

# SUMMIT LIFE



VOLUME 20

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**NOT TO WORRY; NEW HOUSING TRACT WON'T OVERCROWD AREA**

**Bulldozer begins to level 373-acre construction site at corner of Valley Circle and Roscoe Boulevards. Only 63 acres will be used for new home development.**

*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo*



# RESIDENTIAL SALES COULD BEGIN AS EARLY AS 2016

## INGRESS, EGRESS IMPROVEMENTS ARE SCHEDULED FOR STREETS ADJOINING SITE



Overview shows large swath of land already cleared by Pulte Homes for housing site development. Photo looks west from Valley Circle Boulevard. Most of site will be deeded back to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.

*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*

**"S**ay it ain't so," said Summit residents back in 2004 when they learned that almost 400 acres of prime undeveloped land at the corner of Valley Circle and Roscoe Boulevards in West Hills could become a massive housing development that threatened to triple area traffic flow and turn their daily commute into a nightmare.

Well, it ain't so. The Pulte Group, the nation's largest home developer, will build 143 homes and only 143 homes on the 373-acre site. That's 60 fewer homes than those presently sited at the Summit. There will be no

second or third construction phase. Instead, the remaining 310 acres will be deeded back to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to ensure that the natural habitat will be preserved in perpetuity, according to Darren Warren, vice president of Pulte's Southern California Division.

Site preparation began last month, and the completed new community of one and two-level single-family homes termed "Sterling at West Hills" is expected to begin residential sales in early 2016. To smooth neighborhood ingress and egress,

the company plans improvements on Valley Circle Boulevard, from the intersection of Roscoe to Jensen Drive, Mr. Warren noted.

Sterling at West Hills is not your father's tract development, as someone famously said about a new, improved automobile. It took Pulte ten years to weave its way through a host of new environmental regulations before it could reach the developmental phase. All City and regulatory environmental permits have been obtained. In addition, full-time biological and archaeological monitoring is in place to aid tree





Sandbags line roadway at Valley Circle Boulevard marking eastern limit of new housing tract.  
*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*

preservation and replanting, archaeological and Native American resource identification and protection, and riparian restoration.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Native American Heritage Commission also have approved other regulatory permits and mitigation plans central to the Pulte development.

While City permits involve the removal of trees and non-native species, Pulte will ultimately plant and maintain more than 550 new trees on the site. In addition, 11 acres of the 63-acre residential development that includes native oak and chaparral habitat will be left untouched and preserved as open space.

To get on Pulte's community interest list, call (866) 804-1555. ❖



Intersection of Roscoe and Valley Circle Boulevards mark entrance to the Pulte home site, which will extend west from Roscoe into the Santa Susana hillside and North along Valley Circle to Jensen Drive.  
*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*



# CHATSWORTH THERAPIST USES HORSES TO CURE WHAT AILS YOU

## DR. SUSAN SWIM PRACTICES A FORM OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY TERMED EQUINE HEALING

**O**n Baden Drive in Chatsworth, about a mile and a half from the Summit, there's a ranch where you can meet and be gently greeted by a pair of thousand pound dogs.

That's what Dr. Susan Swim calls two of her horses: Jack, 24, a thoroughbred jumper, and Maggie, 26, a quarter horse. Anyone visiting the ranch in Dr. Susan's company is a member of Susan's herd or family as far as the two animals are concerned, and by extension, a member of their own family. Instead of greeting you with a canine tail wag, they'll give you a loving nuzzle or two, and maybe even a whinny.

As a single parent, Susan learned how to ride horses two decades ago to better bond with her young daughter Rose. The PhD therapist couldn't have known at the time she purchased the two young horses – Jack at 2 ½ years of age and Maggie at 10 - that they would later become key players in a highly effective form of humanistic psychotherapy termed Equine Healing. "Being formidable and yet gentle makes Jack and Maggie intensely lovable healers. They're gentle giants, and their ability to connect with our clients is paramount in the healing that occurs at our Now I See A Person Institute (NISAPI)," Susan explains.

Launched by Susan in 2008, NISAPI is a nonprofit, Chatsworth-based mental health and substance abuse agency that uses what the doctor terms a collaborative recovery model of community engagement. It employs horses as a medium for therapeutic conversations that inspire hope and transformation in clients viewed traditionally as resistant and unchangeable.

One of Susan's clients, referred by a colleague in Finland, suffered from schizophrenia and couldn't talk when he arrived at the Chatsworth ranch.



No! it's not a thousand pound dog. It's Maggie (left), a 26-year-old quarter horse. She and Jack the Jumper, 24, (right), were purchased years ago by Dr. Susan Swim (center) to horseback ride with her young daughter. Now the animals are a medium for therapeutic conversations that inspire hope and transformation in clients viewed traditionally as resistant and unchangeable.

*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*



**MEET OLIVIA:** The young student has been in therapy with Dr. Swim since last April. “The horses are magical,” she explains.

*Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*

He was placed on Maggie and told to bend forward and hug the horse. His face was covered with tears when he finally released the animal and sat back up. He began talking again and eventually went back to his job. Since that time, Susan has experienced a 98 percent recovery rate with clients through this form of collaborative recovery.

“Our horses give therapy a new legitimacy,” Susan explains. “Dressed in jeans, hanging out at a stable or corral, we’re low key and engage with our clients in a manner that produces safe and nurturing conversations. Client symptoms and life

challenges present naturally without forced prompting during the course of this conversational ebb and flow. We encourage clients to stay with us as long as they want and come back to visit us at any time. Being a non-profit, our only goal is the welfare of those who seek our help.”

Susan earned a Master’s degree as a therapist in 1983 and her doctorate 20-years later from Saybrook University, Oakland. She has spent most of her career dedicated to the field of marriage and family therapy, teaching students to become proficient therapists and providing innovative theories and research on how clients

viewed as unchangeable can again become whole.

Suffering loss, she believes, is the cause of most mental illness. Making life better for those who suffer loss by being nurturing, but none-judgmental and non-demanding is what good therapists and good horses do best. Those interested in seeking therapeutic help or in donating to rebuild lives through NISIPI can call Dr. Swim directly at 626-487-9305 or by emailing [Swiminc@aol.com](mailto:Swiminc@aol.com). ❖

**PLEASE HELP REBUILD LIVES BY DONATING  
TO NISIPI. EMAIL [SWIMINC@AOL.COM](mailto:SWIMINC@AOL.COM)**



# HISTORY FOUND AND LOST

## CHUMASH INDIAN ODON CHIHUYA ONCE RANCHED THE LAND THAT BECAME THE SUMMIT

*From the Chatsworth  
Historical Society  
Edited by Marci Wormser*

**I**t's impossible to start a history of Chatsworth Lake Manor and the surrounding Santa Susana mountain range without mentioning the area's founding family and its descendants that first lived on the land hundreds of years ago.

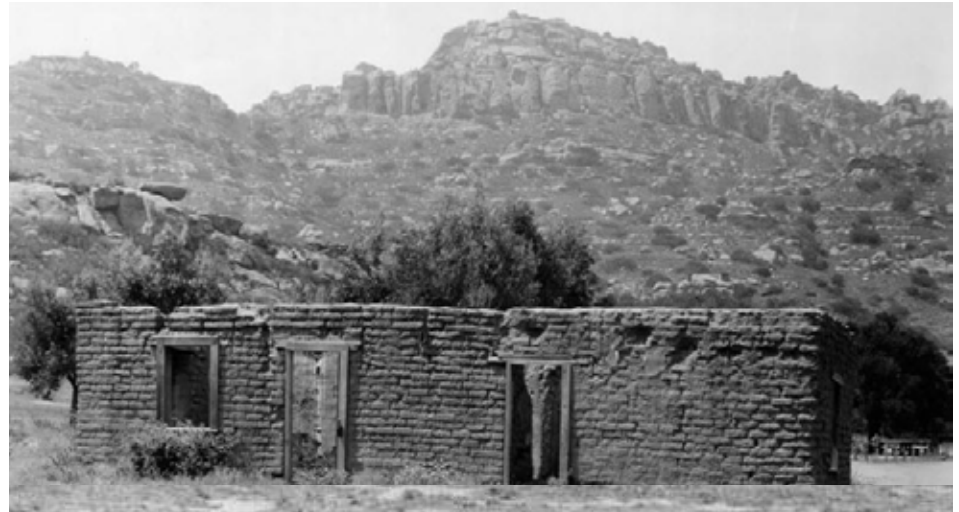
At the time of Spanish discovery, the Chumash Indians, who were known as "bead makers and seashell people," inhabited the Ventura coastal areas, stretching to the eastern Simi hills, which are now the Chatsworth Lake Manor area.

Specifically, it was one of those Indians, Odon Chihuya, who ranched the land grant of Ranch El Escorpion, and areas north to Chatsworth Lake Manor. After American rule, his granddaughter homesteaded the 148 acres of land that became Chatsworth Lake Manor.

Odon's story began in 1797, when he was born in what is now Malibu. Odon, like many others of the Chumash Tribe, was taken to work at the San Fernando Mission. The Mission was "staffed" primarily with people from the three Native tribes that called the San Fernando Valley home. The other tribes were the Tataviam and the Tongva.

Odon lived at the Mission until 1839, when he received his Decree of Emancipation at age 42. After leaving the Mission, Odon and his family moved to the Rancho El Escorpion property at the mouth of Bell Canyon. The property was the site of the Chumash village known as Huwam.

Odon and his wife, Eusabia, had four children, including Maria Delores. In 1845, Odon, his son-in-law, Urbano, and Urbano's son Manuel petitioned Governor Pio Pico to



Top: Pierre Domec's adobe homestead in Chatsworth Lake Manor. This adobe was built in the latter part of the 19th century, just west of what is now the Chatsworth Lake Manor Church. Photo was taken in 1959. Bottom: Photo shows how the site of Pierre's adobe homestead looks today, from the vacant lot to the west of the Lake Manor Church, looking north.

purchase close to 9,000 acres of land. The land reached north to include the Chatsworth Reservoir and east to Topanga Canyon. The governor granted them the 1,100 acres of Rancho El Escorpion. However, through 1870, Odon and the future partners of El Escorpion disputed the boundaries, occupying and using all 9,000 acres at various times. Odon's date of death and his place of burial are unknown.

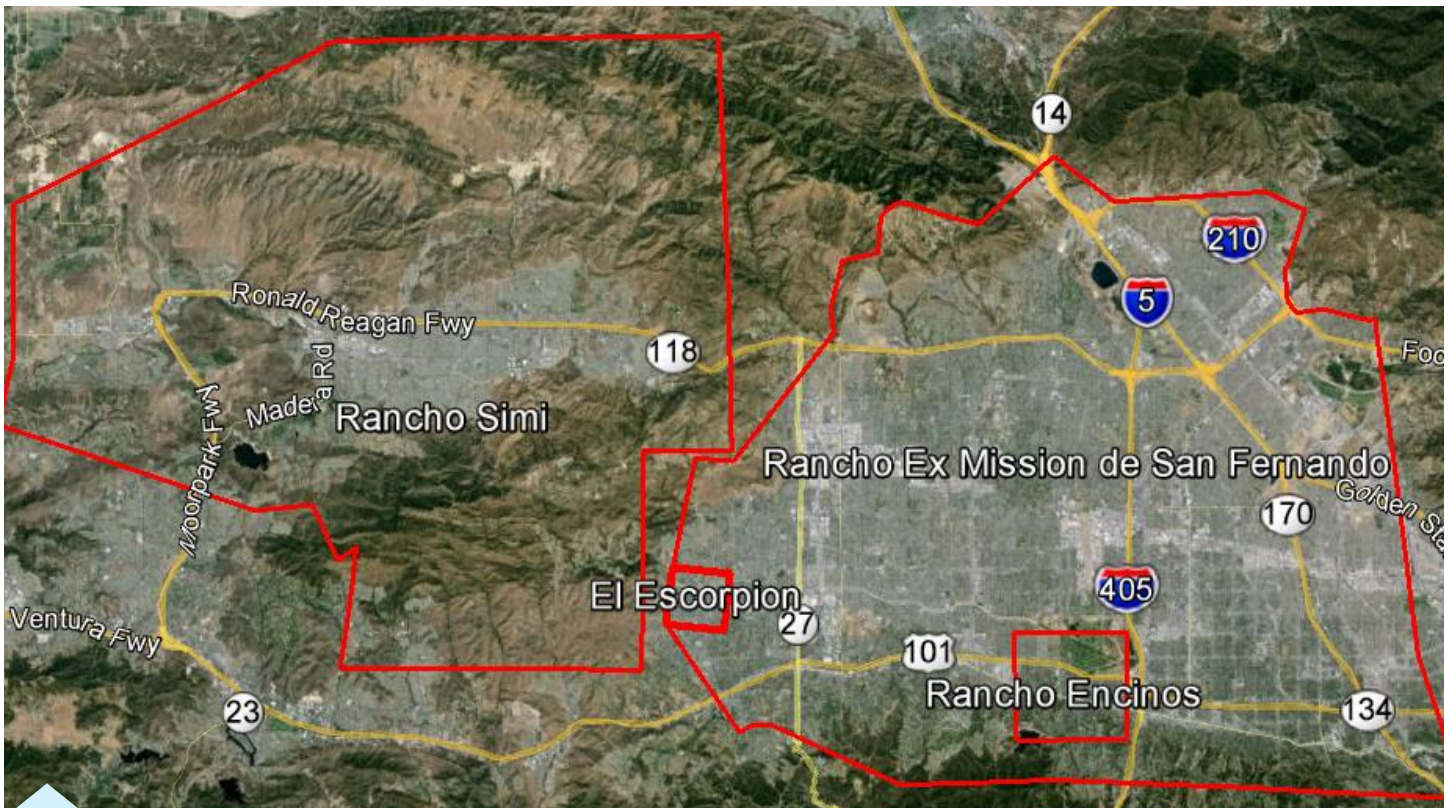
In 1849, his daughter Maria Dolores married Frenchman Pierre

Domec, and the couple settled north of El Escorpion, in the north end of the Chatsworth Reservoir area near today's Chatsworth Nature Preserve. The Domecs had three daughters, Francesca, born in 1854, Celedonia, born in 1861, and Maria, born in 1862.

Upon immigrating to the United States in 1844, Pierre worked as a cooper and was in charge of the wine cellars that belonged to his compatriot Jean Louis Vignes.

By 1849, 29-year-old Pierre was





The 1,100-acre El Escorpion site, located in the lower middle portion of the map, was ranched by Chumash Indian Odon Chihuya in the mid-1800s.

living at Santa Susana at an Indian camp with Maria. Pierre and some other Frenchmen operated limekilns at El Escorpion in the 1850s and 1860s. Lime had a ready market in Los Angeles, as it was used for mortar in brick construction, for tanning cowhides and for sanitation. Part of the limekiln still exists today, east of the intersection of Woolsey Canyon and Valley Circle. It was designated in 1975 as an L.A. Historic Cultural Monument.

Pierre died in 1883, at age 63, and Maria Dolores died just a year later. In 1896, their daughters Francesca and Celedonia, both of whom never married, filed a homestead claim. In 1901, Francesca was granted a 148-acre homestead in what is now Chatsworth Lake Manor. She died in 1936.

Maria, the youngest sister of Francesca and Celedonia, married Francisco Moore and had daughter Marie Irene Moore in 1882.

The family's long and proud history of overseeing the land that

we now call home ended in 1912, when Espiritu's son sold El Escorpion to George Platt, and it was later incorporated into the City of L.A.

The 1940 Chatsworth Census shows Marie Irene Moore living with her son, Henry Acosta, age 20, at 23144 Smith Road in Chatsworth Lake Manor. Henry died in 1952, leaving a wife, Frances, and two children, John, 12, and Yolanda, 2.

John was enrolled in the sixth grade at Chatsworth Elementary School at the time of his father's death. The whereabouts of John and Yolanda, along with Odon's other descendants, are unknown.

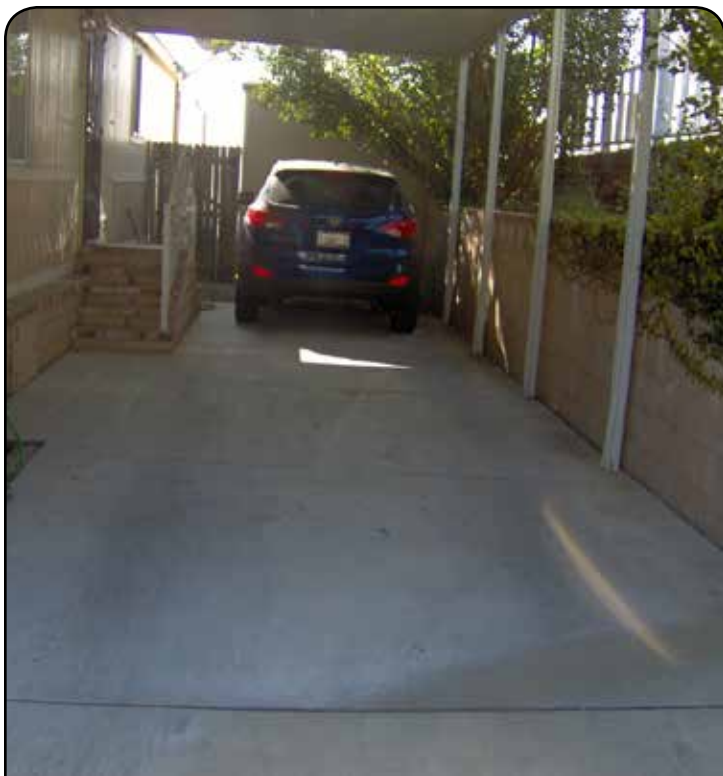
Some information in this story was taken from Wikipedia. It is the first in a two-part series about the history of the area surrounding the Summit. ❖



Pierre Domec and wife Maria, from the Leonis Adobe archives

*Photos courtesy of the Chatsworth Historical Society*





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# SUMMIT LIFE

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