

Entertained.

# REALTY MEN HOLD REVEL.

## Historic Kester Ranch Scene of Merry-making.

## Many Guests of the Janss In- vestment Company.

## Dealers Participate in Old- time Barbecue.

Joe Romero barbecue king of Southern California for the last quarter of a century, officiated yesterday afternoon at the greatest feast he ever created when the Janss Investment Company, general selling agents for the Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company played the host to 225 members of the Los Angeles Realty Board at the historic old Kester Ranch adjoining the new townsite of Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley.

Beef fresh from steers but a few hours removed from peaceful existence on the fat pasture of the Sheep Rancho and done to a turn over wood coals was passed in heaping pans, constantly replenished, down long tables laden with frijoles, enchiladas and everything else hot and Spanish and dear to the palates of a generation now departing. The crew manning these tables demolished everything in sight and washed it down and anchored it with punch that had a "stick" in every cup.

The whole was a veritable symposium of eating, sightseeing and speaking, with emphasis on the eating. Mingled with every exclamation of wonderment and satisfaction at the marvelous transformation of the old valley into a modern home center was a genuine sigh that the times when such feasts were common affairs had departed. Joe's tamales made more than one man sit up and wonder if any days could ever again be like the old days.

The guests, minus coats and with collars loosened to give the invigorating valley breeze full sway, began arriving in automobiles at half past 3. Fully fifty machines were soon parked around the old ranch house, which less than two years ago was the center of a vast untrammelled barley field.

At 4 o'clock the Southern Pacific special train pulled into the handsome new Van Nuys depot with a lot more visitors. Attached to the same train was the special car of H. V. Platt, general superintendent of the Southern Pacific system, who brought about twenty-five guests, most of them local heads of the Southern California departments and divisions of the road. Among these were H. B. Titcomb, district engineer; John G. Stubbs, general passenger agent, and F. E. Batters, assistant general passenger agent.

All were welcomed by Dr. Peter Janss, who, as head of the Janss Investment Company, did the honors for the occasion. Preceded by Moore's band the whole party was conveyed by auto to the rancho a quarter of a mile from the depot.

### TABLES UNDER TREES.

The scene under the ancient pepper trees following a general inspection of the magnificent valley improvements, was one never to be forgotten. Tables and benches had been set up everywhere in the yard inclosure of the old ranch house, H. J. Whitley, general manager of the Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company and the present owner of the Kester homestead, having given the hosts of the afternoon free hand. Everything was informal, even the speakers of the evening talking, or pretending to talk, entirely offhand. Coats were barred and any man who would have attempted to "dress" for the occasion would have been dispatched without ceremony. As a study in informality and comfort the thing was "done to a brown."

The catables were passed around in tin plates and the drinkables, of which there were several varieties and shades, were poured with unremitting regularity from teapots into tin cups holding one pint each. The "Senegambian Quartette," a strictly Senegambian organization, played "coon" songs on guitar and mandolin and sang unceasingly through programme and encores.

The speakers were called upon by Dr. Janss, who, himself, started this part of the programme off with a whole-hearted and well-put speech of welcome.

For the Realty Board, James R. H. Wagner, George N. Black and P. D. Wilson responded in kind, voicing the amazement of the members of that organization at the work that has been accomplished in the valley, and extending hearty congratulations to those who have been expending time and money in this most significant of recent developments in the Southland.

George Hanna, W. P. Whittsett, sales manager for the Van Nuys townsite; M. R. King, O. E. Farish and Harry Chandler spoke briefly.

Prof. James Lyon, who was one of the first to buy land and to build a home in the valley, delivered himself of a ringing boost for the section. J. W. Gilkyson of the Pacific Telephone Company announced in his talk that a fully-equipped station at Van Nuys is one of the early projects of his company.

### WHITLEY GIVES HISTORY

Perhaps the most interesting speech of the evening was that in which H. J. Whitley told the guests of the Janss Company the history of the San Fernando Valley and of the recent development of the section under the management at which he is the head. Whitley went back into the romantic days of early California when the dusty roads of the valley were the scene of house-to-house pilgrimages by the triars and when the hospitality of the ranchmen was a byword throughout Spanish America. He traced the ownership of the ranch of 47,000 acres through generation after generation of Spanish and Mexican owner to the time when it passed from the Los Angeles Farmers and Milling Company to its present possessors in September, 1909.

Whitley then took up the development work that has been accomplished

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in the last year under his management as general manager of the Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company. He told of the engineering difficulties that are being overcome in the construction of the magnificent electric railway through Cahuenga Pass and in the laying out of the twenty-six miles of asphaltum boulevard that bisects the valley. All the stupendous accomplishments to date and all the significant projects for the future in the valley were dwelt upon.

The present owners of the former Lankershim and Van Nuys ranches are H J Whitley, Gen. H. G. Otis, Harry Chandler, O. F. Brant and Gen. M. H. Sherman. These men paid \$2,500,000 for the property in September, 1909, taking possession in November, 1910, following the auctioning off of all of the live stock and farming equipment of the Los Angeles Farming and Milling Company.

The property was placed upon the market on January 1 of the present year, since which time sales have run over the \$4,000,000 mark and the expenditure in building and general improvements has exceeded \$500,000. So successful has been the exploitation of the valley and so great the demand for acreage and for suburban home lots that another great division of the property, the historic "Sheep Ranch," is soon to be cut into acreage and put upon the market.