

VISITOR CENTER FACT SHEET

The building is a re-creation of a barn, garage, circa 1900, typical of the transition from horse drawn to gasoline powered vehicles. As automobiles replaced buggies, the barn became a car barn or garage, Very often the obsolete and displaced buggy was left outside to weather until rescued by antique collectors of the next generation. The double doors at the front of the building were modeled after an old car barn still standing in Fullerton, California.

The Visitor Center was constructed by the County of Orange to house general interpretive exhibits related to Orange County history, specifically for the El Toro area. The changing exhibits allow for items to be displayed that might not be appropriate for the historic buildings; school, church, Serrano Adobe and the Bennett House.

The rear of the building is separated from the display area and is currently occupied by a small research library sponsored by the Saddleback Area Historical Society. The library is open to the public on Saturdays between 2pm and 4pm.

The Visitor Center exhibits currently include a restored buggy loaned by the Saddleback Area Historical Society, a collection of fossils discovered in the local area and an exhibit entitled "Ranchos to Real Estate - Reflections of Old El Toro". The exhibit is a combined effort of Heritage Hill staff and the Saddleback Area Historical Society.

The model of 'Old El Toro' built by LeRoy Evans, formerly housed in the visitor center, can now be found in the vestry of St George's Episcopal Mission at the opposite end of the park.