



Long Beach's Los Cerritos (Images of America)

Geraldine Knatz

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Evolving from a 27,000-acre rancho, to a colony of farmers, and then to a neighborhood subdivision, Long Beach's Los Cerritos is the story of a fiercely independent community established prior to William Willmore's vision of a city of Long Beach took hold. Life centered around the historic Rancho Los Cerritos throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries as John Temple's cattle ranching was replaced by Jotham Bixby's sheep ranching and tenant farming operations. Jotham Bixby sold off land for small farms to create the Cerritos Colony, and further subdivided land to create the Los Cerritos neighborhood. Invaded by oil drilling rigs after the discovery of oil in nearby Signal Hill, fires and noise caused the residents to flee. Los Cerritos declined but rebounded in the 1930s, aided by the presence of the Virginia County Club, stately homes designed by world-renowned architects, and the restoration of the historic rancho adobe by the Bixby family.



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