



Heritage Hill Historical Park

PARK HOURS: TUES. – SAT. 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. | TOUR RESERVATIONS: 949-923-2230
GUIDED TOUR HOURS: WED., THURS., SAT. 11:00 A.M.

Mailing address:
25151 Serrano Road
Lake Forest, CA 92630-2534
949-923-2230

HISTORIC
PARK

Heritage Hill Historical Park is a 4.1-acre park that preserves some of Orange County's rich cultural heritage through a collection of four historic buildings. Fully restored and furnished, they represent distinct eras in the early development of the Saddleback Valley and the town of El Toro. The Mexican Rancho era is typified by the circa 1863 Serrano Adobe. The 1890 El Toro Grammar School and 1891 St. George's Episcopal Mission are representative of the founding of El Toro. And the citrus farming days of the early 20th century are called to mind by the 1908 Harvey Bennett Ranch House.



ENJOY ACTIVITIES ALL YEAR LONG.

Heritage Hill has something to offer all year long. Among the many celebrations that are worth marking on your calendar are Rancho Days Fiesta, Fall-O-Ween, Candlelight Walk and Holiday Lights. Throughout the seasons, Heritage Hill offers a diverse range of experiences, ensuring there's always something exciting to look forward to.



HISTORY LIVES AT HERITAGE HILL.

The park offers a number of programs that help bring the past to life. Three school tour programs are offered to third and fourth grade classes. The Living History program enables students to experience a typical school day around the turn-of-the-century. The hands-on tour includes an activity at each historic building. The Native American program features a visit to the Indian village exhibit to learn about the life of the "People of the Land Before 1769."

COME SEE FOR YOURSELF.

The park offers free tours weekly for individuals and groups of seven or less. Just show up Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday at 11 a.m. Volunteer docents meet visitors at the front porch of the Serrano Adobe and give a guided tour of each building, offering an interpretation of Saddleback area history through the artifacts, events and people associated with each building. Groups of 8 or more should call the park to arrange a private tour.

BEGIN YOUR OWN HISTORY.

Heritage Hill Historical Park offers two charming spots for wedding ceremonies: the historic St. George's Episcopal Mission (capacity 75) and an outdoor Victorian Arbor (capacity 150).

For more information, please email the park office at heritagehill@ocparks.com.



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866-OCPARKS | heritagehill@ocparks.com | www.ocparks.com/heritagehill

LIKE HERITAGE HILL HISTORICAL PARK? YOU'LL LIKE THESE HISTORIC SITES, TOO.
ARDEN: HELENA MODJESKA HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDENS • GEORGE KEY RANCH HISTORIC PARK • IRVINE RANCH HISTORIC PARK • OLD ORANGE COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PERALTA ADOBE HISTORIC SITE

OC Parks has been entrusted with the care and protection of this park. Help us preserve our county's natural and cultural resources for your and your fellow guests' future enjoyment. Please check with your Park Ranger for this park's specific rules, or see them online at www.ocparks.com.



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A BRIEF HISTORY.

The roots of Heritage Hill Historical Park began with the land grants by the Mexican government to Don Jose Serrano in 1841 and 1846. In 1863, the Serrano family built the adobe on the land, then called Rancho Cañada de los Alisos, and the adobe remains on the site to this day. Over the years, the Serrano Adobe passed through various hands. It eventually passed to the Whiting family and was first restored by George and Dwight Whiting Jr. in 1932.

When Mr. and Mrs. V.P. Baker sold the 5,000-acre Baker Ranch to Occidental Petroleum in 1969 for \$11 million, they stipulated in the sale that the Serrano Adobe be donated to a public agency for preservation. In 1974, the Serrano Adobe site was donated to the County of Orange. The County then set aside 4.1 acres surrounding the Serrano Adobe for the development of a historical park.



A PARK IS BORN.

On May 15, 1982, after further development and restoration of the historical structures, Heritage Hill Historical Park opened as Orange County's first historical park. Today, Heritage Hill Historical Park is the only historical site in Orange County to offer a chronological interpretation of the County's past through historical buildings spanning several periods of development.



STEP BACK IN TIME.

The El Toro Grammar School, built in 1890 at a cost of \$2,000, was dedicated in November of the same year. It served all eight grades in El Toro (now Lake Forest) from 1890 to 1914. The schoolhouse has been furnished with antiques and artifacts typical of an 1890s classroom. The architectural style of the building is Victorian with certain details reflecting Queen Anne ornamentation. The building is in a "T" shape with separate side entrances to the girls' and boys' cloakrooms along with a small library-study and teacher's office located in the rear of the building.

St. George's Episcopal Mission was built in 1891 as a house of worship for English settlers recruited to El Toro by Dwight Whiting. It's the last remaining rural 19th century church in Orange County and all that remains of the English colony that settled in El Toro (now Lake Forest). St George's did not have its own pastor and was serviced by vicars who traveled from other churches in Tustin, Anaheim and Orange.

NEW ADDITIONS.

The County continued to develop plans for a historical park at the Serrano Adobe site based on the historical village concept. In 1976, the Saddleback Area Historical Society's successful fund-raising efforts resulted in the ability to acquire El Toro's first schoolhouse and church. The El Toro Grammar School (1890) and St. George's Episcopal Mission (1891) were later moved to their current locations in the park.

In 1978 another venerable El toro landmark, the Harvey Bennett Ranch House, (1908) became available. Cooperation between the County, William Lyon Company (developers of the Bennett ranch subdivision) and the Historical Society resulted in the donation and move of the Bennett House to the Serrano Adobe site that same year. The Bennett House was subsequently restored, other park improvements were made and the park was rededicated in September 1985.

A STATE HISTORICAL LANDMARK.

The Serrano Adobe was granted the status of State Historical Landmark No. 199 in 1932. It again changed hands and was last privately owned by the Baker's from 1958 to 1969. The restored Serrano Adobe was used primarily as a vacation home for the Bakers and a meeting place for the Aliso Water Company.



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