

# Los Fundadores

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## **Rancho Tularcitos**

Submitted by Roger Rehm

(Reprint from Volume 16 issue 4 - 2004)

Ygnacio Higuera came to "California" with the fabled Anza Party. Ygnacio was married along the way to Maria Bojorquez who was traveling with her family. He later became a majordomo of the Pueblo de San Jose and was tragically killed by Indians in 1805 while accompanying a Mission Priest on a trek into the wilderness.

Jose Loreto Higuera, Ygnacio's son, was issued one of the last of Spain's royal land grants. Rancho Tularcitos, 4,394 acres, in what is now Milpitas,

Don Jose built a large rectangular adobe, which later would shel-

ter his nineteen children from three marriages.

Don Jose died at the age of sixty seven, as the result of a fatal fall from his spirited. His eldest son Don Valentin became the patriarch of the large family.

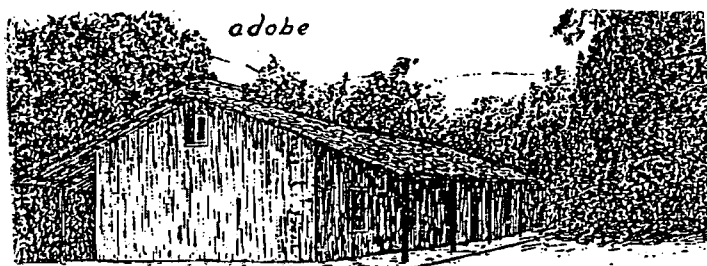
His daughter Maria married Nicolas Chavarria a Chilean, and she was given a lavish dowry of land.

The land slowly began to disappear. Actually, a major portion was sold to a Frenchman named Columbert.

By 1870 when patent was issued by the United States government, half of Rancho Tularcitos was already gone. In 1947 the remains of the last of the wedding dowry was sold for a pittance..

The Los Tularcitos adobe, now restored is a part of a city park, and can be rented for special events.

*The José Loreto Higuera*



*Victoria Park Road*

**H.I. Historic Museum**  
**1509 Warburton Avenue**  
**Santa Clara, Ca 95050**

*Rancho Tularcitos, Santa Clara County*  
 SUBMITTED BY ROGER REHM

The Historic museum is open Sundays, except holiday weekends. Genealogy assistance is available on the first Sunday of the month.

**October 7**  
 Historic Museum/  
 Genealogy Room Open  
 Open 1:00 am-4:00pm

**November 4**

**Open House/ Coffee Social**  
**Bring your albums/  
 genealogy for sharing**

**Historic Museum/  
 Genealogy Room Open**  
 1:00 am-4:00pm

**Historic Museum Closed-**  
**Nov. 25 -Dec. 30**

**Open January 13**  
**for Genealogical Research**

## DON SECUNDINO ROBLES, AN OLD SANTA CLARA COUNTY SETTLER

By Helen B. Collins

The tall, blue-eyed Spaniard, Secundino Robles, was born July 1, 1811 in the Villa of Branciforte, Alta California. He was the ninth of fifteen children born to Jose Antonio Robles and Gertrudis Merlopes. Little is known about his childhood, but we do know that during this time he learned to be a ranchero and to ride horses, as well as, or better than any vaquero could. Secundino was fun loving but not as wild as his brothers Nicolas, Avelino, Flugencio and Teodoro, and lived the more traditional life of a Spanish Don. By 1843, he was married to Maria Antonia Garcia and employed as the Majordomo (foreman) of Mission Santa Clara. At this time, Secundino was joined by his brother, Teodoro who left Santa Cruz after the citizens there grew tired of his wild ways. Old settlers in the area remembered seeing Secundino conversing with Teodoro at his home near El Camino Real or capably driving a span of spirited horses over the country roads. In an area where excellent horsemanship was one of the main attractions in life, he was said to be the finest rider in the Santa Clara Valley. Early settlers remembered seeing him pick up a row of silver dollars placed six feet apart on the ground while riding at a full gallop. The old timers liked to talk about the size of Don Secundino and Donna Maria Antonio Robles' family. There were twenty-nine children born between 1830 and 1860. Of these children, only nine lived to adulthood. Some died as toddlers, and others died as infants.

In 1824 Secundino and his brother, Teodoro Robles followed the Indians to a place in the Santa Cruz Mountains where they found a strange pigment that the Indians used to paint their faces and bodies red. In that year an attempt was made by the Robles brothers and Don Antonio Sunol to find silver or gold in the deposit. The small excavation was called La Mina Santa Clara and later was part of the village of New Almaden. Since there was no gold or silver, the Robles brothers and Sunol did not feel the mine was worth much. Three years later Secundino showed a sample of the ore to Andres Castellero, who had a vast knowledge of mining operations. When Castellero was taken to the mine, he immediately identified the ore as cinnabar, and he was convinced that it was rich in quick silver. Without delay, he wrote out a claim for mineral rights according to Mexican mining laws. In November of 1845, Castellero formed a company to work the mine and divided it into twenty-four shares; giving four shares to the Robles brothers, four to the padre at Mission Santa Clara, four to Jose Castro and kept twelve shares for himself. He hired William Chard, an American, who was married to Maria Estefana Robles, to extract the mercury from the ore.

In 1846 the American conquest of California interrupted the operations at the Almaden mine. Secundino Robles joined in with Jose Castro's force at the Battle of Santa Clara. He commanded a troop of Mexican Cavalry, and during a skirmish, was taken prisoner by the American forces. Secundino deliberately broke his sword and surrendered it to his captors. Castro retreated southward and remained for a short time with a roving band of Californians. He eventually went to Mexico to escape the Americans and while he was there, he convinced James Alexander Forbes, a native of Scotland and a naturalized Mexican citizen, to buy his four shares. Forbes soon realized the value of the mine and decided to purchase all the shares he could get by convincing the holders that the mine was probably worth very little. It was at this time, that Secundino and Teodoro sold their four shares for \$3,800, a mere pittance considering the fact that the discovery of gold at Coloma in 1848 made a tremendous increase in the demand for quicksilver. New Almaden became the most famous and one of the most productive quicksilver mines in the world.

On September 10, 1847, Secundino and his brother Teodoro bought the Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito from Jose Pena for \$3,000. The acreage encompassed most of today's South Palo Alto, and Secundino affectionately called it Santa Rita Rancho after his daughter Maria Rita Robles. Jose Peña had built an adobe house and several out buildings on the Rancho, and Secundino immediately hired workmen to add rooms onto the adobe house for his growing family. He also added a dancing floor, open to the sky, on the flat roof of the adobe. The 1850's were good years for Secundino and his family. There were many head of cattle wondering over the land, and hundreds of horses. The rancho became a stage station between San Francisco and San

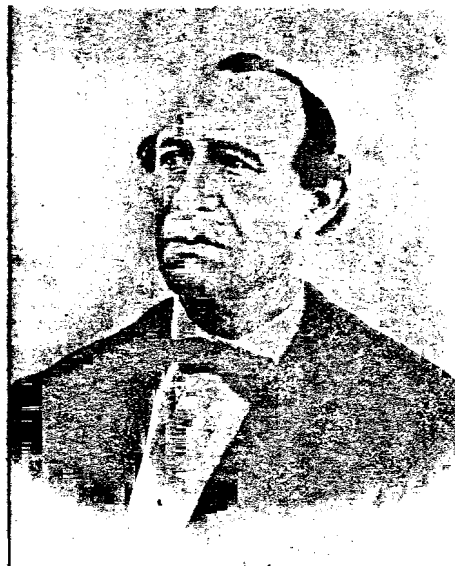
Jose, and the Robles family became known for their hospitality. Three attractions drew visitors to the rancho; the liquid refreshments so genially served by the host, the bear and bullfights held in the arena in front of the adobe house, and the wild game conveniently located near the rancho. There were bears, mountain lions and deer in the forested hills and quail, ducks, geese and snipe in the lowlands near by. It became a rendezvous of hunters who gladly shared the Robles' hospitality. There were almost monthly feasts, fandangos and barbecues. Guests would feast and dance from Sunday morning until the following Saturday night. The men would be up at dawn to ride Don Secundino's fine horses, inspect herds, hunt grizzlies and show their skill at galloping over the fields; not bothering to slow down for gopher holes, ditches, fences or gulches. The women would sew and talk while tending their small children and babies. At night everyone would dance.

In 1852 Secundino and Teodoro filed a petition claiming confirmation of their land title. It was appealed to the District court and confirmed by the Supreme Court in 1859. General E. F. Beale signed the patent for 8,418 acres. Alas the time came when there was little money, and Secundino would trade land for a few dollars. Not satisfied with the entertainment that he had at home, Don Secundino was also an ardent patron of traveling circuses. On one occasion, finding himself short of cash, he borrowed \$75 so that he and his family might attend a circus in San Jose. For the sum of \$75 he gave 50.6 acres of his property in repayment. On another occasion Secundino traded 500 acres of his rancho to Jeremiah Clarke for a span of horses and a buggy. Robles was happy with the deal until an axle broke on the first trip out. By 1859 much of the Robles' land had been sold to meet the combined expenses of legal fees, Teodoro's gambling debts and Secundino's overly generous hospitality, as well as, having the considerable expense in raising so many children. Eventually Don Secundino grew old, and he spent his afternoons sitting in the shade of his grape arbor while a grandchild read the newspaper to him. His land and access to money was largely gone, but he could still offer a visitor a glass of wine. At that time, it was said that he had more friends than anyone in California. He died January 10, 1890 as a ward of Santa Clara County. His wife, Maria Antonia, survived him for several years, still continuing the well-known Robles' hospitality. Maria Antonia Garcia de Robles died on January 6, 1897.

Sources: *The History of the Robles Family in California*, Phillip D. Tollner, 1957  
*Historic Spots in California*, Mildred B. Hoover and Hero E. and Ethel G. Rensch  
*History of Palo Alto, The Early Years*, Pamela Gullard and Nancy Lund  
Palo Alto Historical Association, Photographs



*Maria Antonia Garcia Robles*



*Secundino Robles*

## HIGUERA

Ignacio Anastacio Higuera was born in Sinaloa, Nueva Espana (Mexico), in 1755. He came to Alta California in 1775, with the expedition under command of Capt. Juan Bautista de Anza, with the Colonists. He traveled with the Bojorquez family, the father Jose Ramon Bojorquez his wife, Francisca Romero and their three daughters, Maria Antoina, aged 15, Maria Macaela, aged 13; Maria Gertrudis Bojorquez, aged 12. Ignacio married Maria Macaela on October 26, 1775 in the Mission San Javier del Bac, in a double wedding ceremony, with Maria Antonia marrying Tiburcio Vasquez. Maria Gertrudis married Jose Sinova, February 11, 1777 at Mission Dolores.

As Ignacio Higuera was a soldier, they lived at the Presidio de San Francisco (Yerba Buena), with the rest of the soldiers. Their first child was baptized September 8, 1778 in Mission Dolores. He was, 1. Jose Loreto Higuera (later-grantee-Tularcitos Rancho, Hacienda, Milpitas) Their second child, 2. Maria Antonia was baptized on July 13, 1782, Mission Dolores. Maria Maraela Higuera y Bojorquez died on Sept. 16, 1794; is buried at the Mission Cemetery. January 28, 1795 Ignacio married(2) Maria Soledad, a widow. Later on they moved to San Jose where he died in 1805. They had no children.

Jose Loreto Higuera married (1) Maria Pilar Sanchez, the daughter of Jose Antonio Sanchez and Maria Dolores Morales, on June 15, 1794 at Mission Dolores. Both were sixteen years old. They had five children:

1. Maria Antonia de Gracia Higuera .Bap. 10/20/1796
2. Francisco Fulgencio Higuera, Bap.n01/17/1799
3. Maria Miceala de Dolorés Higuera, Bap. 05/11/1801
4. Maria Rita Susana Higuera, Bap. 05/25/1804
5. Valentin Higuera, Bap 10/18/1809

On June 8, 1811, Maria Pilar Sanchez, wife of Jose Loreto Higuera died, and she was buried in Mission Dolores Cemetery.

In 1813, at Mission Dolores, Jose Loreto Higuera, 35 years old, widower, married (2) Ramona Bernal, 19 years old. She was the daughter of Francisco Bernal, and Petrona Gutierrez.. They had three children:

6. Mariano de la Expetacion Higuera, Bap. 12/17/1813
7. Josefa Higuera, Bap. 10/14/1815
8. Maria Encarnacion, Bap. 02/23/1818

On December 28, 1831, Ramona Bernal wife of Jose Loreto Higuera died.

On July 11, 1832 Jose Loreto Higuera, widower, and now 54 years old, married (3) Ramona Garcia, 20 years old, the daughter of Anselmo Garcia and Juana Rubio.

Their children were:

9. Florencio Higuera, Bap. 1836
10. Miguel Higuera, Bap. 1837

11. Maria Rita Higuera, Bap. 10/11/1840
12. Maria del Refugio Higuera, Bap. 07/22/1842
13. Maria Vincenta Agustina Higuera, Bap. 02/22/1844
14. Maria Reguio Petronila Higuera, Born abt. 1823;  
Bap. In 1833, Hija adoptive, India de Rancho Higuera.

On October 4, 1821, Rancho Los Turlacitos was granted to Jose Loreto Higuera by Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola. This grant was renewed on February 18, 1839 by Governor Juan bautista Alvarado a patent for 4,392.35 acres was issued by the United States government to the heirs on July 6, 1870.

Jose Loreto Higuera died in 1846, during the American Occupation of Alta California. He was aged 68. Ramona Higuera y Garcia his third wife was 34 years old at the time and had six minor children. Mariano de la Expetacion his son from marriage two, was appointed guardian of the six minor children., in his will. He was aged 33. His heirs,  
( from marriages one & two) each received 133 cattle, 88 vines, and ten fruit trees.

Re: Bancroft Library

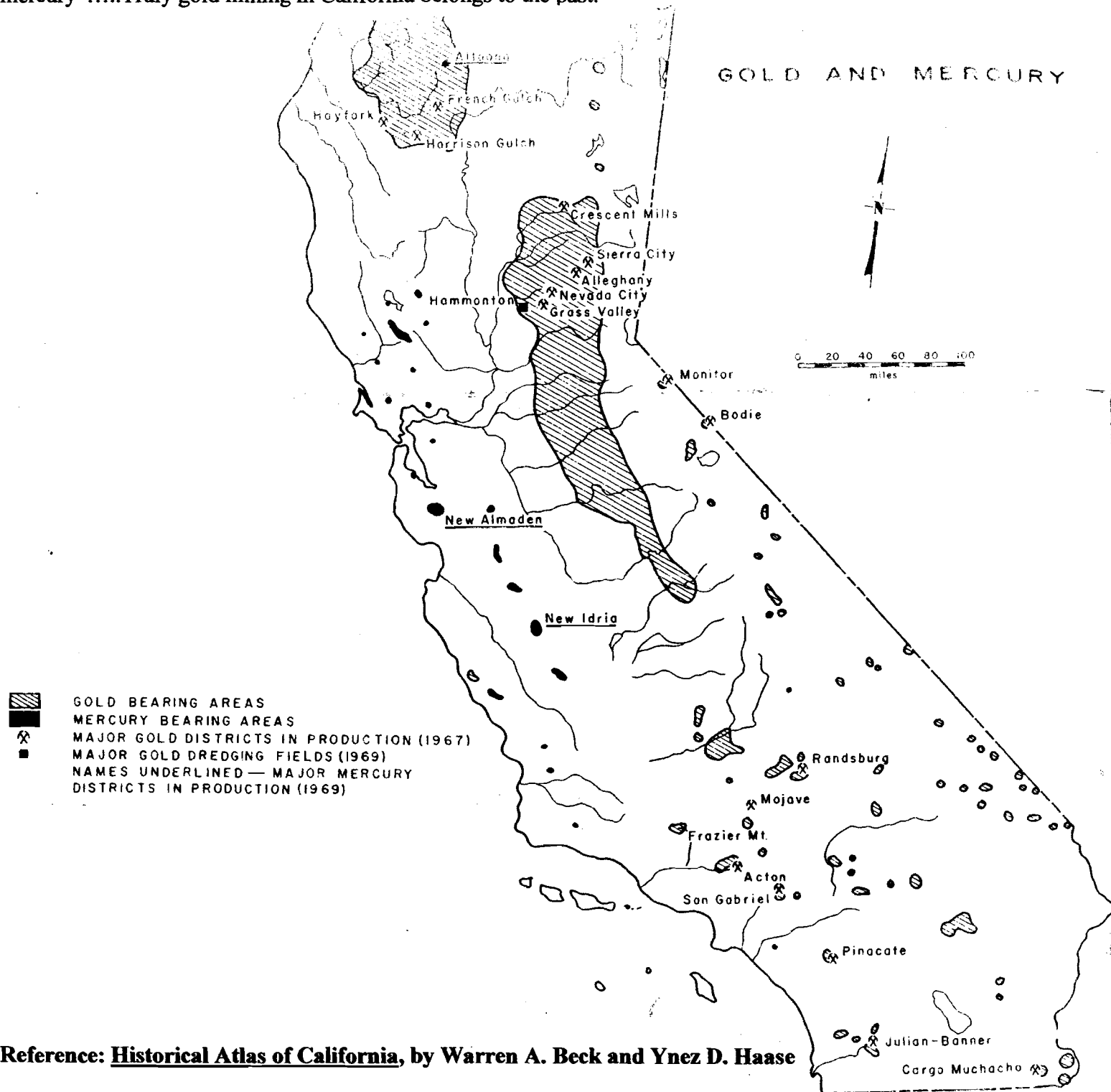
Editors Note: California Rancho Cooking, By Jacqueline Higuera Mc Mahan, states, "Don Valentin, became the patriarch of the large family."....."The least of his troubles were his twelve children and the eighteen offspring of his father, the virile Don Jose Loreto, everyone required a piece of the land."

**The original adobe of Jose Loreto Higuera with the second floor addition**



# GOLD & MERCURY

“Mercury, the silver- colored liquid metal commonly know as quicksilver, has many industrial uses today. However it was first sought because it was indispensable in the amalgam processing of gold and silver ore. California produces about 85% of the United States production. The New Almaden mine was. the state’s leading producer. Indians are believed to have worked the mine, but it was first discovered by white men in 1824 and began production in 1846. The New Idria mine, which began operation in 1853, wass second in importance. As gold and silver production expanded into the nineteenth century there was increased demands for mercury”.....Truly gold mining in California belongs to the past.



Reference: Historical Atlas of California, by Warren A. Beck and Ynez D. Haase

**HERITAGE CALENDAR** *Submitted by Mike Ford Los Californianos***OCTOBER**

6<sup>th</sup> **Mission Dolores annual parish fiesta**  
 speakers Norm Kidder & Jan Southways  
 "Building the New Tule House"  
[www.missiondolores.org](http://www.missiondolores.org) or [chochenyo@aol.com](mailto:chochenyo@aol.com)

7<sup>th</sup> **Soledad Mission Founding Celebration**  
 Bar - B - Q (831) 678-2586

**Viva la Familia Fiesta** at El Pueblo de Los Angeles

26-28<sup>th</sup> **Los Californianos meeting in San Diego**  
 Mira Mesa Conference Center:  
 Holiday Inn Express 9888 Mira Mesa Blvd  
 \$89 + tax for two-room suite/comp breakfast  
 Benita/George Gray [gray850@aol.com](mailto:gray850@aol.com) (858) 538-3027  
 Saturday tours: Rancho Penasquitos and  
 Cabrillo lighthouse & museum  
 Demonstration: tamale making  
 Dinner = Mexican buffet  
 Speaker Prof Richard Carrico of San Diego State  
 "Native Americans & the California Rancho Era"  
 Sunday brunch speaker Lynne Christensen,  
 San Diego County Parks & Rec Historian  
 "Adobes & other Historic Sites in San Diego County"

**NOVEMBER**

**San Jose Founders Day**  
 Peralta Adobe  
[www.historysanjose.org](http://www.historysanjose.org)

**DECEMBER**

**Monterey Christmas in the Adobes**

**San Diego Old Town Christmas**

**Battle of San Pasqual commemoration**  
 At San Pasqual SHP in Escondido  
 (760) 724-1695 or (858) 459-7759

**La Hacienda Holiday** at Rancho Buena Vista Adobe,  
 Vista. (760) 639-6164 or [www.cityofvista.com](http://www.cityofvista.com)