

AGUA MANSA

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Cornelius Jensen's grave.

Colton, etc. Lorenzo Trujillo died in 1855, and is buried here. The earliest existant headstone marks the grave of Maria Delores Trujillo, who died in 1859. She was the wife of Esquipula Trujillo, who led colonists here from Santa Fe. The last to be buried here was Jorge Domingues in 1862. Over a span of 104 years, it is estimated between 6,000 and 6,500 were interred in the cemetery, although there are hand written records of only some 3,500 names.

In 1889, Father P. J. Stockton and descendents of the Byrne family gave title to the cemetery to Peter C. Peters, A. J. Martinez, and Pablo Velarde, who became trustees for residents stretching from present Colton to Chino as a burial place of their ancestors, themselves and heirs.

Years passed and people continued to die and be buried in the Agua Mansa Cemetery. The trustees also died, leaving no one appointed to succeed them. As a result, many of the wooden-cross markers were destroyed

by grass fires, graves were dug into by treasure seekers, and some of the old tombstones of marble from Slover Mountain were stolen. The Agua Mansa Cemetery has suffered since her evil days came upon her and has passed from one ownership to another.

It was specified the cemetery should remain a free burial spot for all members of the old parish church and their descendents.

In 1955, Mrs. Marie Wood, daughter of Antonio R. Espinosa, formed descendents of the pioneer families into an organization called "Friends for the Preservation of the Agua Mansa Cemetery" for the purpose of cleaning up and protecting the graveyard from vandalism. Mrs. Woods became the first President of the organization, with Mrs. Oliver Vlahovich as Secretary-Treasurer and Alice Barclay as vice-President. Carl Rimbaugh was employed as their attorney.

Attorneys Cunningham, Parry and Holcomb were retained to petition the Superior Court of San Bernardino County to appoint Marie Wood, granddaughter to Antonio Jose Martinez; Mary N. Cerswell, great-granddaughter of Peter C. Peters; and Lucy Alvarado, granddaughter to Pablo Velarde, as trustees for the Agua Mansa Cemetery. Lucy Alvarado declined because of ill health and her husband David replaced her. The appointments were filed in the San Bernardino County Clerk's office on December 2, 1955. The County Surveyors' office records disclosed part of the graveyard belonged to a Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hendrix who subsequently gave a quickclaim deed to cemetery trustees for their portion of land.

The Friends of the Preservation did all they could to protect this historic burial ground until 1961 when it became impossible for them to continue. They were not only too old but their monetary resources had given out. They asked for help from the County Board of Supervisors, but were turned down. Meanwhile, between 1962 and 1965, vandals, grave robbers, and arsonists invaded and literally destroyed the burial grounds. The County Sheriff's department could not adequately partol the area. Staff members of the San Bernardino County Museum Association rescued some of the markers and headstones from various city police departments and temporarily stored them in the County Museum building.

In 1964 and 1965, the County Board of Supervisors were again petitioned to accept the Agua Mansa Cemetery site and to protect and preserve it as a pioneer memorial park. In 1966 and 1967, they awarded the responsibility of protecting Agua Mansa to the San Bernardino County Museum staff, along with awarding an annual budget of \$500 to accomplish same, but the graves continued to be desecrated. Finally, on September 16, 1968, the

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