

*Compliments of*  
**ILENE KUZEL**  
Bohannon Realtors  
485-6800 489-6953

Ilene Kuzel has been a resident of Sacramento for over 18 years. She has achieved outstanding success in her Real Estate Profession; a member of the Million Dollar Club and Presidents Club with Bohannon Realtors. She has also authored "*History of Arden Oaks.*"



A Sacramento Historical Dignette  
From "Ranch of the Pass"

to

Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin  
and Del Dago ©1979

*Compliments of*  
**ILENE KUZEL**  
Bohannon Realtors  
3406 American River Dr.  
Res. 489-6953 Bus. 485-6800



## PROLOGUE

Reminisce about Sacramento's history and there is an immediate recollection of 1848 and the luster of the Gold Rush years . . . an exciting period that captured the imagination of the world and aroused those who were "young at heart" to join the most electrifying fantasy the world has ever known. The Gold Rush made an instant state out of California . . . a thriving city out of Sacramento . . . and evolved as a monument to a national dream.

While the cry is more subdued and the "rush" is more controlled, the 1970's represent a modern-day gold rush to Sacramento. Today, however, the rush is for land, new homes and new businesses . . . as valuable to today's society as gold was to the 49'er generation.

Nestled in the middle of this modern-day "Real Estate Rush" are three sections that exemplify the "dreams" that have long been associated with Sacramento land development and serve as a prestigious landmark of future developments . . .

This is the story of Sierra Oaks . . . Willhaggin . . . and Del Dayo.

## RANCHO DEL PASO THE EARLY YEARS

To fully appreciate the modern-day "Real Estate Rush" that embraces Greater Sacramento and has gold plated land and home values in Sierra Oaks, Willhaggin and Del Day, one must return some one-hundred-and-forty-years to a period before Marshall's gold discovery at a Coloma sawmill.

It was in 1839 that a Swiss immigrant named John Sutter founded the first inland settlement in Northern California at Sacramento and soon after the now famous Sutter's Fort, which was the only settlement near the Sierras.

Shortly after, the historical "roots" of Sierra Oaks, Willhaggin and Del Dayo took form. On Dec. 20, 1844 a Mexican land grant was made to Eliab Grimes by Manuel Micheltorena (then Governor of the Dept. of California under Mexican rule) for the 44,374 acres of land that occupied eight miles along the American River and some eight miles to the north . . . identified as "Rancho Del Paso."

The Rancho Del Paso name in itself is of historical significance. The Rancho acquired this Spanish name (which means "ranch of the pass") because the road leading to Emigrant Gap Pass in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, over which most of the pioneers traveled, passed diagonally across the Rancho.

In these early days, land in the Sacramento Valley was cheap but living was expensive. Owners of great tracts of this rich land were often in need of money. This financial need led to the passing of Rancho Del Paso from Howard Grimes (he had been given the land by his father Eliab) . . . to Samuel Norris. Norris found

himself in need of additional money for taxes and upkeep of the land. He borrowed \$65,000 from Col. Haggin with the Rancho as security. One year later (1860) unable to pay the debt, he lost the land to the partnership of Col. Haggin and Lloyd Tevis.



Col. James Ben Ali Haggin

Reproduced thru the courtesy of Pioneer Museum and Haggin Galleries.

Col. James Ben Ali Haggin (Ben Ali was his mother's maiden name) was a colorful and imaginative man. Wealthy in his own right before his purchase of the Rancho. Records indicate Haggin (1827-1914) developed the Rancho in addition to acquiring thousands of acres of so-called "desert land" in the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Kern River valleys on which he engineered extensive irrigation projects. Preserved at the Kern County Museum in Bakersfield is one of the huge plows used in digging the irrigation canals. It was pulled by 80 oxen.

Haggin had long been an admirer of thoroughbred horses so he began in the early 1870's to raise horses on his Sacramento ranch. His horsebreeding empire soon flourished and eventually extended to his native state of Kentucky where he developed, near Lexington the famous Elmendorf horse stock farm. Between 1881 and 1891, Rancho Del Paso became world renowned as the breeding ranch of some of the world's fastest horses, such as Salvator and Golden Garter. Because of this fame, the Rancho became known as the Haggin Grant. The great success of the Rancho was due in part to John Mackey, Manager and the most famous horseman in America during that period.

Tevis and Haggin never lost sight of their land interests and in June 1891 they formed the Rancho Del Paso Land Company . . . an act that might be termed "the downfall of the Rancho," as Haggin and Tevis were besieged with attractive offers for their Rancho from eastern land developers.

Years of success and fame for Haggin and the Rancho Del Paso horses came to an end in 1905 when racing became almost a dead pastime. Haggin ordered Mackey to sell most of the thoroughbreds, and in grandiose style sold 35 stallions, 600 brood mares and a large number of young horses in New York at an auction that attracted an international array of bidders and was identified as "the greatest event of its kind ever held in the world."

But Haggin could not bring himself to lose Golden Garter, so he outbid a number of agents for European noblemen and bought the stallion for himself for \$72,000. Golden Garter was returned



HAGGIN'S NEW YORK HOME \*

Entry Hall at the Haggin's 5th Avenue house, shown here is 50 ft. square. Most of the paintings and some of the furniture (not the clock) are part of the Haggin Galleries collection.

Louis Terah Haggin, son of James Ben Ali Haggin, formed an impressive art collection from his father and during his lifetime. Through Louis' descendants this collection and other priceless items were given with sufficient funds to help start the Pioneer Museum and Haggin Galleries in Stockton.

Louis Haggin died in 1929, before knowing the honor of the museum named after him. The Museum opened on June 14, 1931.

\*Reproduced thru the courtesy of Pioneer Museum and Haggin Galleries in Stockton, CA

to Haggin's Kentucky ranch where he sired offsprings that dominated the sport of kings on American and European turf for over a quarter of a century.

By now Sacramento Valley was having a rapid growth period. Much pressure was brought to bear on Col. Haggin to sell his beloved land. With his thoroughbreds gone from the Rancho, he had lost much of his interest in California.

He retired to his farm in Kentucky for a short time, before going to live in New York where he spent the remaining part of his 87 years.

Since Rancho Del Paso was considered to be "like a stone before the doors of the capital city, blocking its progress and retarding its destiny," Sacramento's business community was overjoyed on May 13, 1910 when an announcement was made that the Sacramento Valley Colonization Co. (a subsidiary of the Chicago-based U.S. Farm Land Co.) had purchased the 44,374-acre Rancho Del Paso for a reported \$2 million (about \$45 an acre).

The company announced it would establish two towns on the Haggin Grant, one near the station of Walurga and the other near Dry Creek. Within the first year of ownership, the Sacramento Valley Colonization Co. sold 26,875 acres to firms and individuals which was considered a remarkable land sales record. The remaining grant of 17,500 acres was sold shortly thereafter.

Sacramento was provided the first choice of any land it wanted for a park. The city acted on this option in 1911 by purchasing over 900 acres along Arcade Creek, now the site of Del Paso Park and the Haggin Oaks Municipal Golf Course.

Many were attracted to the Rancho Del Paso land because of stringent restrictions in the contracts which prohibited the "sale of liquor or establishment of cemeteries, slaughter houses, or anything deleterious to health or offensive to the sight."

The Sears-Roebuck Co. of Chicago startled the valley in November 1910 by buying 21,000 acres for \$1,350,000 (about \$64 an acre). Sears planned to sell five and ten-acre plots for \$150 to \$300 an acre. The company also hoped to sell the farmers

agricultural and household equipment . . . and even to market crops. "Farm by Mail Order" became a unique offering in the 1911 Sears Catalog. The land was advertised and purchased by the people in the eastern states.

Sales continued with: W. E. Gerber and W. A. Curtis purchasing 2207 acres of the bottom land laying along the American River, which was later transferred to the Haggin Bottom Land Co. (This Aug. 30, 1910 purchase established the beginnings of Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo.)

As part of a one-year anniversary celebration, the 15 real estate firms that separately owned the 26,875 acres joined together and invited all Sacramentans to a picnic and barbecue, on one land site, May 11, 1911. It was a grand turn-out, with each firm represented promising not to talk sales to the crowd during the picnic.

The day made headlines in the Sacramento Union and it was reported that plans for the development of the land were extensive and embraced everything from a town lot to a large factory. Roads and boulevards by the hundreds of miles were being cut through the beautiful oak studded land.

The groundwork was laid and the future of Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo assured.

## PRESENT DAYS

Modern-day Sacramentans know Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo as northeast sections of Sacramento that are bordered by the Campus Commons development on the west (Munroe St.) and Arden Way to the east, Fair Oaks Blvd. on the north and the American River to the south.

In the 1960's and continuing through the 70's prestigious growth surged in this area with \$100,000-plus homes more the rule than the exception. Commercial growth complemented the area with the establishment of the Teichert Construction Co. building, Powell Teichert Center, Selby Ranch and the recently opened (1978) Bohannon Real Estate office complex at Watt Ave. and American River Drive.

SIERRA OAKS Unit No. 1, recorded May 1, 1929, centered at Sierra Blvd. (now Fair Oaks Blvd.) and Mills Road included 77 lots (ranging from 1/3 to 1-acre) which are arranged in fan-like design off of Hopkins and Sutter Roads. Sierra Oaks derived its name from the beautiful oaks that flourished in the area. Original restrictions prohibited builders from cutting down any of the grand old oaks. In 1953 the name of Sutter Road was changed to Crocker Road and Stanford Parkway became Drake Circle.



(Old Stage Coach Station)\*

This was the Stage Coach Station on the Ben Ali Haggin property. Built in the 1860's for the people, who numbered approximately 100, and worked on the Haggin ranch, with the race horses and row crops. They used the Stage Coach as their transportation into Sacramento.

After WWII the Station was a home for a Japanese family who farmed the land.

After Stephen Day purchased the Haggin home and surrounding acreage in 1911, (See Del Dayo) the next purchase was in 1954, by developer Frank P. Williams. Williams moved the Stage Coach Station in 1955 closer to the bluffs and expanded and remodeled it for his family residence.

The present owners have updated the Station into a beautiful home among the trees on Day Drive. It is a mark of our past history roots.

\*Photograph courtesy of Steve Williams

WILHAGGIN was launched in May 1962 by the Wilhaggin Development Company and named after James Ben Ali Haggin and Steve Williams who developed and subdivided the 61 lots. Steve Williams' father, Frank P. Williams was the "REAL CREATOR" and idea man we can thank for starting this prestigious area. Here again, the original Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC & R's) established in April 1963 continued the prohibition of cutting down the magnificent old oak trees.

One of the first settlers in this area was Nickola and Matia Sertick, in this country from Yugoslavia only a few years. They were attracted by the greenery and level land for farming. In 1919 they purchased 14.5 acres for \$3,850.00 and built a small 5 room home. Two Indians who were squatters in the area were given jobs helping the Sertick's with their many farm animals and vineyard harvesting. After a fire destroyed their home (no fire dept. then) a second one was built in 1925. The Sertick's exemplify the pioneering spirit of the European immigrants.

Still residing on Saverien Drive, Mrs. Henry Saverien is one of the earlier settlers of the Wilhaggin area. The Saveriens purchased three acres in 1936 for \$2,000 and built their first home. In this period the lower bottom lands were farmed by Chinese . . . but every spring the American River, enlarged by the melting Sierra snows, flooded the bottom land and destroyed everything in its path. In the fall and winter months, the river bed was dry. After several years of being flooded out, the Chinese farmers departed. Following World War II, Japanese farmers leased the land and attempted to farm it but again the spring flood waters were crippling. (In later years the Folsom Dam and a levee system in full operation — opened May 15, 1956, put the American River under control.)

In 1946 the Saverien's bought 111 acres of the bottom land for \$30,215 (between Whitehall and Ashton). They farmed the land harvesting barley and grain until property taxes became too high. The Saveriens sold their acres in 1963 to developer Steve Williams. Williams' development of Arden Oaks is described in another booklet I have written, "A Beginning: History of Arden Oaks." A few copies are still available, call Ilene Kuzel 489-6953.

DEL DAYO got its start in July 1954 with original 34-lot units surrounding Del Dayo Drive at Fair Oaks Blvd. Del Dayo units #2, 3 and 4 followed shortly thereafter.

Around 1860, James Ben Ali Haggin built his home on the bluff near the American River.

Stephen S. Day, prominent Sacramento business and social leader, purchased the Haggin home in 1911 and the 40 acres surrounding it. In 1913 Mr. Day moved the home further back on his property to its present location, Del Dayo Drive. The original home was enlarged, updated, and christened 'Del Dayo Farm.'

Stephen and Evelyne Day had thought someday they would like to share their beautiful oak studded acres with others. That day came in December 1954, when 38 acres were sold to Frank P. Williams a developer and family friend.

Frank Williams and Mrs. Day worked together reading plans for roads and dividing the land into its present lot sizes. Frank Williams built 10 homes which were sold before they were completed, selling the remaining lots to individuals and other builders.

In 1971 the development of the Haggin Bottom Land Company was completed with a final small section of American River Drive — opened between Ashton and Morris Way . . . joining Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo.

## TODAY AND TOMORROW

The development of Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo is about complete. Although a few lots remain for new building, future growth will be more limited while property values continue to rise.

However, for residents of an area where horses are still prominent and bicycle trails abound, there is an assuredness they will continue to enjoy a lifestyle that is centered about a prestigious and well-developed area . . . rich in historic lore, fully serving family living and recreational needs, and symbolizing the good life of its Rancho Del Paso beginnings.

*Compliments of  
ILENE KUZEL*

Bohannon Realtors  
3406 American River Dr.  
Res. 489-6953 Bus. 485-6800



**I**magination is the beginning of creation.  
You image what you desire,  
You **WILL** what you imagine,  
and at last you **CREATE** what you will.

George Bernard Shaw

---

Copies of the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC & R's) on Sierra Oaks, Wilhaggin and Del Dayo can be secured by calling Ilene Kuzel at Bohannon Realtors at 485-6800.

---