

**ALH. RESIDENT**

**Donates Baptism Dress From 1893**

Esperanza Batz, a resident of the California Lutheran Home, 2312 South Fremont, Alhambra, recently donated to the Alhambra Historical Society the baptismal dress she wore in 1893 when she was 2 months old.

The dress was made of hand-embroidered batiste for her baptism in the San Gabriel Mission. Esperanza, now living with a sister, Marguerite, 90, will celebrate the same birthday Feb. 25 with her sister.

Their roots go back to the middle of the 19th century when their grandparents, Jean Baptiste Batz and his wife, Catarina, left their Basque homeland on the French side of the Pyrenees Mountains and sailed to Buenos Aires to try their luck at farming.

The venture failed, but the couple heard of California's gold rush and sold their ranch to take the 6-month sail around South America's Cape Horn to Monterey Bay.

In 1850 California was admitted to the Union. The Batz family acquired an adobe house which had been built in 1776 by Franciscan missionaries. Some 16 years after their arrival they began acquisition of what eventually became the Rancho Rosa Castilla, covering all or part of the present communities of El Sereno, Monterey Park, Alhambra, Belvedere, and City Terrace. The land cost \$12 per acre. Their property was



**BAPTISM DRESS** — Mildred Rickabaugh, left, curator of Alhambra Historical Society, admires dress Esperanza Batz, right, wore for baptism in 1893. Esperanza recently donated the hand-embroidered batiste garment to the Society.

bounded on the East by Atlantic Avenue, in what was then called Ramona Acres (now Monterey Park); on the North by Alhambra Road and the West by Eastern Avenue in Los Angeles. The Batz family built a second home in 1906 and sold the original house with 582 acres to Grider and Hamilton, realtors.

The Batz sisters remember Alhambra when the center of the town was Garfield and Main and a store stood on each corner, providing all the necessities of life: the blacksmith shop, the Crow and Drake butcher shop, the general store, and the feed and mill store.

In 1882 Catarina Batz died at the age of 60 years. The Batz's aunt Martha received the property which is now known as The Alhambra. A brick house stood on top of the hill. Later the property was known as the Hill estate.

The sisters remember the creek that used to run through the present Lutheran Home property. As girls they would ride a sled down the green-weeded hillside across this property, a hill now identified by the Luminaria restaurant. They recall the Old Hill estate, built by the railroad magnate from the East Coast, which is the building housing

the present Lutheran Alhambra East home.

They recall also the purchase of the estate by Dominic Jebbia (later known as "The Banana King"), for \$100,000 at auction.

—KURT LENSER



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