



Application to Designate a Historic Resource as a  
**HISTORIC MONUMENT OR LANDMARK**

§17.52.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code sets forth a procedure for designating any historic resource in the City as a historic monument or landmark. 1) The process begins with a preliminary evaluation by staff to determine if the nominated property meets the applicable criteria and is eligible for designation. 2) If staff determines that the nominated property is eligible for designation, the nomination is scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. 3) The Historic Preservation Commission determines if the historic resource meets the criteria for designation as a historic monument or landmark. If the Commission finds that the nominated resource qualifies for designation, it forwards a recommendation on the designation to the City Council. 4) At a noticed public hearing, the Council then determines whether to approve or deny the request for designation.

**PART I. PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION**

1. Name of Property:	THE OLD HOUSE/SIERRA MADRE VILLA HOTEL	
2. Property Address:	1577 OLD HOUSE ROAD	
3. Date of Original Construction	1874-1878	
4. Architect / Builder:		
5. Present Owner: (Name)	MICHAEL AND MARCIA COPPESS	
(Address)	1577 OLD HOUSE ROAD	
	PASADENA	
(State/ZIP)	CALIFORNIA 91107	
(Phone/FAX)	626-791-8617 (A)	626-744-9620 (w) / 626-356-7976 (fax)
(E-mail)	michaelcoppess@sbcglobal.net	

**PART II. APPLICANT**

Applicant: (if not property owner)	
(Address)	
(State/ZIP)	
(Phone/FAX)	
(E-mail)	

Date ~~6-4-07~~ 10-1-07 Signature *Michael Coppess*

Case # 2007-00530

Date received: 10/2/07  
Planner: *[Signature]*



*Application to Designate a Historic Resource as a*  
**HISTORIC MONUMENT OR LANDMARK**

**PART III: TYPE OF DESIGNATION**

**PROPERTY TO BE DESIGNATED AS A:**

<b>HISTORIC MONUMENT</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>LANDMARK</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>A historic monument means any historic resource that is significant at a regional, state or national level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.</i>	<i>A landmark means any historic resource that is significant at a local level, and is an exemplary representation of a particular type of historic resource.</i>

**PART IV: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

Briefly describe the property proposed for designation, indicating whether the entire site or a portion of the site is the subject of the nomination (e.g., how many buildings on the site). A map may be used for the description. Please also submit recent photographs. Use continuation sheet if necessary.

Refer to continuation sheet, site plan and recent photographs.

SEE ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

**PART V: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ON SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPERTY.** With this application, please attach information that will assist staff with the preparation of a designation report. Books, photographs, articles, and other archival information will all be useful to document the significance of the historic resource.

Refer to bibliography, historical photographs, chronology, and other supporting information.



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## CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A HISTORIC MONUMENT

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the region, state or nation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, state or nation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. It is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or that is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the region, state or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, state-wide or national significance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history of the region, state or nation.

A historic monument designation may include significant public or semi-public interior spaces and features.

### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A HISTORIC LANDMARK

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the city.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant historic resource property type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder who is locally significant, or that possesses high artistic values that are locally significant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.

**Disclosure Pursuant to the  
City of Pasadena Taxpayer Protection Act  
Pasadena City Charter, Article XVII**

- I. Does the value of this application/project *have the potential* to exceed \$25,000?  Yes  No (Applicant *must* mark one)
- II. Is the application being made on behalf of a government entity?  Yes  No
- III. Is the application being made on behalf of a non-profit 501(c) organization?  Yes  No  
 If yes, please indicate the type of 501(c) organization:  501(c)(3)  501(c)(4)  501(c)(6)

Applicant's name: Michael and Marva Lopez Date of Application: 10-2-07

Owner's name: same Contact phone number: 626-791-5417 / 626-744-9622  
(For questions regarding this form)

Project Address: 1577 Old House Rd

Project Description: Landmark Application

- IV. Applicant and Property Owner must disclose all joint owners, trustees, directors, partners, officers and those with more than a 10% equity, participation or revenue interest in owner and/or project. If any of these are an organization/entity, include the name of the organization/entity and the first and last names of all parties of interest of that organization/entity. (List all parties below and use additional sheets as necessary, or provide all parties on an attachment) Please print legibly.  
 Have any additional sheets or an attachment been provided?  Yes  No

Names of Owner(s), Trustees, Directors, Partners, Officers of Owner/Project	Names of Owner(s), Trustees, Directors, Partners, Officers of Owner/Project (continued)	Those with more than a 10% equity, participation or revenue interest in Owner and/or project
<u>Marva and Michael Lopez</u>		

I hereby certify that I am the owner or designated agent and that the statements and answers contained herein, and the information attached, are in all respects true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Owner or Designated Agent: Michael Lopez Date: 10-9-07

*For Office Use Only*

Type of Application:  Variance (all types)  Adjustment Permit  Sign Exception  Temporary Use Permit  Expressive Use Permit  
 Conditional Use Permit (excluding Master Plan)  Master Plan Amendment  Planned Development  Other

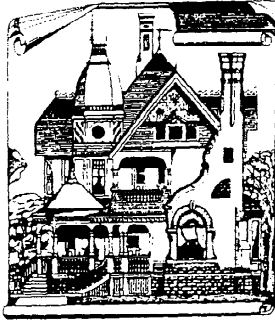
Assigned Planner: Jon Tanury PLN#: 2007-00530

Attached Address: \_\_\_\_\_  No Attached Address

Appealed:  Yes  No Appeal PLN# \_\_\_\_\_  Application Withdrawn

Final Decision:  Approved  Denied Decision Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Decision Maker: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Title, or Name of Commission/Committee)

Votes in favor (please print):  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**THE BUILDING  
BIOGRAPHER  
TIM GREGORY**

**ATTACHMENT B**

- ❖ Building Histories
- ❖ Cultural Resource Studies
- ❖ Historic Resources Surveys
- ❖ Local, State, and National Landmarking
- ❖ Historic Preservation and Archival Consulting

**1577 OLD HOUSE ROAD**

**PASADENA**

**Former Addresses:** 1527, 1556 and 1571 Old House Road

**Style:** Vernacular Farmhouse

**Years Completed:** ca. 1877—Laundry facility for the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel and Ranch which once occupied the site.  
ca. 1894—Ranch manager's cottage  
ca. 1945—above two buildings (and possibly some others) joined together and altered into a single residence designed to resemble an "antique farmhouse."

**Owners:** The Sierra Madre Villa Hotel, founded in 1877, was one of the Pasadena area's first resort hotels. William Porter Rhoades and his father-in-law artist William F. Cogswell had purchased 473 acres of the old Rancho Santa Anita from Lewis H. Bonestell in 1874. The new owners built a comfortable home for themselves, surrounding it with gardens and orchards. Just three years later, they transformed the property into the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel, adding seventy rooms and a long glass-enclosed veranda which took advantage of the property's marvelous views of the San Gabriel Valley. The hotel became a social center, with fine food and eminent clientele, including Ulysses S. Grant, Mark Hopkins, and Collis P. Huntington.

Tiring of the hotel business, Mr. Rhoades sold the property to his brother-in-law William G. Cogswell in 1886. In 1894, the old hotel, now occupying a 76.81-acre parcel, was sold to James Lyman of Chicago and his sister Mary Lyman of Connecticut. By then, fancier and more close-in hotels had been built in Pasadena, and the Sierra Madre Villa closed its doors. For a while it was rented out as a sanatorium, but even that use became too costly and it closed in 1916. By 1923, fire insurance had become so expensive that the Lymans decided to demolish the old hotel, leaving intact some outbuildings and the original Rhoades/Cogswell ranch house. A number of articles about the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel are attached.

In 1923, Thomas B. Wilson became the owner of the former hotel property. In 1927, he sold it to Mayme F. Hawkins (some sources say "Hoskins") whose husband Jerry cut down the old citrus

Tel/Fax: (626) 792-7465

E-mail: [timothygregory@earthlink.net](mailto:timothygregory@earthlink.net)

400 East California Boulevard, #3 ❖ Pasadena, California 91106-3763

groves and cleared the land, hoping to sell it off in five-acre parcels. This venture failed due to the Great Depression, and Mr. Wilson was forced to repossess around 1932. Two parcels were sold off, leaving the old hotel property at forty acres.

Alfred T. Murray and his wife Donna Evans Murray purchased the acreage in August 1945. They sold the old Rhoades/Cogswell house to Disney Studios who relocated it to Placerville for use as a movie set. It was later razed, but much of the gingerbread decoration survived to be placed on the buildings lining Main Street in Disneyland! The Murrays then set about creating a new home for themselves by combining several of the old hotel's remaining outbuildings, including the ranch manager's cottage and the hotel's laundry. They cut through a new access to their property from Sierra Madre Villa Avenue which they called Old House Road. (The sign on the masonry wall at the entrance to the road off Sierra Madre Villa Avenue is said to be a reproduction of Mrs. Murray's handwriting.) Retaining just 2.85 acres for themselves, Mr. and Mrs. Murray subdivided the rest of the property into lots and gave themselves the right to approve the design of all houses built on them.

Born in New Jersey in 1899, Mr. Murray had moved with his parents to the Pasadena area. In the mid-1920s, he took over the real estate and construction business that his father, Alfred Murray, had founded. (The senior Mr. Murray had built many residences throughout the San Gabriel Valley and was a pioneer in the development of apartment houses. He was also well-known for having founded the Passaic Foundation which later became the Boys' Clubs of America.) The younger Mr. Murray and his wife later moved to San Gabriel where they purchased the former residence of pioneer Leonard J. Rose (the founder of Sunnyslope Ranch and Rosemead). Their next home was in Palm Springs. There they bought several acres where they planned "a fabulous new development," according to the *Pasadena Star-News*. Mr. Murray died in Riverside County in 1981 at the age of 81. Donna Murray (1901-1995) was a native of Texas.

In the mid-1950s, Mr. and Mrs. Murray sold their Sierra Madre Villa home, including all of 1.19-acre lot 55 (345-by-162 feet), to Mary Virginia Robbins, who shared it with her husband James E. Robbins. Mr. Robbins was associated with the R. C. Lumber Company.

Charles H. and Jayne Heneveld were the next owners, in September 1960. Both Mr. and Mrs. Heneveld worked for the D. J. Feenstra real estate company. They sold their Old House Road property to Floyd T. Pedersen, a painter, and his wife Dorothy M. Pedersen in May 1963. At that time, the parcel was reduced to its present size of .64 acre. In January 1968, John F. and Patricia D. Welsh became the owners. Mr. Welsh was president of Cal-Draulics, Inc., a hydraulic engineering firm located at 144 Titley Avenue in Pasadena.

Paul A. and Marion J. Strauss purchased the property in March 1977. Title passed to Hugh W. and Ann G. Evans in July 1978. Just over a year later, in August 1979, Troy O. and Dorritt J. Hill became the owners. Mr. Hill assumed sole ownership in August 1982. In November 1982, Antonia K. Schade joined Mr. Hill on title.

**Building Permits:** The Hotel's laundry facilities, ranch manager's cottage and other outbuildings were built long before Los Angeles County began issuing building permits. (Sierra Madre Villa was part of the County's unincorporated area until 1952 when part of it was annexed by the City of Pasadena.) The remodeling of the older buildings into a house ca. 1945 was probably permitted, but the County's Building & Safety Division has not been able to find any surviving records.

A 9-by-21-foot addition was made to the northeast corner of the residence in 1950. In May 1952, a permit was issued for the construction of a swimming pool for \$3,400. Measuring approximately 18 by 64 feet, it would be of the inverted-dome type and would contain a marine light, ladder, and diving board.

A permit was issued in October 1953 by the City of Pasadena for \$4,000 in alterations. An addition was to be made to the west side of the house and a 10-by-14-foot extension built onto the northeast corner. A room, bathroom, closet, and porch were to be added. A fireplace and a new wood-shingled roof were part of the project. The Beauman Company of Pasadena was the contractor.

In May 1963, the City of Pasadena approved a lot-split, giving 1577 Old House Road a parcel of 33,000 square feet and a new house at the rear, 1581 Old House Road, approximately 20,000 square feet. Ingress to the new lot would be by-way-of a 20-foot wide strip of land from Old House Road.

A September 1964 permit for a new 22-by-24-foot garage costing \$1,600 was canceled. In August 1966, a permit was issued for the construction of a new three-horse stall and training ring. The owner would act as his own contractor for this \$450 job. A new oven and range-top were installed in the house in June 1973.

In April 1977, a 14-by-27-foot addition was built onto the north side of the house and a 9-by-11-foot space was added to the northwest corner. Costing \$28,000, this work would add a family room and bathroom to the house and would remove two bearing walls. At the same time, a new 125,000-BTU forced-air furnace and air-conditioning system were installed. Reese Construction of Glendora was the contractor.

Copies of some of these City permits are attached.

**Assessor's Records:** The building records for this property found in the files of the district office of the Los Angeles County Assessor go back only to August 10, 1954. On that date, the Assessor recorded a single 1 ½-story bungalow. It had a concrete foundation, walls of rustic shingles and wood siding over a wood frame, a gabled shingled roof with a boxed cornice, and exterior trim of wood. Heat was provided by a fireplace and two floor furnaces. There were twelve plumbing fixtures. The Assessor commented that one of the lavatories was in a "very old oak 'captain's

desk'." Interior finishes included plaster, putty, pine-board, paint, wallpaper, and plain woodwork. Floors were made of pine.

The Assessor estimated the square footage at 2,069. On the first floor were an entry hall, two living rooms, a dining room, two bedrooms, two dressing rooms, one and two-thirds bathrooms, and a kitchen. One of the living rooms had a used-brick fireplace with raised hearth; grooved and stained wide pine paneling; extensive built-in cabinets with louvered-shutter doors; and wide sliding glass doors to the porch. Louvered "cottage shutters" separated this room from the entry hall. The dining room had sliding glass-and-wood doors and "cottage shutter" doors in a built-in cabinet. The newer dressing room had two full-sized wardrobe closets and a built-in set of drawers between two smaller closets. The older dressing room had a built-in dressing table and two closets. The downstairs bedroom had louvered folding doors. The kitchen had rustic wood cabinets and a built-in oven, cooking-top, and dishwasher. The second floor of the house contained two bedrooms and a two-thirds bathroom. There were approximately 500 linear feet of 4-foot board fencing around the property.

In 1964, the Assessor updated the property record to include two sheds: one measuring nine by nineteen feet probably built in 1953 and another about ten feet square, probably built around 1933. Also entered into the record was an eight-by-fourteen-foot dressing room and wash house, probably constructed around 1950. All three buildings had concrete foundations and walls of wood siding. Both sheds had gabled shingled roofs.

The Pasadena City Assessor recorded the property on September 17, 1952, shortly after the area was annexed to the City. His description matches almost exactly that of the County Assessor.

Copies of the records of both City and County Assessors are attached.

(Note: The Pasadena City Assessor's Office ceased operations in 1974. Their square footage totals often exceeded those of the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, since they frequently included garages, terraces, patios, etc. in their computation. It is advisable to rely on the County Assessor's square footage figures since they are more up-to-date and consistent.)

**Note:** A map is attached drawn by Gregory McReynolds of the Villaloe Historical Society showing the "old house" and how close it is to the former location of the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel.

**Significance:** This property, although much altered, is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and on the California Register of Historic Resources because it is the last remaining building associated with the historically significant Sierra Madre Villa Hotel.



**Sources:**

Los Angeles County Assessor (South El Monte district office and Los Angeles archives)  
Los Angeles Public Library  
City of Pasadena, Planning Department (Design & Historic Preservation Section)  
Pasadena Public Library  
Pasadena Museum of History (Research Library and Archives)  
Villaloba Historical Society

Carew, Harold D. *History of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley*.  
Chicago, S. J. Clarke, 1930.

Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide*.  
Salt Lake City, Gibbs-Smith, 1994.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*.  
New York, Knopf, 1984.

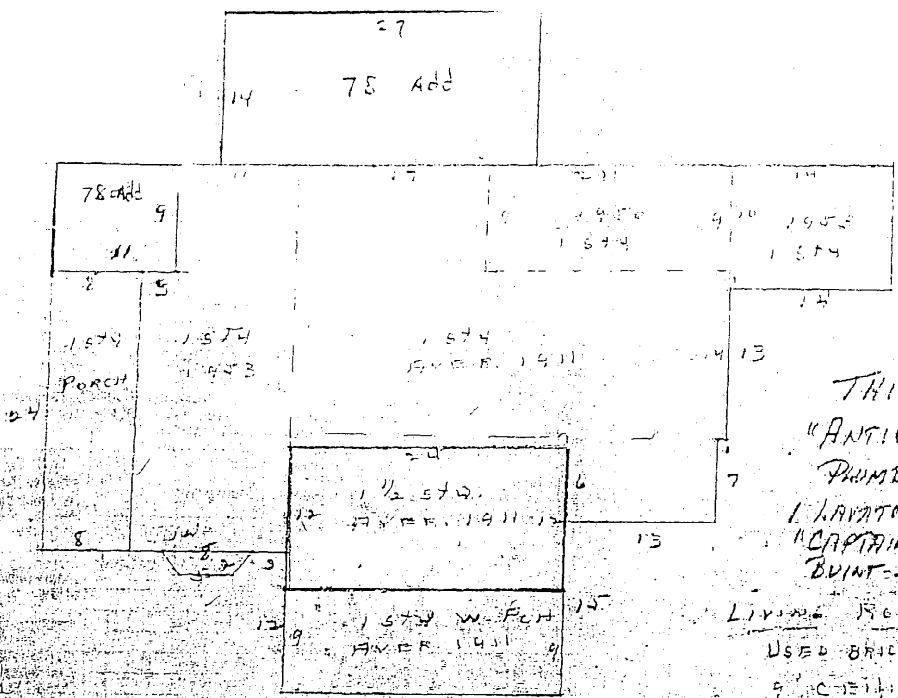
City Directories: 1952-

*Pasadena Star-News*: March 21, 1948; June 12, 1962

*Villaloba Historical Society Newsletter*: December 1992

Tim Gregory  
The Building Biographer  
400 East California Blvd., #3  
Pasadena, CA 91106  
Phone/Fax: 626-792-7465  
e-mail: [timothygregory@earthlink.net](mailto:timothygregory@earthlink.net)

*Copyright*  
August 2003



78 Adds  
 14 x 27 = 378  
 11 x 9 = 99  
 477  
 1865  
 TOTAL 2342

THIS HAS BEEN ALTERED TO AN  
 "ANTIQUE" FARM HOUSE  
 PLUMBING FIXTURES ARE VERY OLD,  
 1 LAVATORY (SMALL) IS IN AN OLD OAK  
 "CAPTAIN'S" DESK, HIS WIFE'S UP -  
 BUILT-IN CABINETS ARE OLD

LIVING ROOM

USED BRICK FIREPLACE - RAISED HEARTH  
 9' CEILING - DISHMASTER BURNING  
 STAINED  
 7' VERT. GROOVED 1/2" WIDE PINE W/VA  
 EXTENSIVE BUILT-IN CABINETS WITH  
 LOUVERED SHUTTER DOORS. TOP HALF OF  
 PARTITION BETWEEN ENTRY HALL IS  
 LOUVERED COTTAGE SHUTTERS. GLASS IN  
 W/ SLIDING DOORS TO PORCH.

1953  
 Adds

DINETTE: SLIDING GLASS IN W/ DOORS TO  
 PORCH. COTTAGE SHUTTER DOORS ON BUILT-IN  
 CABINET.

2/3 BATH (NO TUB), COMPARTMENTED.  
 1. STALL SHOWER WITH 6" TILE WALLS  
 AND GLASS DOOR.  
 2. TOILET. WARDROBE TYPE STEEL CLOSET  
DRESSING RM: 2 FULL SIZE WARDROBE  
 CLOSETS. BUILT-IN SET OF DRAWERS  
 BETWEEN 2 SMALLER CLOSETS

KITCHEN NOW HAS BUILT-IN COOKING TOP  
 AND OVEN. RUSTIC W/ DO. DISHMASTER.  
 NEW A.T. FLR.  
 OLDER DRESSING RM HAS BUILT-IN DRESSING  
 TABLE + 2 CLOSETS.  
 LOUVERED FOLDING DOORS IN 1ST FLR.  
 BEDRM AREA.

1953  
 Adds  
 8 x 24 = 192  
 9 x 24 = 216  
 408

1 x 1/2 x 24 = 3.6  
 1 x 4 x 4.9 = 19.6  
 1 x 10 x 1.4 = 14.0  
 1 x 24 x 1.4 = 33.6  
 1 x 8.75 x 2 = 17.5  
 1 x 14 x 3.8 = 53.2  
 1 x 1 x 24 = 24  
 1 x 7 x 4.3 = 30.1  
 1 x 12 x 2.9 = 34.8  
 1 x 1/2 x 9 x 2.4 = 10.8  
 2347  
 1865

2nd flr.  
 12 x 24 = 288 @ 2.46 = 679  
 2069

NO HLTS TO 2<sup>ND</sup> FLR AREA (1/2 STY)  
 WHICH IS NOT AS GOOD CONSTR AS  
 1<sup>ST</sup> FLR. (1 RM PAPERED PLASTERED  
 + PLY W/.)

FENCE: 4 FT Wood (2-6" Board + 1-10" ON W/). PER  
 APPR. 500 LIN. FT. AT 40 = 200



*Began*

## AND HOW IT GREW

The following passage from Ann Scheid's book, PASADENA: Crown of the Valley (Northridge: Windsor, 1986), describes how the Sierra Madre Villa became a world-renowned hotel:

*"The first real hotel in the area was Sierra Madre Villa which began as a large house. The land was purchased by William Porter Rhoades and his father-in-law, artist William F. Cogswell, in 1874. They built a comfortable house, planted the grounds in orchards and vineyards, and landscaped with rose gardens and ornamental trees.*

*The house remained a private home until 1877, when the James F. Crank family arrived from Denver, seeking a healthful climate for the ailing Mrs. Crank. The Cranks stayed with the Rhoades, and during this time, a 20-room addition with a long glass-enclosed veranda transformed the ranch house into a well-sledged hotel.*

*The hotel soon became an important social center, attracting guests from around the world. Famous for its hospitality, beautiful site, and eminent clientele, the hotel was also known for its fine foods and genial host, William Porter Rhoades. Activities for the guests*

*included horseback riding or driving through the surrounding countryside, hunting and fishing, and, in the evenings, dancing parties and musicales. Guests came for a week, for a month, or for the whole season, and their ranks included such names as Ulysses S. Grant, Collis P. Huntington, the Crocker and Mark Hopkins families from San Francisco, and tobacco millionaire Abbott Kinney. Kinney was so enchanted with the setting that he soon decided to purchase the mesa to the west which became his ranch, Kinneloa.*

*In the early 1880s, large excursion groups from Boston began arriving in Los Angeles. They made regular excursions out to the San Gabriel Valley, taking lunch at Sierra Madre Villa and then visiting Lucky Baldwin's ranch and winery, Rose's Sunny Slope, Shorb's winery and the San Gabriel Mission. This greatly increased business at the hotel and 50 more rooms were added. But the intimate home atmosphere was gone and for Mr. Rhoades who had reveled in socializing with his guests, the place had become too big.*



*The 210 foot long Sun Parlor ran the length of and linked together the hotel's three main buildings. It afforded a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean, Catalina Island, and sunsets unsullied by civilization.*

hotel, that the Lymans decided to tear it down, taking care to preserve the original ranch house of Cogswell and Rhoades.

A year later, the Lymans sold the remaining structures and ranch to Thomas B. Wilson.

In 1927, Thomas Wilson sold the property to Jerry Hoskins who cut down most of the orange and lemon trees, and cleared the land to be put on the market in 5-acre parcels. However, the Great Depression intervened, Hoskins defaulted on his mortgage, and the property was foreclosed upon and retained by the Wilsons.

Unable to develop the land for residential housing as Jerry Hoskins had envisioned, the Wilsons sold off two parcels in the late 1930's to Linus Pauling and to Riley Roberts.

The Wilsons then sold the remaining 40 acres in 1942 to Alfred T. Murray and his wife Donna. The original Rhoades ranch house was too big for the Murrays, so they sold it to Disney Studios which carted it off to Placerville to be used as a movie setting. After filming, the house's decorative gingerbread was removed and stored. The gingerbread was eventually installed on some of the turn-of-the-century buildings on Disneyland's Main Street in Anaheim.

The Murrays took the ranch manager's house and parts of other hotel structures, combined and remodeled them to become their home which they

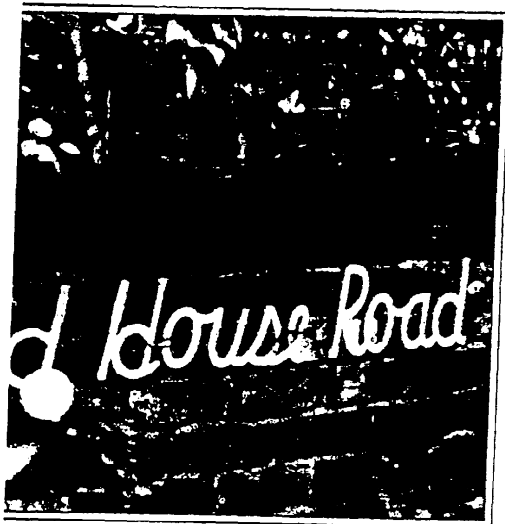
## AND THEN...

In 1886, Rhoades sold the hotel and its grounds to his brother-in-law William G. Cogswell who ran it until 1894 when he sold to James Lyman of Chicago and his sister Mary Lyman of Middlefield, Connecticut. By this time, other more fashionable hotels had been built in Pasadena, and the Sierra Madre Villa was no longer profitable.

The Lymans rented out the hotel as a sanitarium, and hired a manager, Sherman Hayman, to take care of the orange groves. By 1916, the Lymans decided that the upkeep of the large wooden frame building was too costly, and they did not offer a renewal of the lease to those operating the sanitarium. In 1923, the fire insurance became so expensive on the big wooden frame

named the Old House.

To reach the Old House conveniently, the Murrays cut a new trail leading directly from Sierra Madre Villa Avenue to the Old House, and they called the street they built Old House Road. On the corner of Old House Road stands an ornamental masonry wall bearing a sign of the name of the street.



The metal calligraphy recreates Donna Murray's handwriting.

After the Murrays sold off 10 acres to Everett Calvert in the mid 1940's they subdivided the remainder into lots. The Murrays retained the right to approve the architectural style of the houses that were being built on the lots. To provide water for their building sites, they deeded Sierra Madre Villa water rights to the City of Pasadena, and in exchange Pasadena annexed these lots into City of Pasadena boundaries and began to serve City of Pasadena water.

By the mid 1950's, most of the lots had been purchased, and the houses that you see today had been built.

## MAY HAMILTON'S STORY: Excerpts from Oral History Interviews

These excerpts were taken from recordings of conversations in 1992 between May Hamilton and Gregory McReynolds.

May Hamilton's family had ties to the history of the Sierra Madre Villa, the Kinneloa Ranch and the Hastings Ranch. Her grandfather, Michael McManus, was hired by Abbot Kinney to dig water runnels for his property, and we have handwritten diaries that McManus kept so he could bill Kinney for the labor and material expenses incurred. Michael's daughter was Elizabeth McManus who was May's mother.

Listening to May describe her life is like being in a wonderful time machine, seeing through her memory the way our neighborhood was in the early part of this century...

"I was born in 1902 in what we called the "Little House" which was one of the buildings at the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel.

My father, Sherman Hayman, had been the foreman of the Hastings Ranch, but he was offered a much better job of managing the ranch and citrus groves of the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel. Part of his salary was to be able to live on the property of the hotel, and that's where my parents were living when I was born.

We moved away from the Sierra Madre Villa to live in our own house in Lamanda Park in 1904, but my father continued to manage the Sierra Madre Villa Ranch, and I often went with him on his daily rounds.

After my father died, the owners (the Lymans) asked my mother, Elizabeth McManus Hayman, to continue managing the property. My mother was familiar with the problems of the Ranch... how to keep the water flowing, how to hire the workers when necessary to keep



Dorothy Hayman Bates (May Hamilton's sister) on the lawn in front of the sun parlor, c. 1917.

the trees producing, when to fumigate the fruit trees, how to hire additional workers to pick the oranges and lemons, how to negotiate with the citrus buyers and how to transport the fruit for shipment, and the thousand other details of running a major grove.

When I was about 13 years old, the Lymans stopped leasing to people who were running the Sierra Madre Villa Hotel as a sanitarium, and the hotel was standing vacant. They (the Lymans) wanted my mother to move back to the property where she was to continue to manage the Ranch, but could also keep an eye on the now vacant buildings.

So my mom, my sisters Dorothy, Marian and Katherine and I all move back to the place we had lived 13 years earlier.

It was spooky living there. We kids had the run of this big old place, 50 bedrooms and nobody there except us.

My sisters and I would scare ourselves by pretending that there were still crazy people living there who had not moved out with the rest of the sanitarium people. It was easy to imagine there could be somebody because the building was old and it made creaking and groaning sounds at night.

The fire insurance on the hotel cost more and more each year, and in 1923 Mr. Lyman had

# Time All but Erases Famed Hostelry Snuggled in Hills



**LAST VESTIGE**—Miss Rhoades and Mrs. Diem ascend porch of sole remaining structure of old Sierra Madre Villa. This building, nestling under giant pepper tree, was villa's laundry house recently modernized with lumber from Chinese laborers' dormitory.

Times photos by Maxine Hoama





Anita Rhoades and Sarah Fiem at the Murray home, February 1953  
From the collection of Joyce and George Wenger



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