

Rancho Arroyo de los Pilarcitos

—Joaquin Jimenez

Arroyo de los Pilarcitos was the land grant that Juan José Candelario Miramontes, an officer at the Presidio in San Francisco, was granted by the Mexican government.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American war in 1848. The California Land Act of 1851 honored the Treaty, intending to protect Mexican citizens' property rights. However, the Land Act required landowners to prove their titles in American courts, and many lost their property trying to litigate under the new American legal system.

Juan José and his wife Maria Guadalupe Briones were the owners of Rancho Miramontes. Around the year 1841 Rancho Miramontes was known as Rancho San Benito, a diverse community that included different ethnic backgrounds. Rancho San Benito's demographics included the native Ohlone, Mexicans, Italians, Portuguese, Polynesians, Scots, Chinese, and other ethnic groups. During this era Rancho San Benito was known as a very prosperous community.

Mexicanos and Latinos are not new to this community. After the war of 1848 many Mexicans moved out of the area into the central valley of California.

After World War 2, many Mexican nationals came to work in the fields of Half Moon Bay. Most of these were migrant workers or seasonal workers.

It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that many Latino families decided to stay in Half Moon Bay. Now, in 2020, Mexicanos/Latinos are 32 percent of the population, many continuing to do farm labor. Present-day Half Moon Bay is again becoming a welcoming city for Mexicano/Latino residents.

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