

ur Priceless Treasure

told to Janice Pickartz

National Registry of Historical Buildings. With pride, Jose's great-great grandson, the author of this article, keeps Jose and Maria's memory alive for future generations.



The Rios Adobe - "The early years"

of freshly prepared salsa (salsa), beans, rice and homemade flour tortillas. The scents of these early Californio foods filled the air of Los Rios Street. Even wandering strangers were welcome to take a seat at the table and share in the Capistrano feast. Well-crafted games of poker will played there by both men and women, long into the night. Another oral history tells us that a woman with the winning "hand" stood in her excitement, then immediately left to go give birth. Her son was never allowed to forget that she had to abandon her winning hand because of him. Ten generations of Rios' have called this adobe their home. Today, from the Castilian roses and gardens to the other buildings on the land,

At the heart and center of this historical neighborhood sits its namesake, the Rios Adobe. Built in 1794 for Feliciano Rios, it was one of 40 adobes built in San Juan Capistrano and one of 20 that stood on the street many years ago. Known as the smallest Rancho in the area, it is the only Rancho that stood the test of history and time. It also was a center of hospitality and a gathering place. The Rios family was known for celebrating the Juaneno culture and hosting early Californio barbecues. Now, close your eyes and picture an open fire pit with freshly slaughtered meat of all kinds - the family's specialty was lamb. Take a deep breath and inhale the aromas



The Rios adobe today; "The Heart and soul of San Juan Capistrano"

this Adobe is a living memorial to the street and its people. It remains under the loving, caring hands of Stephen Rios and his family.



The Montano (Montanez) Adobe; "Days long ago"

believed in the healing energies of herbal medicine. As a mid-wife and during a time when there was no such thing as "specialized" medicine, she focused the majority of her time and attention on girls and women with female related ailments. She used Native herbs from the surrounding area and plants from her very own gardens, taking those who suffered and making them well again. She was a respected educator, arbitrator and mediator. She was a teacher of the faith, including the Holy Sacraments of the Catholic Church. When there was no priest at the Mission, she administered baptisms and did prayers for the dying and the dead, and conducted burial rites. She was a guardian of the Mission and will forever be remembered for the "miracle of the rains" that ended the great drought of 1890. The Montano (Montanez) Adobe is also the birthplace of San Juan Capistrano's present Matriarch, Helen Charles McMullen. This Adobe stands as a monument to Apolonia Montanez.

The Apolonia Montano (Montanez) Adobe - one of the 40, was built in the late 1790's for Tomas Gutierrez. He was a Master Carpenter whose talents were sought out by all the local, nearby Missions. His granddaughter Apolonia, born around 1835 at Mission San Luis Rey, became the first recorded deed holder of the land. Traditionally, holdings were only given to men. Apolonia, a strong and determined woman, was "Capitan" of San Juan Capistrano. Known as the healer by all the town's people, she



The Montanez adobe today; "History endures"

Photos courtesy of the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society