



Irvine Ranch Historic Park

PARK HOURS: SEE OCPARKS.COM/IRVINERANCH
OC PARKS OFFICE: MON. – FRI. 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

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HISTORIC
PARK

Irvine Ranch Historic Park represents one of the most historically significant eras in our county. Its origins can be traced back to James Irvine I and his partners. The land where the park is located eventually became the second-generation home of the Irvine family and the headquarters of the Irvine Ranch, "one of the greatest cultivated farms in the world," according to the 1910 Los Angeles Times. Today, it is the headquarters of OC Parks and the Katie Wheeler Library, and stands as a reminder of the Irvine family's unique and historic contributions to Orange County.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF RANCHING.



James Irvine II

James Irvine I died in 1886, and in 1892, James Irvine II came into full possession of the ranch. One year later, he incorporated it into the Irvine Company.

Between 1886 and 1892, however, the properties were supervised by James' older brother George and a group of trustees. George Irvine made a number of improvements to the property in his short time managing the Irvine Ranch including converting large tracts of land to drought-efficient dry farming.

Under James Irvine II's supervision, the ranch grew significantly and transformed from a cattle and sheep ranch into a successful, multifunctional ranch. It became a leading producer of beans, barley, sugar beets and oranges.

LIVING ON THE RANCH.

Irvine Ranch's remaining buildings reflect the agricultural company's labor hierarchy. Largest was the 30-room **Irvine family residence**, built in 1876 and enlarged in 1892, designed to have views of the ranch's extensive orchards. A reproduction of the home was built in 2008 and houses a public library today.

Second in size is the eight-room **Krauss House** built for the ranch superintendent from 1893 to 1915.

The homes of **Foreman Row** were built to house supervisory foreman and their families on the ranch between 1906 and 1935. Irvine preferred to promote from within, rewarding longtime laborers.

The **Bunkhouse** housed unmarried laborers at the ranch. Originally built as a mule corral, the building was converted to housing in 1917. Up to 50 men (two or three per room) lived in the bunkhouse at one time.

All workers would eat in the **Mess Hall** which had a kitchen, walk-in cooler and two dining rooms (one for workers and one for foreman). Between 1906 to 1976, more than 2 million meals were served in this building.



A BRIEF HISTORY.

The land that became the Irvine Ranch was originally made up of three large Spanish/Mexican grants: Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana and Rancho Lomas de Santiago.

In the mid-1860s, Rancho San Joaquin was acquired by four prosperous sheep ranchers: Benjamin and Thomas Flint, Llewellyn Bixby and James Irvine. In 1868, they later acquired Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana and then Rancho Lomas de Santiago.

In the late 1870s, James Irvine became the sole owner by acquiring his partners' interests for \$150,000. His 109,000-acre ranch stretched 23 miles from the Santa Ana River to the Pacific Ocean.



WORKING ON THE RANCH.

The Red Barn was originally constructed around 1900. Its first purpose was to house mules, but after World War I, mules were gradually phased out in favor of machinery. The barn was then used to store grain and equipment.

The Agricultural Headquarters was first built in 1929. Following several remodeling projects in 1959, it nearly doubled in size. The Irvine Company enlarged the office building to accommodate a real estate and planning division, which was instrumental in developing the community of Irvine and University of California, Irvine.



THE RANCH BECOMES A PARK.

In 1996, the Irvine Company donated the land to the County of Orange and Irvine Ranch Historic Park was established.

Today, Irvine Ranch Historic Park is a 16.5-acre historical park that is open to the public. The park retains 24 original ranch structures that represent the rich agricultural history of Orange County and, specifically, the Irvine Ranch. In addition, it features OC Parks Headquarters and the Katie Wheeler Library – a reproduction of the Irvine family home.



Bunkhouse, 1917



OC Parks offices and original
Agricultural Headquarters, 1929



Katie Wheeler Library, 2008



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THE GROUNDS ARE OPEN DAILY FOR SELF-GUIDED TOURS DURING PARK HOURS. BUILDINGS ARE NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
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OC Parks has been entrusted with the care and protection of this park. Help us preserve our county's natural and cultural resources for your and your fellow guests' future enjoyment. Please check with your Park Ranger for this park's specific rules, or see them online at www.ocparks.com.