

Chapter I

History of Glendale

A traditional annual celebration in Glendale is that of the "Days of Verdugos." A major street in the City is named "Verdugo Road." Overlooking the City are the beautiful "Verdugo Hills." And in the name of Verdugo there lies a story that embodies much of the historical romance associated with the exploration and settlement of California by the Spanish Dons.

In the late 1700's, a Spanish soldier stationed at San Gabriel Archangel Mission, Corporal Jose Maria Verdugo (originally Berdugo), attempted to augment his income by raising livestock on land south of the mission. However, some other soldiers had already laid claim to the use of the land (it was owned by the mission). The padres counseled the Corporal to select land several miles northwestward of the mission. Verdugo decided to ask for a 35,000 acre tract between the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Hondo (today's Arroyo Seco). In 1784, the Corporal's former commanding officer, Governor Pedro Fages, granted Verdugo the second Spanish land grant in Alta California. He received an honorable discharge in 1799 and retired with his family to "El Rancho San Rafael."

The march of history saw Mexico gain independence from Spain in 1822, with control of California passing to Mexico. In 1848 California was ceded to the United States and in 1850 admitted to the Union as a state. The Board of Land Commissioners in 1855 upheld a petition by the heirs of Jose Verdugo, Julio and Catalina, affirming their ownership of the great ranch. However, in 1869, debts and mortgages resulted in its breakup. The courts had to step in to settle conflicting claims and officially partition the land.

Newcomers drifted in, buying large tracts, building homes and planting fruit orchards. The various little adobes which had originally spotted the huge ranch were deserted and tumbled to ruin and oblivion. Only two still remain today—one of them is the Casa Adobe de San Rafael at 1340 Dorothy Drive and is one of our City's many parks. Visitors are well rewarded by going through this simple, early California ranch home that represents a way of life that has disappeared.

In 1883 the new settlers chose a name for the developing community. "Glen Dale" was chosen over such other suggestions as Etheldale, Minneapolis, Puertosuelo, Riverdale, San Rafael and Verdugo. On March 11, 1887, a new "Town of Glendale" was created. Its borders were what are now Lexington Drive on the north, south to just below Colorado Boulevard, Central Avenue on the west, and Chevy Chase Drive on the east; this area is now the current center of the City. In 1906, after a heated debate, the growing town officially became the "City of Glendale."

The spectacular growth and development of Glendale through the first half of the twentieth century can largely be attributed to the Glendale Improvement Society and Leslie C. Brand. Mr. Brand, with the help of the Improvement Society, brought the Pacific Electric Railway line to Glendale in 1904. Brand later went on to establish two water companies and a light and power company. After these companies were fully developed, he offered to sell them all to the City. He also donated land for parks, as well as bequeathing his mansion and its grounds for a library and a park. Brand Library is located at 1601 West Mountain Street.

Glendale has grown to be the third largest city in Los Angeles County. This is a result of dynamic growth which once earned Glendale the title of the "Fastest Growing City in America." These figures tell the story:

Year	Population
1906	1,186
1910	2,746
1920	13,576
1930	63,736
1940	82,582
1950	95,702
1960	119,442
1970	132,752
1980	139,060
1990	182,000
2000	203,700

Glendale's dynamic growth and redevelopment in the downtown area is another example of Glendale's ability to adapt to changing economic realities. The Glendale Galleria, The Exchange and Marketplace shopping and entertainment centers, the Montrose Shopping District, the South Brand Boulevard auto dealerships and a variety of other banking, financial and business institutions push Glendale's daytime population to over 250,000 and make Glendale one of the leading financial centers in the state of California.

In spite of this rapid growth, Glendale remains one of the most livable cities in Southern California, with beautiful suburbs, a top-rated school system, and numerous parks and recreational facilities located all within the 31.5 square miles of the City. Glendale indeed is a special place to be. We hope your contribution towards Glendale City government is one that the City can eventually take pride in. Good Luck!