

RANCHO CAMULOS MUSEUM

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



RCM ACHIEVES MAJOR MILESTONES IN 2017



Artifacts from Rancho Camulos are prominently featured in "Many Voices One Nation," a new exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, that debuted in June 2017. A large wooden cross from the rancho's chapel garden, a red glass sacred heart from the Camulos chapel, and a mortar and pestle attributed to the Tataviam Native American people, who worked at Camulos — tell the story of the del Valle family in Southern

California. The artifacts from Rancho Camulos are expected to be on display for three years or more.

Smithsonian Features RCM Artifacts

In early October, a group of museum members, docents and board members traveled to Washington, D.C. to see NMAH's "Many Voices One Nation" exhibit. Seeing the striking exhibit sharing the Camulos story was "exciting and a great honor," according to museum director Susan Falck. "We are so pleased that the many visitors viewing this great exhibit that recognizes how diversity shaped our nation's history will learn something about Rancho Camulos located more than 2,700 miles away. We encourage anyone visiting Washington to stop by the National Museum of American History to see this excellent exhibit."

RCM's New Library Opens in Newly Renovated Small Adobe



Introducing visitors to RCM's new research library, which houses books and archival manuscripts relevant to Camulos and Southern California history

its electricity, putting in a new septic and plumbing system, painting the interiors and restoring the building's original beautiful hardwood floors, the small adobe is ready for visitors and now also houses RCM's new research library. A dedication and ribbon cutting celebration was hosted in June.

The new library represents a major achievement in the museum's history. In addition to an excellent collection of books on Southern California and rancho period history, the library will give patrons access to the museum's archives, including early letters, business records, photographs and maps of Rancho Camulos, some dating back to the early 1800s. The library is open to visitors the first Sunday of every month, February – November, 1 – 4 p.m. and by appointment. To learn more about visiting the library and its holdings call 805-521-1501. Plans are in the works to use the building as the museum's new visitor's center in early 2018, and to stage future exhibits and lectures relevant to Camulos and local history.

After more than a decade of hard work by volunteers and generous donors, RCM's small adobe, which was nearly destroyed in the 1994 Northridge earthquake, has once again opened its doors to the public. In addition to making the 1920 building structurally sound, restoring

RCM Breaks Ground on New Tataviam Village



Volunteers at work on the new Tataviam village at RCM, scheduled to open in early 2018

and helped to build the family's home, now referred to as the "Main Adobe."

The village being constructed by Tataviam and museum volunteers will consist of a dwelling (kij), a storytelling area (ramada), a non-functioning sweat lodge and native plants from the Tataviam era. The village will offer school children and older visitors the opportunity to learn about the role the Tataviam people played at Camulos. The village will open for tours in early 2018.

Historic Portraits Returned to Camulos



RCM Board Chair Judy Triem accepts the 19th-century wedding portrait of Josefa del Valle Forster from Suzie Daggett, great granddaughter of the bride

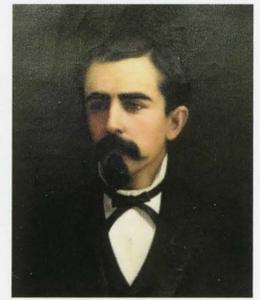
early 1900s. Daggett also returned the small mission bell to the museum that originally hung adjacent to the chapel with two larger bells.

The portrait of Josefa's older brother Reginaldo del Valle (1854-1938) was donated to the museum by his great granddaughter DeeDee Grady about two years ago, and was recently restored. This portrait, likely painted in the early 1880s, depicts Reginaldo as a young man. Although not signed, the portrait bears a strong similarity to the portrait of his sister Josefa and is also believed to be the work of Harmer. According to Harmer's great granddaughter, Michele Plumridge, the painter spent a lot of time at Camulos as a young man, was friendly with the del Valle family and married Felicidad Abadie Yorba, a

In partnership with the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, RCM broke ground this fall on a new interpretive village that will share Tataviam history and their role at Rancho Camulos in the 19th-century. Tataviam Indians labored for the del Valle family

member of a prominent Santa Barbara Californio family. The couple married in 1893 under the once expansive Camulos walnut tree.

Plans are underway to stage an exhibit and lecture in 2018 on these two exciting museum acquisitions.



Reginaldo del Valle

COMING MARCH 2018: St. Francis Dam Disaster: Camulos Connections



Ruins of St. Francis Dam, 1928

March 18, 2018 marks the 90th anniversary of the terrifying St. Francis Dam Disaster that devastated much of the Heritage Valley and took the lives of more than 450 people. In remembrance of this tragic date in local history, Rancho Camulos (along with other community organizations) will

commemorate the occasion

with a special month-long exhibit and lecture. The exhibit, "The St. Francis Dam Disaster: Camulos Connections" will be open to the public every Sunday of the month from 1-4 p.m. in the museum's recently renovated small adobe. The exhibit will include photos, letters and newspaper articles documenting how Rancho Camulos experienced the disaster. Coincidentally, Reginaldo del Valle, who was a member of the Board of Water and Power Commissioners for the city of Los Angeles between 1908-1929, spent his formative years at Camulos before his family sold the property in 1924. Del Valle's connection to the disaster will also be explored.

On **Sunday, March 18** at 1 p.m., RCM will host a community potluck and guest speaker to commemorate the St. Francis Dam break and flood. National Park Service archeologist Ann Stansell will speak on her research findings and answer questions regarding the disaster's impact on Rancho Camulos in what ranks as one of the worst American civil engineering failures in the twentieth century.

2018 RCM EVENTS CALENDAR

- **SUNDAY, FEB. 11** — *Helen Hunt Jackson Returns to Rancho Camulos*. (Living History Re-enactment.) 2 p.m. \$5 per person.
- **SUNDAY, MARCH 18** — *St. Francis Dam Exhibit & Lecture*
- **FRIDAY, APRIL 6** — *Artists' Day*. An invitation for painters and photographers to enjoy Camulos' colorful gardens and grounds. \$25 per person. Reservations required.
- **FRIDAY, APRIL 20** — *Cowboy Festival & Luncheon*. Includes concert, tour and vaquero buffet. Performer to be announced in early 2018.

RANCHO CAMULOS MUSEUM

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

We're huge fans of **HGTV** home makeovers.

Dear Historic Homes and Gardens Lover:

We love seeing how those talented designers on HGTV magically transform battered old homes—many of which saw their best days decades ago—into welcoming showplaces.

At Rancho Camulos Museum, Ventura County's only National Historic Landmark, we'd like nothing better—with your generous help—than to restore the beauty and charm of one of California's most significant mid-19th-century historic homes and gardens. Thanks to the help of friends like you we're already well on our way to fulfilling this mission.

One of our most noteworthy achievements this past year was the completion of interior restorations on the property's 1920 small adobe, which once served as the ranch manager's home, and will soon become our new visitor's center and exhibition area.

For more on RCM's progress this past year, please read the enclosed newsletter. Learn about the artifacts that are now on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in the exhibit *Many Voices, One Nation* that made its Washington debut in June. Read about the recently donated Josefa del Valle wedding portrait, accredited to Alexander Harmer, one of California's premier 19th-century artists. Discover our new research library, which opened earlier this year in the restored small adobe building. The library contains a valuable trove of books, letters, photographs and maps that shed light on the history of Camulos and the rancho era.

There's all this and more going on at Ranch Camulos. You're invited to join us in keeping the momentum alive by either renewing your museum membership or becoming a new member.

As demonstrated on HGTV, mending and maintaining old structures and grounds is daunting and costly. Rancho Camulos is no different.

In the upcoming year our goal is to raise \$250,000 which will enable us to make major improvements to the grounds and gardens of Camulos by landscaping our new visitor's center, improving our aging watering system, and making essential repairs to the main adobe residence.

It was during famed author Helen Hunt Jackson's visit to Rancho Camulos in January 1882 that she found the inspirational setting for her novel *Ramona*, which became an overnight bestseller and attracted train loads of visitors to the old adobe home and gardens, sparking a tourist boom in Southern California. With your generous support, we can make this site as lovely as it was when Mrs. Jackson paid her visit more than 135 years ago.

We invite you to join us in our efforts to keep Rancho Camulos structurally sound and restore its original beauty. These efforts ensure that the museum can continue to be shared with the more than 2,500 school children who visit us annually as well as older visitors who are still young at heart and eager to learn about early Southern California history.

On behalf of our museum board of directors, docents and volunteers we thank you for your financial support. We wish each of you a joyous holiday season and happy new year, and we look forward to seeing you in 2018.

Warm regards,

Judith P. Triem

Judith Triem
Board Chair, Rancho Camulos Museum

Susan J. Falck

Susan Falck
Director, Rancho Camulos Museum

P.S. We are offering a special gift for those who donate \$500 or more. You'll receive a signed copy of *Ranches: Home on the Range in California* by Marc Appleton, which prominently features Rancho Camulos. This spectacular book features the stunning photography of Melba Levick and showcases 19 ranches, rekindling nostalgia for life on a western ranch from a bygone era. See the enclosed response card for more information.



Rancho Camulos history lovers know how to have fun!
In October, a group of museum volunteers, members and board members traveled to Washington, D.C. to see RCM artifacts on display at the National Museum of American History. The trip included visits to other landmarks, including Mount Vernon.

Local Artifacts

Make It To

Washington, D.C.

BY SCVHISTORY.COM
PHOTOS BY JESSICA BOYER

Three sets of artifacts from the Rancho Camulos Museum collection were recently shipped to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. for inclusion in the "Many Voices, One Nation" exhibit at the National Museum of American History.

The new permanent exhibit, which opens June 28, "presents the 500-year journey of how many distinct peoples and cultures met, mingled and created the culture of the United States." The artifacts from Rancho Camulos are expected to be on display three years or more.

The artifacts include: the late 18th Century red sacred heart from the 1860s Camulos chapel; the original wooden cross from the Del Valle family's chapel garden at Camulos; and a mortar and pestle attributed to the Tataviam people who lived in the Piru area and maintained a village on the (later) Rancho Camulos property until 1803, when they were removed to the San Fernando Mission.

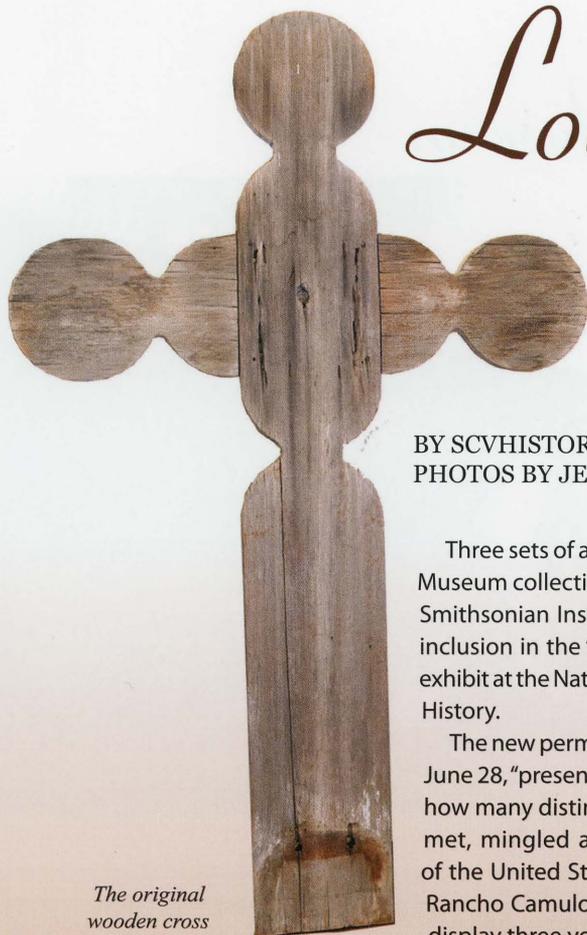
The sacred heart was previously loaned for an exhibit at Loyola Marymount University, where Josefa del Valle Forster had donated other family heirlooms just before her death in 1943.

Late 19th Century photographs show this elaborately jeweled Sacred Heart once resided on the altar in the Camulos chapel, easy to see for those participating in the liturgy, according to the LMU exhibit. As an object of devotion, it referred to the sacred heart of Christ, representing His divine love for humanity. Devotion of the Sacred Heart dates back to biblical times as a way to commemorate Christ's acts of asceticism, love and salvation for mankind. The possession of this Sacred Heart was another demonstration of Ysabel del Valle's pious character. The second item, the original wooden cross, had been in protective storage at Rancho Camulos Museum. Visitors can see a replica of the cross in the garden area next to the chapel. It is painted white, as the original seems to have been at one time.

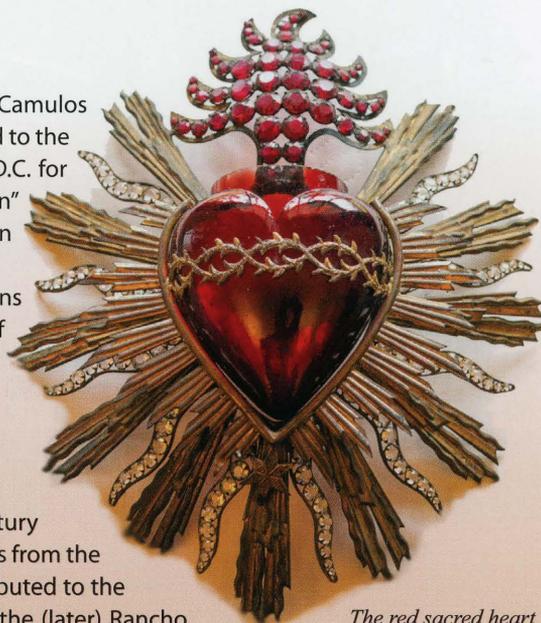
Adding some mystery to history, it is not known whether the mortar and pestle, the third set of artifacts, were found on the Rancho Camulos property or at another location in the Piru area. Rancho Camulos Museum director Susan Falck said they were donated by a museum volunteer prior to her tenure. However, they were not among the grinding tools found in 2014 in August Rubel's pre-1943 museum in the winery.

For an informational treasure trove of local history, please visit scvhistory.com.

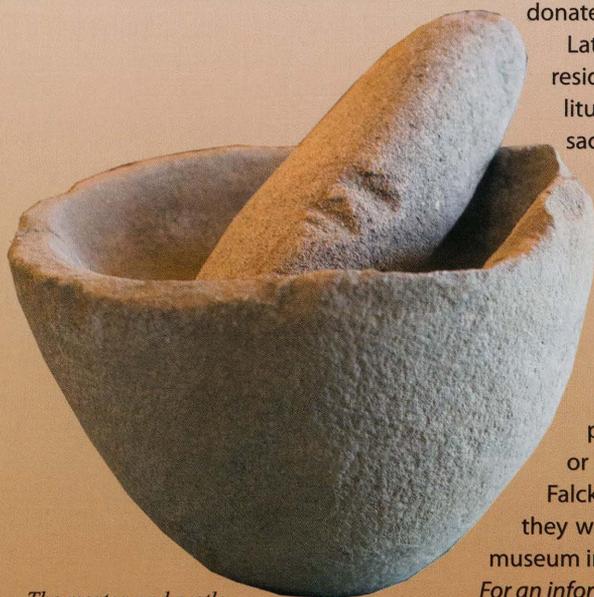
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The original wooden cross



The red sacred heart



The mortar and pestle

A Little History on Rancho Camulos Museum

◀ from 58



Rancho Camulos Museum is located 10 miles west of Valencia on scenic Highway 126. When the ranch was granted by Mexico's California governor to Lt. Antonio del Valle in 1839, it spanned 48,000 acres of the Santa Clarita Valley including the present communities of Newhall, Saugus, Valencia, Stevenson Ranch and surrounding areas.

Visitors can see the 1853 Del Valle adobe home, their 1860s chapel and other features on most Sunday afternoons. Along a well traveled road known as El Camino Real (The King's Highway) lies a place out of time...Rancho Camulos. It is one of the best surviving examples of an early California rancho in its original rural environment and stands as a vibrant reminder of the state's Spanish and Mexican heritage. Established by Ygnacio Del Valle in 1853, Rancho Camulos was once part of a 48,000 acre Mexican land grant deeded to Ygnacio's father Antonio Del Valle in 1839.

The Del Valles were a prominent California family involved in state and local politics during the Mexican period and after its transition to statehood. They were famous for their generous hospitality and

for maintaining the traditional rancho lifestyle long after it had disappeared elsewhere. Camulos bustled with extended family members and ranch workers, with up to 200 people living on the property during years of peak agricultural production. Among the frequent guests at Camulos during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were a number of prominent writers and artists, including Charles F. Lummis, James Walker and Alexander Harmer, who were inspired time and again by the rancho's idyllic setting.

Camulos was a noted stop along the main coach stage route—part of the original mission trail—from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara. Padres traveling between San Fernando and San Buenaventura would visit the ranch to say mass for the Del Valle family and the nearby residents in the private chapel, which over the years has become endearingly referred to as "the lost mission." Rancho Camulos remained in the Del Valle family until 1924 when it was sold to August Rübel, whose heirs have worked to protect and preserve the site.

THE HOME OF RAMONA

Rancho Camulos is also part of literary folklore as the setting for Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona*, first published in 1884 and still in print today. It is the romantic tale of a young girl raised by a Spanish California family who falls in love with an Indian ranch hand. Their life together mirrors the fate of Indians at the hands of white settlers. With its tragic love story and nostalgic view of history, the dramatic tale captured the imagination of the American public and created tremendous interest in California's Hispanic past. Tourists and settlers flocked to the region in huge numbers from the late 1880's until the beginning of WWII. Rancho Camulos—once a stop on the Southern Pacific rail line—was dubbed "The Home of Ramona" and was a must-see attraction for devotees of the novel.

For more information visit: <http://ranchocamulos.org/>