



ODYSSEY

CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 875
SAN BERNARDINO, CA. 92402

Editor

FRED HOLLADAY

Business Manager

CHRISTIAN R. HARRIS

Phone: 883-7759

Associate Editors

ARDA M. HAENSZEL

RICHARD D. THOMPSON

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

FIRST walked through Agua Mansa Cemetery in 1950 and was horrified at what I saw, for before me lay desecrated graves -- with cavities in the ground, large enough to remove bodies from the soil -- in an area covered with a few rotting wooden crosses; some pulled from the earth and tossed about haphazardly. Innumerable snake, gopher and varmint holes covered most of the burying ground, along with hills filled with swarms of red and black ants.

I once believed that San Bernardino County's potter's field, located in the North West section of Mountain View Cemetery, just off Waterman Avenue, was a good example of man's inhumanity toward man, for there one finds no grave markers, no grass -- no conscience effort to give a body an honorable burial. These were persons who died without funds and were relegated almost to a bone pile.

It seemed to me, on that day in 1950, that Agua Mansa was a cemetery without a soul, for it contained the bodies of many pioneers who helped found this area and make it what it is today.

Of course there is so much finality about death. In a few short years after death one's name is forgotten, except to a few who are still alive and loved him, and, rich or poor, it makes no difference, we all return from whence we came.

But one of the grants to the living is the chance to honor the dead and, fortunately, a few years ago the County of San Bernardino and its Museum came forward and helped to restore Agua Mansa as much as humanly possible. But too many of the old pioneers still lie in unknown graves because of inadequate records.

Two fine articles in this issue retell the story of Agua Mansa and we hope you enjoy reading them.

Two special issues coming up. Our November one will tell the story of Slover Mountain and the January 1981 issue relates the history of the San Bernardino Water Department from its beginning to date.

..F.H.