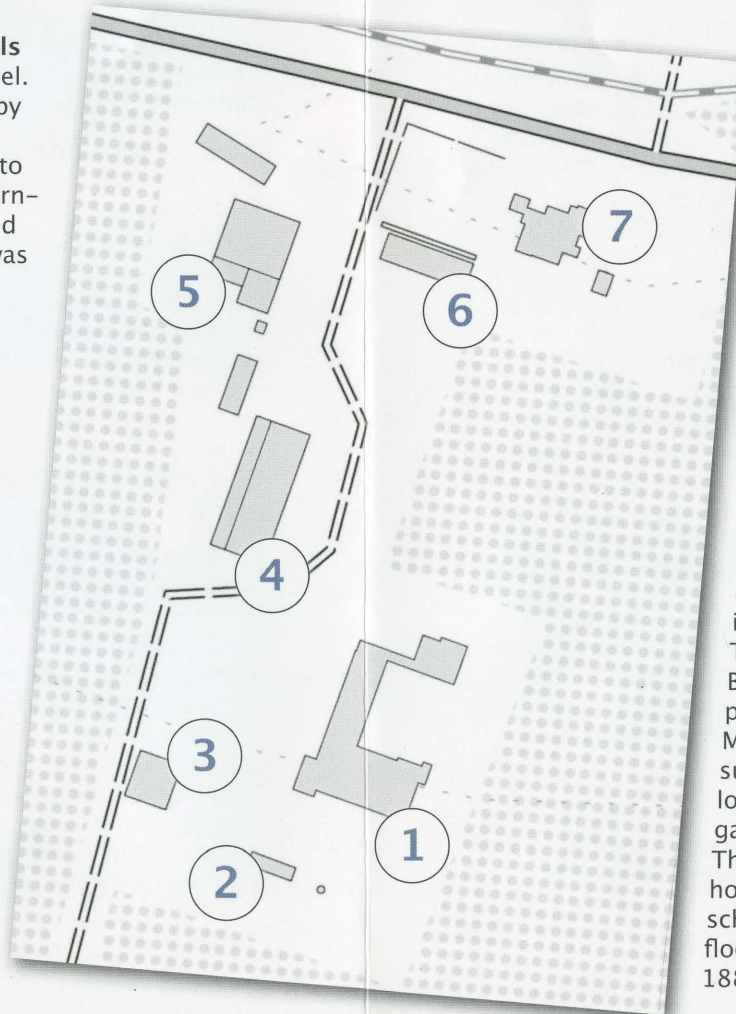
Historically, three **bells** hung beside the chapel. The largest was cast by Russians in Kodiak, Alaska and was used to call worshipers to morning prayer. The second slightly smaller bell was also cast in Kodiak in 1796 and originally hung at the San Fernando Mission. The **fountain** dates from 1853. Early photographs indicate the central stem was changed. The Rubel family rebuilt the fountain circa 1934.

[3] Schoolhouse

The only building on the rancho constructed by the Rubel family, the schoolhouse was built in 1930 to serve the family's five children, as well as the ranch bookkeeper's children. With its long



rectangular plan, corridor and plaster siding, the schoolhouse was designed to blend with the historic adobe buildings.



[4] Winery

Built in 1867, the brick winery with its massive stone buttresses, was important for the storage of the famous Camulos wines and brandies, produced between 1870 and 1900. Wines were aged in casks in the basement. The 1870 census lists Camulos Ranch winery as the largest of four vintners in San Buenaventura Township of Santa Barbara County, producing 45 tons of Mission grapes resulting in 6,000 gallons of wine and 800 gallons of brandy. The winery also housed the rancho school on the ground floor during the 1880s.

[5] Barn

Built circa 1910, the large barn is constructed of wood and served to house ranch animals as well as equipment in later years. The **gas and oil house**, also built circa 1910, is part of the ranch working buildings.

[6] Bunkhouse

Built circa 1916 in the California Bungalow style was the ranch bunkhouse and is now used as the office. Note the detached pergola on the north side covered by wisteria vines.

[7] Nachito del Valle Adobe

Built circa 1920, this adobe building, constructed around a courtyard, exhibits the Spanish Colonial Revival style with its tile roof and recessed arched entry. The house was built for “Nachito” del Valle, the youngest son of Ygnacio and Isabel del Valle.

Landscape Features

The **California Black Walnut tree** is the only survivor of four “Black Eagle” seedlings planted by Juventino del Valle circa 1870. It has been written up in [Trees of Santa Barbara](#) as perhaps the largest tree of its kind in the Santa Barbara–Ventura County region. The tree’s trunk measures approximately twenty-five feet in circumference.

The long **grape arbor** was built by the 1880s and featured prominently in Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona*. The rose garden and brick pathways were part of the Rubel family’s contribution to the landscape.

The gardens are shaded by a variety of mature trees including a cork oak, pecan tree, maple tree and numerous palm trees.

© 2006 Rancho Camulos Museum

Text, photos, map and production by San Buenaventura Research Associates, except as otherwise noted.

History of Rancho Camulos

The present 1,800 acre Rancho Camulos, established by Ygnacio del Valle in 1853, was carved out of the 48,612 acre Rancho San Francisco, granted in 1839 to Ygnacio’s father Antonio del Valle, majordomo and administrator of Mission San Fernando. Camulos is located at the western boundary of the rancho and was originally a Tataviam Indian village known as Kamulus.

By the time of Ygnacio’s death in 1880, the ranch had grown from a few hundred head of cattle to a thriving self-contained ranch containing citrus, vineyards, almonds, grain and vegetables supporting close to 200 residents. Camulos wines and brandies became well known throughout Southern California.

Camulos gained national attention as the “Home of Ramona” following the publication of the best selling novel [Ramona](#) by Helen Hunt Jackson in 1884. The setting for the novel matched many of the features at Camulos including the adobe, the cross on the hill, the chapel, the bells, the fountain and courtyard. The arrival of the railroad through the valley in 1887 brought literally thousands of tourists to visit the “Home of Ramona.” The del Valle family marketed their citrus under the Home of Ramona brand.

Camulos was sold to the August Rubel family in 1924, who raised five children at the ranch. The schoolhouse was built in 1930 along with the aviary and pond. Prior to his death in 1943 while on a mission in Tunisia during World War II, August Rubel had set up a small museum in the winery telling the early history of Camulos. The Rubel family recognized the importance of preserving the ranch and its buildings. August Rubel’s children and grandchildren are continuing the tradition today.