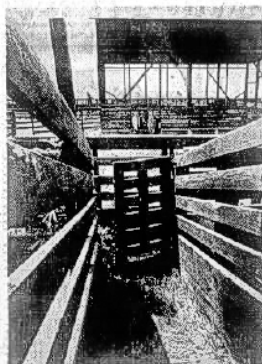


Independent Post-Section  
**Women**  
LONG BEACH 12, CALIF., SUNDAY, SEPT. 13, 1964  
SECTION W

—SHOT FROM BY CURT JOHNSON

## ADOBE AND OLD ROOTS

# A First: Bixby Ranch on Home Tour



By MARY ELLIS CARLTON

Travelers, commuters, natives and newcomers—chancing to look up from their world of plain surfaces and status symbols—have long pondered the wondrous beauty of East Long Beach's tree-shaded hacienda on the hill.

Few contemporaries have set foot on its historic, unspoiled grounds.

For Rancho Las Alamitos—or Bixby Ranch, as it is more often called—is today a world apart.

As if to rise above the incessant roar of today's mechanized society, it stands aloof, a hauntingly beautiful shrine to the wealth and beauty that is California—and to the men who swept West to fulfill it.

For here are Southern California's deepest roots—some pushing their way through the

oldest residential landmark in the vicinity of Long Beach, was "almost a ruin" when Bixby successfully undertook its rehabilitation and improvement of the grounds.

In 1906, after death of his mother, Fred H. Bixby and wife (Florence Green), moved into the old adobe with their three children (soon to be four, later five).

THE FAMILY STORY unfolds colorfully as one strolls through house and grounds.

There's the original adobe house with its 3-foot walls (first part of present home) . . . the massive wardrobe built, carved and mirrored by John Bixby ("pretty good for a school teacher," he's reported as saying) . . . the lamp made from an old cider jar by a ranch hand for Mrs. John Bixby.

And there's the massive, carved billiard table the elder Bixby ordered from the east as a gift for the YMCA. (The YM refused it on the grounds "it would corrupt our youth." Result: All members of the Bixby clan have been expert billiard players.)

THERE'S THE steady succession of additions—the living room, the parlor, the library and the dining room (all with fireplaces) . . . a couple of kitchens, a mess hall for ranch hands, the milk room, pastries, and an unending parade of bedrooms (1 last count), many with their own sitting rooms.

The story is that Fred Bixby built bedrooms as the children were born. When the rambling structure hit the tank house, they quit having children. "It's too expensive to tear down the tank house," Bixby is quoted as saying.

In the dining room is a massive, glass-smooth cherry wood sideboard referred to by the family as "father's folly."

An avid gambler (he'd play for money or matches), Fred H. once became engrossed in a

See BIXBY RANCH, page W-12

See tour map, information  
on other homes, page W-12

earth's surface, exposing their age-old strength, producing a magnificent fusion of yesterday and today.

ONE OF FIVE homes on the Women's Architectural League Home Tour, the historic landmark next Sunday will—for the first time—open its gates to the rush of modern man.

To browse through the 16-room ranch house, to plod through its now-deserted studies and barns, to stroll through the many lush gardens is to relive the romance of early-day California.

The beholder feels the spell and, suddenly, understands what makes California more than a fertile frontier, a booming economic giant, a sunny playground.

For here there has been magic union, a rendezvous between man and nature.

THE HISTORIC domain on the hilltop off E. Seventh Street has, for 14 years, been "managed" by jovial, gregarious George J. Salzer of the Ranch Co. (If he had a title, it would be "manager," says he, but in the casual way of the Bixbys, beloved by employees and friends, nobody ever bothered to give him a title.)

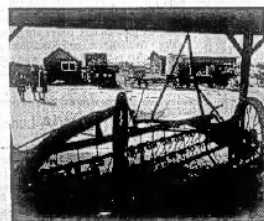
For more than 80 years—longer than Long Beach has been a city—it has been the home, the livelihood, the life of the Bixby family.

First part of a vast Spanish land grant, the original 25,000-acre spanse was, in earlier days, owned by Don Manuel Nieto (he built the original adobe house in 1784), Jose Figueroa, California governor, Don Abel Stearns, and an investor or two.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bixby (he was a former school teacher) and their 18-month-old son, Fred, moved into the long unoccupied Alamitos ranch house in 1877. The adobe structure, regarded as



A PREVIEW TOUR of Bixby Ranch by WAL members . . . Mrs. Arthur V. Hoyer, president, and Mrs. Stanley Val Goldin (top picture) marvel at massive rubber trees, planted in 1881, second oldest in state . . . upper left, the ranch's once-busy curio shop . . . upper right . . . Mrs. Richard O. Pryor is awed by three-foot walls in original adobe house . . . above, the cypress garden . . . and, lower left, a lineup of now-idle farm machines.



### Next Sunday

### On Architects' Home Tour

House No. 1  
THE DAVID GRAND RESIDENCE  
3311 East Circle Drive  
Huntington Harbour  
Architect—William A. Lockett, AIA

House No. 2  
RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS (Bixby Ranch)  
3311 East Circle Drive  
Huntington Harbour  
Architect—Thomas J. Ruzesi, AIA

House No. 3  
THE J. DONALD LOCKE RESIDENCE  
1425 La Playa, Long Beach  
Architect—Thomas J. Ruzesi, AIA

House No. 4  
THE DR. HARRY JOHNSON RESIDENCE  
4262 Lakeside Drive, Lakewood  
Architects—Jordan Powers, AIA,  
and Patrick D. DeRosa, AIA

House No. 5  
THE NORMAN GOTTLIEB RESIDENCE  
4438 Fairway Drive, Lakewood  
Architect—Stanley Val Goldin, AIA



More About:

## Bixby Ranch

(Continued from page W-1)

poker game that kept him from home several days. Mrs. B. decided if he could do that, she could splurge. The exquisite sideboard is monumental proof that she could.

IN THE WOOD-PANELED offices at the back of the house are evidences of the vastness of the ranch operation. Also there are engravings of Fred Bixby's smoking habits—a criss-cross pattern of scratches where he struck his matches on the wall.

The ranch was completely self-sustaining with a staff that included blacksmiths, choremen, milkmen, gardeners, horse breakers, teamsters, cowboys, carpenters and cooks. All food was raised on the premises, including spices and sugar beets.

Gardens of every variety testify to the Bixbys' love for nature. There are rocks and cactus hauled by wagon from Arizona . . . two rubber trees in the front yard (pictured on cover) are the second oldest of their species in the state. Walks are lined with Italian cypress, oleander, pepper trees. Arbors, tennis courts, verandas and meandering walks echo of yesteryear.

TODAY, with only a small staff, the ranch house and grounds (now only 9 acres) are kept manicured and well-groomed for occasional weekend visits of surviving members of the Bixby clan—Mrs. Preston Hotchkis of San Marino, Mrs. Ed Janeway of Santa Ynez and Fred Bixby, Los Angeles, all children of Fred and Florence Bixby.

Once one of the largest ranches in the world, the barns and stables are now deserted.

But they stand as living monument of bygone days, of the strength of a family, a state and a nation.

This Sunday the Bixbys will share that heritage with all of Long Beach.



## on WAL Tour ... Other Homes

Tickets for next Sunday's Home Tour, sponsored by the Women's Architectural League, Long Beach District, will be available at the five tour homes. They can be visited in any order.

Only the Bixby Ranch will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; hours for other exhibited homes will be 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Mrs. Arthur V. Hoyer, president of the local chapter, says proceeds from the annual event will go for architectural scholarships at the University of Southern California and to the civic beautification committee of the Women's Division, L.B. Chamber of Commerce, to further its program.

VARIETY IS the keynote of homes selected for this year's tour.

The David Grand residence, in Huntington Harbour, duly oriented to a landscaped atrium, has a sweeping view of the surrounding water and offers a new dimension to Southern California living.

The beauty of Japan is captured in the Park Estates home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Donald Locke. The owners, who have traveled widely in the Orient, have brought the serenity and atmosphere of Japan to California with sweeping lines, Shoji screens, Japanese black pines—even a Japanese garden complete with swimming pool and tea house.

Luxurious spaciousness sets the atmosphere for the rambling contemporary estate home of the Dr. Harry Johnsons, Lakewood, designed for an artistically inclined family. Built on an acre of ground, encompassing a building area of 6,000 sq. ft., the home has a magnificent view of the golf course, an interior garden and swimming pool recreation area.

A low cantilevered roof projection over the entry walk presents an invitation to enter the Norman Gottlieb residence, also in Lakewood. A glass-walled living room, deliberately undraped, allows full viewing of a specially landscaped yard.



FATE OF HISTORIC RANCH  
TO BE CONSIDERED TUESDAY

## These roots of heritage can be ours!

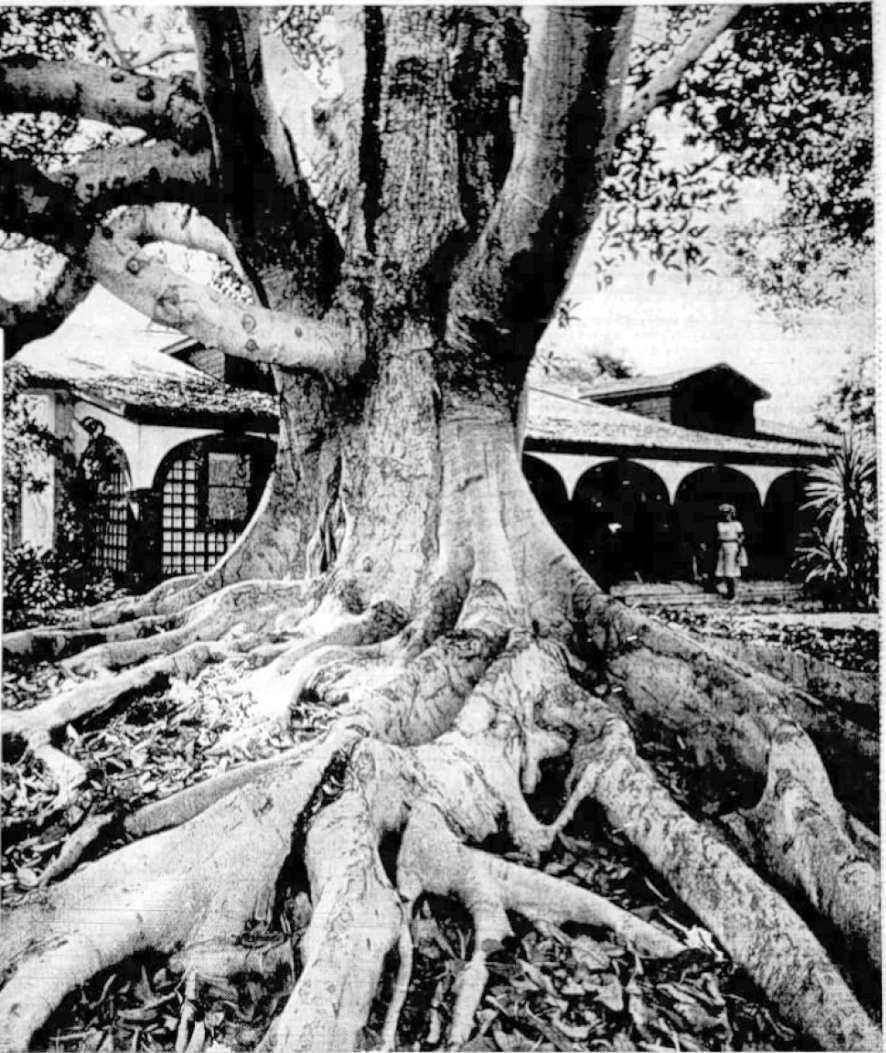
By MARY ELLIS CARLTON  
Director, Women's News

Long Beach is busy these days . . . looking to the future . . . buying ocean liners . . . designing derricks that pump oil from the ocean's floor . . . building high rises that reach for the sky.

But this week, hundreds of local citizens are more concerned with preserving the roots of our heritage.

Historians, civic leaders, organizations and professional groups are flooding the city building with requests that Long Beach's oldest residential landmark — Rancho

See BIXBY RANCH, page W-6



—Staff photo by Curt Johnson

INDEPENDENT PRESS-TELEGRAM  
**Women**  
and TRAVEL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1967

W-1

ADOBE AND OLD ROOTS . . . that's Rancho Los Alamitos, for four generations the home, livelihood and life of the John Bixby and Fred Bixby families. This historic site—along with its "twin" rancho, Los Cerritos—once was hub of a vast ranching empire that stretched beyond the city's present-day boundaries.

Overlooking East Long Beach, the rambling hacienda includes walls of the rancho's first adobe structure, built in 1806 and regarded as oldest residential landmark in the area. The burgeoning rubber tree—second oldest in California—is, like Rancho Los Alamitos, deeply rooted in our present-day heritage.

"These roots of heritage..." || 12.10.1967  
PAGE ONE



# COUNCIL TO DECIDE RANCHO'S FATE TUESDAY

## Will L. B. save its oldest landmark???

(Continued from page W-1)

Los Alamitos — be saved from that so-called agent of progress, the bulldozer.

The fate of East Long Beach's wondrous tree-shrouded hacienda on the hill will be up for decision at City Council meeting Tuesday.

Word has it that scores of articulate citizens plan to be there . . . and that they will raise their collective voices in an organized campaign to keep the remaining property intact — AND unspoiled.

It will be the City of Long Beach's second opportunity — "and their final one," according to a spokesman for the estate — to acquire the picturesque ranch site.

HEIRS OF THE late Fred H. Bixby are scheduled to present a revised proposal to city councilmen.

Their original offer donating this unique site to the

city was rejected by the City Council last July.

Terming the initial offer "very generous" and the city's action "hasty," a Bixby family spokesman emphasized in an interview Saturday that "the family has gone to great lengths to affect the necessary changes to make the proposal acceptable to the city."

Legal owner of the property is the Bixby Home Property Trust, established in 1930 by Fred H. Bixby. Trustees are his surviving children, Katharine Bixby Hotchkis, Elizabeth Bixby Janeway and Fred H. Bixby Jr.

The proposal, to be presented by Councilman Paul R. Deats, culminates more than three years of study and discussion by the family, interested citizens and city officials.

Preston B. Hotchkis, grandson of Fred Bixby and son of Mrs. Hotchkis, has represented the trust in these negotiations.

IN OUTLINING the family's proposed gift, Hotchkis said it includes a deed to the property . . . a policy of title insurance (\$300,000) in favor of the city . . . plus an additional cash contribution in excess of \$20,000 "as further evidence of the family's belief in the proposed historical and community-use concept."

Meanwhile, the family has spent substantial sums for repairs, replacements and maintenance.

In addition, the family recently let a contract for construction of an adobe wall around the entire 7½-acre site, designed to meet specifications agreed upon by the city.

WHAT CHANGES have been made in the original proposal to the city?

"Two substantial concessions," Hotchkis noted. The first: a change in the initial requirement that a community building be constructed as part of the city's restoration program.

The second: a change in terms of the right to revert. The proposal, asking for city expenditures amounting to approximately \$50,000 for restoration, renovation and improvement would provide that no community building be built for at least a year after the site has been restored.

After that — and for a two-year period — interested citizens could force the city to construct such a building by raising \$37,500 in cash and agreeing to pay half the cost. After three years, the building would be built only if the city felt it was needed on the site.

THE MODIFIED REVERTER clause states that if there is damage or destruction too severe to warrant restoration, the land would not revert to the family — provided the city transform the site and maintain it as a park or arboretum.

But the Bixby clan is dead set on its decree that "the site should be restored, maintained and used as a 'living' historical site." . . . geared toward becoming a hub of worthwhile community activities."

MEANWHILE, many civic leaders and organizations are standing up to be counted. . . .

Board members of the Chamber of Commerce have gone on record as favoring the acceptance of the proposal. Said Gerie Bishop, president: "If properly maintained and administered, the acquisition of the ranch as a historical monument certainly would contribute to the beauty and character of Long Beach."

Said Mrs. William B. Murray, member, Friends of the Museum: "I am completely horrified to think we have to fight to keep anything of historical value."

Mrs. Gus Walker, Historical Society: "There are very few places of historical value related to the history of early-day Long Beach. We're very much in favor of preserving the ranch as a significant historical monument."

Mrs. George P. Taubman, chairman of Long Beach Beautiful: "Rancho Los Alamitos is synonymous with Long Beach's heritage. To preserve it for future generations under local supervision would be a true asset to the cultural growth of our city."

MEANWHILE, beautiful and serene Rancho Los Alamitos — located on the brow of a graceful hill overlooking East Long Beach — silently awaits its fate.

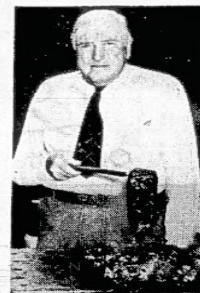
As if to rise above the incessant roar of today's mechanized society, it stands aloof, a hauntingly beautiful shrine to men who swept West to shape our destiny.

Here are Long Beach's deepest roots — a magnificent fusion of yesterday and today. Here the beholder — for generations to come — can witness firsthand evidences of the romance, the courage, the determination that made California the booming giant it is today.



**SPANNING THE YEARS**  
... Mrs. Roger Pryor measures historic impact of walls four feet wide. Above arch, the horns of Old Star, an ox that pulled John Bixby's plow during 1880s.

**AS THE BIXBY FAMILIES**  
grew, so did the hacienda — from 4 to 19 rooms. In the osmosis, the library (right) ended up with no windows. But Mrs. Fred Bixby (Florence) put in a skylight — and it soon became the most used room in the house. She spent her "egg money" for sets of books until shelves covered all the library walls.



FRED BIXBY . . . at age 74



FLORENCE BIXBY . . . at 73

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