

ever  
changing,  
always  
the  
same

- Public Hours and Tours**  
Wednesday–Sunday 1–5 p.m.
- Rancho Center - Self-guided tour
  - House - Tours only, every 30 minutes
  - Gardens - Self-guided or tours by request
  - Barns Area - Self-guided or docent tour
  - Group Tours - 15 or more by reservation
  - Gift Shop - Wednesday–Sunday, 1–5 p.m.

- School Tours and Programs**  
(call 562.431.3541 for reservations)
- Tours - Wednesday–Friday, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
  - Tongva Cultural Workshop - Tuesday, 9:30–11:30 a.m. Limited to 60 students

- Public Programs and Events**
- Free educational programs and events for all ages explore The Rancho's cultural ecology
  - Contact the Foundation Office to add your name to the mailing list

- On Site Meetings and Use**  
(call 562.431.3541 for reservations)
- Book the The Rancho Center for outside group meetings (must be in keeping with the educational mission of The Rancho)
  - Book private lunches with a group tour for a fee

For more information about membership, events and programs, tours, and volunteering, visit [www.rancholosalamitos.org](http://www.rancholosalamitos.org) or call the Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation Office at 562.431.3541.

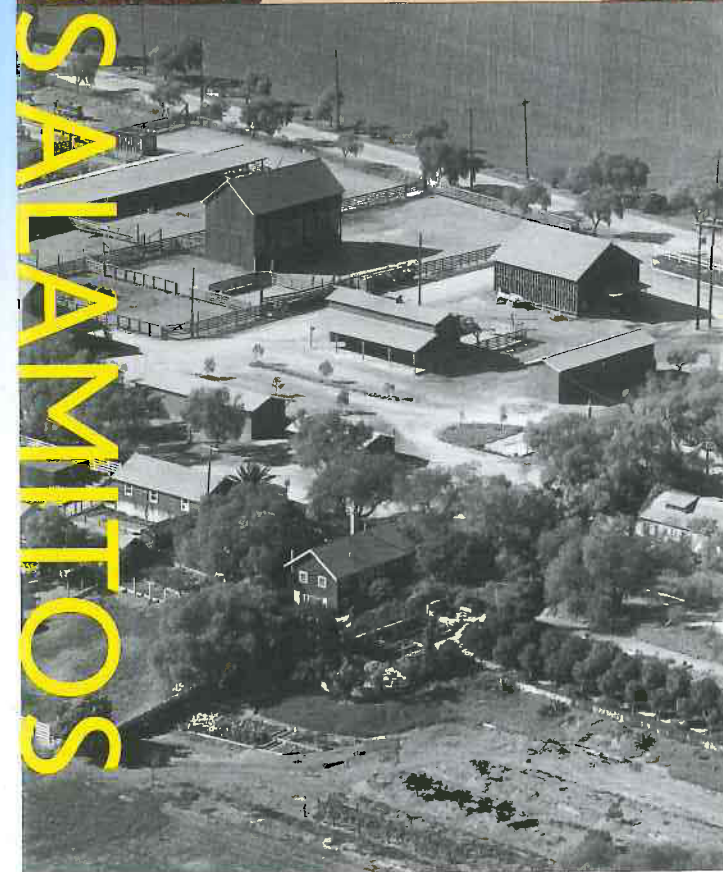
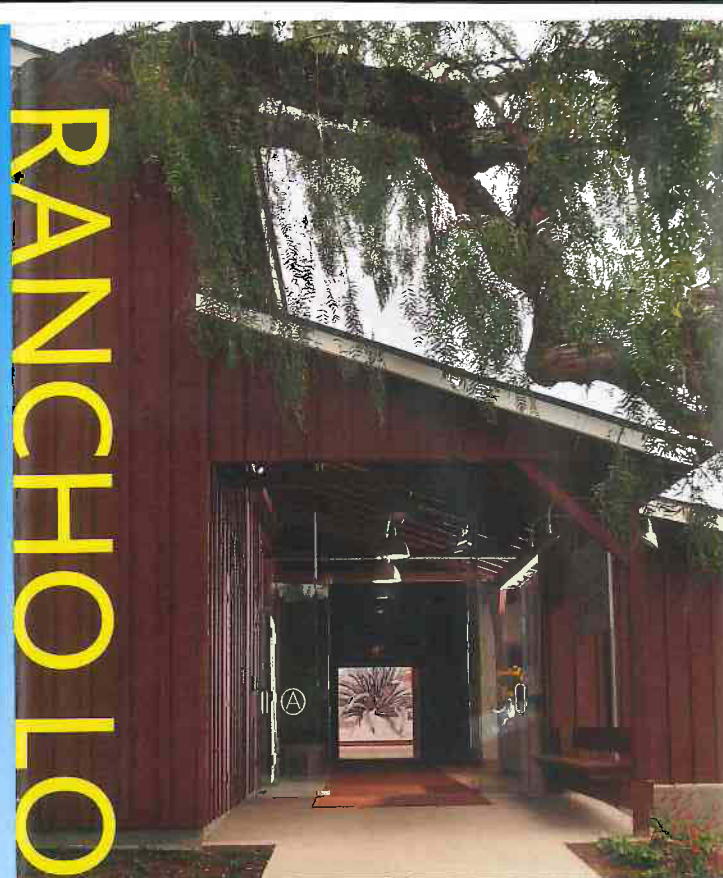
THE  
**rancho**  
LOS ALAMITOS | a place for all time

6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, CA 90815  
562.431.3541  
[www.rancholosalamitos.org](http://www.rancholosalamitos.org)

The Rancho is owned by the City of Long Beach, operated by the non-profit Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation as a public/private venture under the Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Marine.

Contemporary photos by Cristina Salvador Klentz  
Lithograph of Rancho Los Alamitos, 1888  
Woodcut illustration of Chingich'nich by Jean Goodwin

RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS



*“...were we only to have the story of Rancho Los Alamitos at hand, we might still be able to reconstruct the outlines and successive phases of this region’s history...”*

—KEVIN STARR, historian and author of the *California Dream* series



From ancestral days through the 20th century, the hilltop at The Rancho has been home to many since Povuu'ngna, the sacred home of the native Gabrielino/Tongva people. The early Spanish called the village a "rancheria," where perhaps two-hundred people lived within twenty-five to fifty homes (domed willow frames covered with brush or hides). Between 1804–1833, in the Spanish or Mexican era, the Nieto family built a four-room adobe on the hilltop for their vaqueros and help. The siting offered good drainage and a view, and the dirt-floor, partial flat tar roof adobe suited the semi-arid environment.

The adobe-core Ranch House evolved over two centuries. Beginning in 1842, owner Abel Stearns

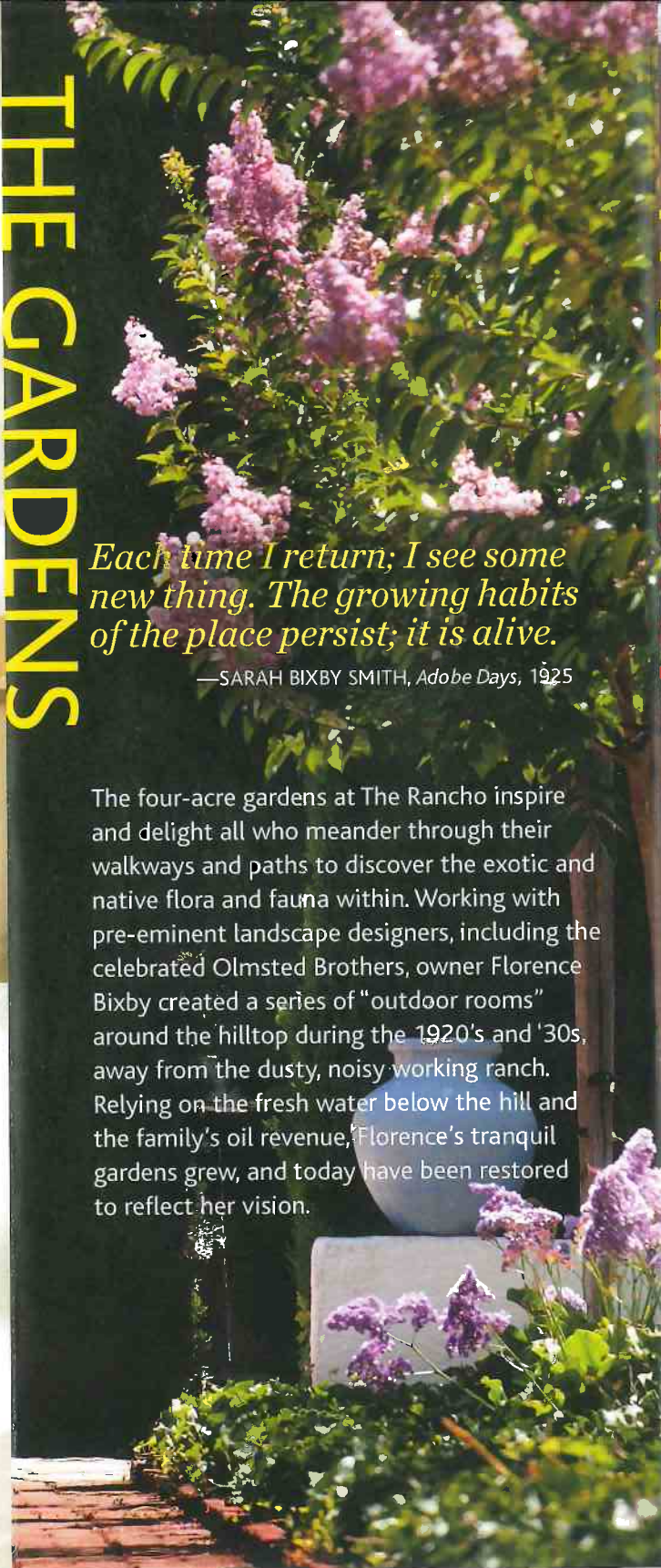
THE RANCH HOUSE



brought his New England traditions to the adobe, adding wood floors and siding, gabled roofs, and a north wing bunk house. When John and Susan Bixby moved on site in 1878, they transformed the adobe's crumbling remains into a Victorian home.

Fred and Florence Bixby expanded the Ranch House again in the early 20th century, extending the south wing, adding a front porch and second floor, and decorating in the regional style of the time. Filled with southwestern motifs and art, native baskets, as well as impressionist art and collectible glass, the Ranch House evokes the sense of a place where others have come before.

THE GARDENS



*Each time I return; I see some new thing. The growing habits of the place persist; it is alive.*

—SARAH BIXBY SMITH, *Adobe Days*, 1925

The four-acre gardens at The Rancho inspire and delight all who meander through their walkways and paths to discover the exotic and native flora and fauna within. Working with pre-eminent landscape designers, including the celebrated Olmsted Brothers, owner Florence Bixby created a series of "outdoor rooms" around the hilltop during the 1920's and '30s, away from the dusty, noisy working ranch. Relying on the fresh water below the hill and the family's oil revenue, Florence's tranquil gardens grew, and today have been restored to reflect her vision.

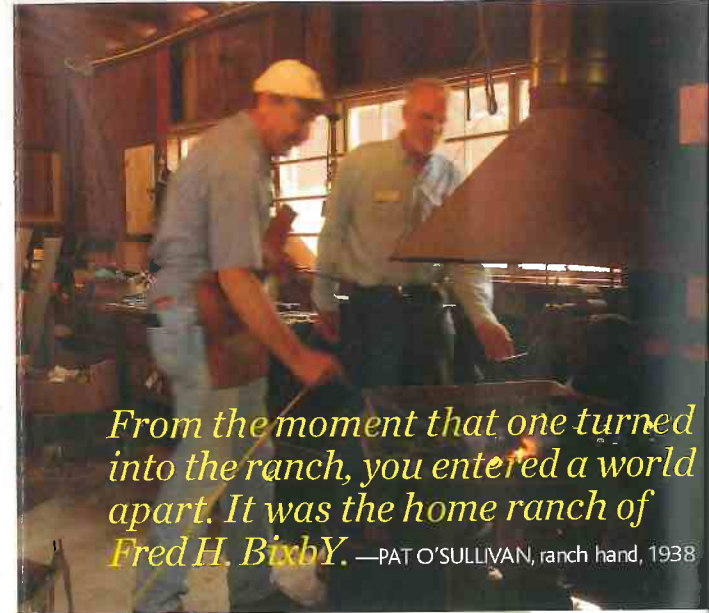
THE RANCHO CENTER



At the heart of The Rancho's commitment to public education is the new Rancho Center located in the restored Barns Area of the historic site. Opened to acclaim in June 2012, the dramatic structure joins historic to contemporary architecture by aptly incorporating the original 1948 Horse Barn in its exterior and interior design. The exhibition inside creates an exceptional environment as it shapes *Rancho Los Alamitos—Ever Changing, Always the Same*.

The History Room and Theatre video, "An Island in Time," feature original sources and photos drawn from The Rancho's untapped archive of ledgers, letters, oral histories, and documents which, for the first time, tell the personal stories and impressions of owners and workers, native people and newcomers in time. Their efforts, combined with the diverse natural resources of Rancho Los Alamitos, reshaped the landscape over and again, and reflect the Southern California experience.

In the visually dramatic, multi-purpose Rancho Room, a hand-rendered floor map artfully illustrates the changing borders of The Rancho within the regional context, past to present. The magnificent wall murals feature native and newcomers from the gardens to suggest the relation between people and place, climate and water.



*From the moment that one turned into the ranch, you entered a world apart. It was the home ranch of Fred H. Bixby.* —PAT O'SULLIVAN, ranch hand, 1938

THE BARNNS

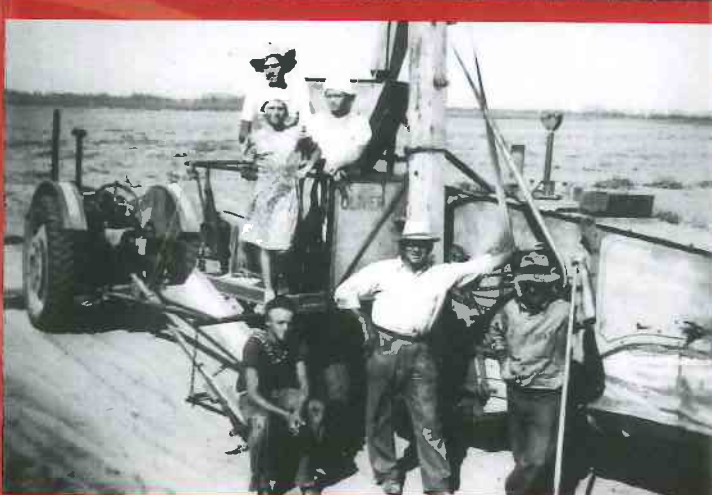
By the early 20th century, the 3,600-acre Alamitos ranch was an urban anomaly fueled with revenue from oil, but it all ended mid-century. Today the recent acclaimed restoration of the Barns Area brings back the landscape of the early 20th century working ranch. The Barns Area is smaller than originally, but still plenty big enough to walk back in time to the sights, sounds and smells of the ranch. The Blacksmith's Shop is functioning, and the barns, corrals, duck pond and rabbit hutches are teaming with life. From chickens, ducks, rabbits, goats, and sheep, to the one-ton draft horses, the pride of Alamitos, the ranch animals are home again.

# ABOUT THE RANCHO

On a shady hilltop just thirty minutes south of downtown Los Angeles sits Rancho Los Alamitos, an incomparable landscape that tells a tale of Southern California history spanning centuries.

The native Gabrielino/Tongva people of the Los Angeles Basin call this land Povuu'ngha, the sacred village where, in traditional belief, the ancestors first emerged and gathered for ceremony and trade. But in 1790 their land would fall within a great Spanish land concession given to Manuel Nieto for his service on the Portolá expedition of 1769. Under later Mexican rule, Rancho Los Alamitos was one of five great ranchos founded from Nieto's land in 1833. For new owners Governor José Figueroa, then Abel Stearns, the "Ranch of the Little Cottonwoods" was a valued 28,500-acre asset with natural springs. For two generations of the Bixby family, its last private owners, and their workers from around the world, tenant and lease farmers, Rancho Los Alamitos was an enterprising, diversified ranch, as well as a home that would endure through the early 20th century and the imprint of modern times.

Twice listed on the National Register of Historic Places, today's 7.5-acre site is an unsurpassed oasis in time with an adobe-core Ranch House, the lush Gardens and Barns Area of the early 20th century working ranch, and a new Rancho Center. Impeccably preserved and restored, Rancho Los Alamitos is a place for all time, revealing the culture and ecology of the region past to present.



## OWNERS AND WORKERS

The successive owners of Rancho Los Alamitos were notable, prosperous men in the region and state, but they depended on the efforts of others. From the time of Povuu'ngha through the Spanish-Mexican era, California Indians supported the rancho economy. In the late 19th century, owner John Bixby hired workers from the U.S., Europe, China, and Japan to cultivate his fields and raise livestock as did other big land owners. His son, Fred Bixby, like other Californians, relied on labor from Mexico, as well as Belgian tenant and Japanese lease farmers to maintain the smaller 3,600-acre ranch. In 1968, the children of Fred and Florence Bixby, the last private owners, donated the remaining 7.5-acres of Rancho Los Alamitos to the City of Long Beach for public benefit.



# A PLACE TO BE

Rancho Los Alamitos has always been resilient. Abundant natural attributes, including water, land for ranching, farming, development, and oil have combined with the perspectives of native people and newcomers to support continuity and change over years. Its historic open green space is a timeless haven in the urban landscape, and always a place to be. Today Rancho Los Alamitos works to preserve its cultural ecology through ongoing stewardship. Geo-thermal technology supports the new Rancho Center and Bookshop/Classroom, and is but one example of ongoing efforts to ensure a sustainable future. Rancho Los Alamitos is the first historic site in the Southern California region to adapt this green technology.

*It was the feeling of the life that had been lived here before... a thousand different influences, as though a great river were flowing past. The continuity of life... that was the secret.*

—FLORENCE BIXBY, 1922