



Adolfo, Cisco And Pancho

Adolfo Camarillo, Duncan Renaldo and Leo Carrillo

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Adolfo, Cisco, and Pancho By Beth Miller

Two were Californians by birth. One was by choice. Family and friendship would forever connect them to Camarillo. Adolfo Camarillo, Leo Carrillo and Duncan Renaldo are all part of Camarillo's history.

Related to the Camarillos through family ties from the Portola Expedition, Leo brought Hollywood to town on his frequent family visits. Leo introduced his good friend and "Cisco Kid" co-star Duncan Renaldo to the area. Duncan purchased a ranch on Boney Mountain and later retired in Las Posas Estates. Though he grew up in Europe, Duncan would always call California his home.



One day at the Camarillo Ranch, Leo encountered his cousin Adele Hernandez Flynn leaving the house. "The famous Hollywood star!" teased the future librarian and City Treasurer. "If only I had my autograph book," Adele joked. Leo spirited Adele's small black purse from her hand and signed the inside flap. Today that purse, donated by her daughter, Adele Flynn Stuebing Walsh, is displayed at the Camarillo Ranch.



Leo signed this undated photo:
"To my dear Isabel con Amor"
(photo courtesy the
Pleasant Valley Historical Society)

Leo consulted Adolfo about horse care and breeding. When Leo bought 1,750 acres near Carlsbad, Adolfo send Meliton Ortiz with a gift of a horse, cow and mule. It became a profitable cattle, horse and dry farming ranch, now preserved as the 27-acre Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park.



Beth Miller, Camarillo Ranch Docent and Historian with Richard Renaldo, Duncan's son when he gave a talk at the Ranch and opened "The Cisco Kid" exhibit.



"The Cisco Kid" exhibit at the Camarillo Ranch House.

The Camarillo Ranch displayed mementos of Leo's television adventures with Duncan Renaldo. Both had been famous film stars that successfully moved onto television in the 1950s on "The Cisco Kid." The skillful horsemen did their own stunts. Leo was nearly 70 years old when he began his role as Pancho and Duncan as the Cisco Kid was in his 40's.

The popular western children's program, which ran from 1950-1956, emphasized non-violent solutions. Duncan was a story consultant and writer. Both he and Leo were concerned about the children watching violent scenes. Cisco and Pancho became role models to kids worldwide. The show's 157 episodes were translated into more than a dozen languages and fan mail arrived from all over the world.

Leo and Duncan also promoted a positive image of Hispanic actors. For a time they were the only Hispanic cowboys portrayed on television. They received numerous awards and honors in recognition of their achievements. Leo and Duncan were frequent visitors at the Camarillo Ranch.

The love of horses and outdoor life led Adolfo, Leo and Duncan into the Los Rancheros Visitadores (The Visiting Ranchers). Adolfo was one of the founding members of the all-male riding group. Ninety men were in the saddle for the first official Rancheros ride on May 9, 1930. Leo participated for at least ten years and Duncan rode on several occasions. The group is considered the inspiration of Santa Barbara Western artist Edward Borein and rancher Elmer Awl. Awl had visited the Camarillo Ranch and signed the guest book in 1932.

Leo and Carmen Camarillo, Adolfo's youngest daughter, were friends with Edward Borein. The artist gave Carmen a signed sketch of a horse and rider. The family frequently visited and special events were covered by the press.



Early 1940's parade, possibly in Santa Barbara. White Horse riders left to right: Paquita Burket Parker, Rosita Petit Marvel, Unknown, Leo Carrillo, Carmen Camarillo, Susana Burket Lamb.

The Santa Barbara Fiesta was a beloved parade for Adolfo, Leo and Duncan. At different times, the three played key roles in organizing the parade. Riding with his Camarillo relatives, Leo announced his family to the crowd by twirling his sombrero high above his head and shouting "primos" (cousins). He and his horse gave a special bow to Carmen Camarillo. When health issues made it too difficult to organize and participate in the parade, Duncan took over Leo's duties.



Retired Duncan in Las Posas Estates

Until his final move to Goleta, Duncan remained active in local charity events in Camarillo and throughout Ventura County. He was a beloved neighbor of Las Posas Estates. There he continued to paint. His artwork was once displayed in the White House by Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Duncan died in Goleta in 1980 at age 76. The Camarillo Daily News covered the report of his passing and included a photo of Duncan with Diablo, his much-loved horse.



October 29, 1954 - L-R: Charles Todak (President of the Chamber of Commerce) - Eugene Dickinson (Los Angeles County Sheriff) - Adolfo Camarillo (90 years old) - Carmen Camarillo - Leo Carrillo (of the newspaper).

One of Leo's last visits to Camarillo was in 1954 when he was the master of ceremony for Adolfo's 90th birthday celebration. In 1958, Leo was an honorary pall bearer at Adolfo's funeral. Adolfo was 94 years old.

Illness did not stop Leo from completing his memoir The California I Love. It was a title that both Adolfo and Duncan could concur. The book was published shortly after his death in 1961. He was 81 years old.

"The adobe is my birthstone" began Leo's romantic tales in his memoir of California. No doubt Adolfo and Duncan would also agree.

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Thank you!

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