



OLD BATHRICK HALL—Back in the days when Gardena Boulevard had dirt streets and resembled the old west. John Hiram Bathrick is seen, wearing a hat, at far left. The large brick building in the photo is “Bathrick Hall,” his lasting legacy in Gardena. Below, the old Bathrick Hall as seen today at 1004-1006 Gardena Blvd. The addition of palm trees in front of the building is appropriate, for Gardena Boulevard’s original name was Palm Avenue.

From Town Hall to Watering Hole, One Landmark Remains a Gathering Spot

By JAMES OSBORNE
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Few Gardena residents who pass by the old brick building, once known as “Bathrick Hall” and located at 1004-1006 Gardena Blvd., may know the history of the building or the man who built it.

John Hiram Bathrick, or J. H. Bathrick as he was more commonly known, was born in Roscoe, Ill. on Aug. 28, 1845 to parents Martin and Cassandra Bathrick. When he reached the age of 18 he enlisted as a private with the Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. He fought until Oct. 10, 1864 when he was mustered out of service.

Bathrick married his first wife, Marietta Dale, on Feb. 15, 1870. This marriage produced three children: Edward, William, and Minnie.

In the spring of 1879, the family left for Custer County, Neb. so Bathrick could try his hand at cattle ranching. In 1882 they moved again to Arapahoe, Neb. and stayed there for the next 20 years.

Shortly after this move, however, Marietta died on Aug. 20, 1883. John would remarry however, this time to Elizabeth T. Doyle, on June 15, 1885, and have two more children, first Loretta and then John, who died in infancy.

It was 1902 when Bathrick and his family made the long journey to California. Upon his arrival, he purchased a ranch near present

day 182nd Street in Gardena. He soon after bought an additional 10-acre parcel near the intersection of Gardena Boulevard and Budlong Avenue from another early settler to Gardena, Charles Edwin Wallin.

In 1904, Bathrick constructed what was considered to be the first commercial building on Gardena Boulevard, west of Vermont Avenue. The east half of the first floor of “Bathrick Hall” originally served as a grocery store. During the 1930s, this same room served as “Daniel’s Malt Shop.”

Later, it was a cocktail lounge until

Among the first parishioners of St. Anthony’s was the Rosecrans family, who donated to the building of the first St. Anthony’s Church. Also among the original founders of St. Anthony’s was J. H. Bathrick.

Bathrick Hall also served as the meeting place for Gardena’s Masonic Lodge for more than 40 years. J. H. Bathrick was, in fact, a charter member of the lodge.

In 1911, Bathrick constructed a residence at 1157 W. Gardena Blvd. to originally house the family help. A few years later, the Bathrick family actually occupied the home.

At one time Bathrick had planted the acreage surrounding the home with an apple orchard. However, the apple trees proved to be of a poor quality and were later removed.

Bathrick’s daughter, Loretta went on to live in the old house until 1977. She died three years later at age 93. Currently, the former Bathrick House serves as a dental office.

J. H. Bathrick died at his home on June 21, 1939 at the age of 94. He was buried in the family plot located at Roosevelt Memorial Park in Gardena, along with his son William, who died in 1921, and daughter, Minnie who died in 1949.

However, Bathrick’s legacy lives on in Gardena in both the hall and home he built on Gardena Boulevard. Still, if Bathrick were alive today he might be surprised to see current Gardena residents enjoying a cocktail in the same building where he once attended Mass.

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the 1980s, when it housed “The Way” Bible store. The west half of the first floor of the building originally served as a drug store until the 1930s, when it housed an electrical shop. Today, this same room is known as the “Desert Room” cocktail lounge.

At the time Bathrick Hall was constructed, Gardena did not have a Catholic Church within its boundaries. St. Anthony’s Church was built later and dedicated on Dec. 12, 1912. Early Gardena residents would hold Mass, beginning in 1909, at the home of Peter Lillich, near the vicinity of 168th Street and Normandie Avenue. As the number of parishioners grew, it was decided that a new location be found, so Mass was held at Bathrick Hall until St. Anthony’s opened.



LAYED TO REST—John Bathrick is buried at Roosevelt Memorial Park.