



# WHITESMOKE SUN / COURIER

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Backyard History - Sometimes, we can find history right in our very own backyard. Often, we drive by significant historical sites yet, never turn our heads to take in the view. One such location can be found right here in Chino within less than a mile from the Prado Park reenactment site. During the last half of the 1800s there were four trails that crisscrossed the Chino Valley. The fourth of these trails was called the Colorado road and was first used in 1831 by trappers and immigrants from Mexico and the East and was one of the only trails accessible year round to navigate Southern California. The trail was also used by the famed Butterfield Overland Stagecoach from 1858 to 1861 to carry passengers and mail across the southern part of the state. The route of the Butterfield Stage passed at the doorstep of an adobe home after crossing the Santa Ana River and followed the base of the hills along Chino Creek above which Highway 71 now runs. The Adobe belonged to Fenton Slaughter, who purchased the building from Mr. Yorba in the late 1860s. The Yorba-Slaughter Adobe is one of the oldest standing adobe residences in all of San Bernardino County. The home is restored to its original 19th century beauty, complete with furnishings, a general store, and a post office. What does all this have to do with the Civil War you might ask? Well, the Butterfield Stage just happens to be the route taken by Albert Sydney Johnston upon leaving of Los Angeles on the way east across Texas and on to the war. Upon Session and the outbreak of war, many union military men were stationed in Los Angeles, a small village of about 4,000 inhabitants. A call went out to enroll a voluntary militia and the Los Angeles Mounted Ri-

files were formed. (Editor's Note: See this web site for more information on this unit: <http://www.militarymuseum.org/LosAngelesMountedRifles2.html>). From its inception however, the militia was pro southern in its sentiments and mirrored the hotbed of secessionism that was L.A. In fact, things were so bad that General Sumner, commanding all U.S. forces in California, wrote the State Department that there was more "disaffection" in Los Angeles than any where in the State and that influential members of the city, including the police, sheriff, and various judges had become secessionists and vowed rebellion. (Rowdies from El Monte had disrupted union meetings). It was decided that if one really wanted to help the confederacy, it would be better accomplished by heading east and joining the army there. The Los Angeles Rifles joined General Johnston for the journey. On the night before the departure, the quartermaster at the time, General Winfield Scott Hancock held a dinner party at his home for the resigned officers, including Johnston and Armistead. The emotional scene of old friends bidding each other a fond adieu is played out well in the book Gods and Generals. Johnston's hasty departure from Los Angeles for fear of arrest on charges of treason lead him over the Butterfield Stage route to Chino and the Yorba-Slaughter Adobe. With vaqueros guarding the route against Union troops, Johnston escaped through Texas and onward to the east and the rest, as they say, is history...right here in our own backyard! The Adobe is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and is located near the Prado Olympic shooting range, across Euclid Street from the Prado Park entrance. There is no charge for admission.