The Leonis Adobe Essay, Research Paper

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The Leonis Adobe was built in stages; however, who and when the original portion of it was built is still under research. At first, there appears to have been a simple adobe farmhouse with whitewashed walls. This original portion of the house is believed to date back to 1844, and if this is so it is almost certain that Leonis did not build it. In any event, about 1880 he extensively enlarged and remodeled the house into the gracious Monterey style mansion you see today, and he and Espirtu moved into it and made it their home.

The building of this project was not an easy one. A great deal of research and studying along with skillful work went to the restoration of this mansion. But there is one or two exceptions. For instance, the present living room was originally two rooms, a parlor and living room, separated by a wall just to the right of the front door. The wall was removed around 1925 and has not bee replaced in order to provide a large room for group meetings.

When Leonis enlarged and remodeled the house, he sheathed the outside front of the house, and paneled the interior living room walls with wood. He walled-in the rear and northeast side porches, both upstairs and downstairs, to add more rooms. He added the Victorian fretwork balcony along the front of the house, and other enhancing details and features. The bright colors that highlight the house were discovered under many layers of paint, and presumably were the ones Leonis used. The paint used to repaint the house was carefully matched to achieve the exact feeling the Leonis Adobe brings.

The present living room, the family portraits hang on the wall where they used to hang, but the mirror originally hung where the dining room door now is. This door was cut through in the 1920?s. Before that, as in many of the California houses, one walked along the porch to reach the dining room.

Both the kitchen and the dining room are board and batten construction added during Leonis? remodeling. The adobe dirt floors were discovered under modern wood flooring that has been removed. The fireplace in the dining room and stove in the kitchen provided the only heat in the house. The stove, while not original to the house, carries a date of 1875.

Out side, at the northwest corner of the house, a large Mexican ?beehive oven? with a shed over it for protection from the rain, was used to bake bread. The present oven and shed have been reproduced from descriptions furnished by persons who saw the original.

The barn was built in 1912 to replace an early barn and blacksmith shop that stood across Calabasas Road, and that burned. A well, windmill and tank house stood at the southeast corner of the house. The original well has been located and its decaying redwood lining replaced. A replica of the windmill has been built. The tank house you see was found on an old Van Nuys ranch and the wood tank belonged to the first Calabasas school house.