

I. Introduction

On August 10, 1989, the Santa Fe Springs City Council adopted Ordinance No. 755, which created the Heritage Artwork in Public Places Program. The original goal of the program was to provide a collection of permanent outdoor artwork in the City that could be enjoyed for many generations. The program was designed to present the community with a wide range of sculpture styles, themes and media, all of the highest quality and monumental in scale.



“Eternal Springs” by James Russell, 1996, whose theme reflects the Industrial Modern period.

In keeping with the City’s rich history, art should be created around four historic periods:

- * Native American**
- * Spanish/Mexican**
- * Turn-of-the-Century Ranching**
- * Industrial Modern**

A brief description of these periods is listed on the next pages.

Native American Period

Santa Fe Springs was once the home of the Tongva People, a highly successful tribe. This tribe established a village near the hot springs that once bubbled at the corner of Telegraph Road and Norwalk Boulevard. Waterways that no longer exist connected the Tongva with other villages located throughout Southern California.



Dancing Gabrieleños by Janet Tuck and Geraldine Waldman

Good weather, plentiful game and a wealth of plant material enabled this tribe to flourish and develop a complex society. The Tongva People thrived until the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s. Forced labor ended hunting and gathering traditions of these natives. Their diet was changed to a less nutritious one, and diseases like small pox nearly made the tribe extinct. Even their name was changed; they became known as the Gabrieleños. An exhibit about their culture before the arrival of the Spanish covers a one acre site at Heritage Park.



Spanish /Mexican Period

By the early 1800's Southern California was a Spanish controlled territory with a system of Catholic Missions serving as government bases. After gaining control of the state, the Mexican government divided it into vast land grants that were awarded to soldiers and individuals loyal to the Mexican government. Santa Fe Springs was part of the extensive Manuel Nieto land grant, which extended from Whittier to Fountain Valley. At that time, Mission San Juan Capistrano had an immense cattle operation based here in Santa Fe Springs. Their foreman or mayordomo, Patricio Ontiveros, maintained a home and cowhide operation on the land, which is now Heritage Park. The remains of his early 19th century adobe home can be seen next to the Carriage Barn.



Turn-of-the-Century Ranching Period

From 1870 to 1920 Santa Fe Springs was the site of several impressive agricultural enterprises. Originally called Fulton Wells, this city was started by J. E. Fulton, who used its sulphur-rich water to establish a health resort that treated tuberculosis in the 1870's. Later, he sold part of his property to Eli Hawkins, who developed the land as an elegant Victorian estate in 1880. The ranch, which featured the finest in Victorian architecture and gardens, has been reconstructed by the City as Heritage Park. Another family, the Clarkes, hired innovative architect Irving Gill to build a country estate here in 1916. This distinctive-looking home has been restored by the City for public use. Together these two ranches encompassed about 175 acres of citrus groves. Other elegant estates existed near the Telegraph Road/Norwalk Boulevard intersection but were destroyed during the oil boom of the 1920's.

Industrial Modern Period

Around 1919, oil was discovered in Santa Fe Springs. The discovery of the sixth largest petroleum deposit in enormous changes for Alexander Bell well blew the explosion could be Within hours after the farmers in Santa Fe their wagons and cars to



The little farming town of Santa Fe Springs became a boom town overnight. As the oil industry moved in, so did industrial hazards. Sometimes after drilling, oil would explode from the ground with such force that workers would yell, “Run for your life!” Hardhats were not a requirement in those days.

the world meant the town. In 1919, the out with such force that heard in Whittier. blow-out, the citrus Springs began packing move to safer places.



The Oilfield Workers by Carlos Terres, 1991

Oil fires were another problem. Some would burn for days and could be seen from as far away as central Orange County. Little was known about arresting oil fires in the 1920’s. Many burned for days and became public spectacles. Gradually, living conditions improved and Santa Fe Springs’ residents incorporated their city in 1957. Today the City is home to thousands of businesses and over 20,000 residents.