

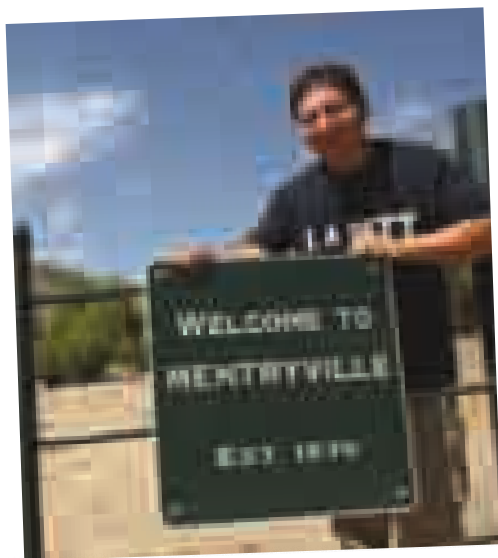
Angel's Be Alive!



Angel Gomez,
Director of
Member Services



Mentryville's historical marker plaque.



Here I am, ready to explore!



And here I go!

Mentryville: Western Oil Town

Angel discovers that oil's well that ends well.

Hello again, everybody!

With everyone thinking about oil prices these days, I thought I would visit an old oil ghost town.

Recently I heard that, tucked away in the hills of Valencia just a few miles north of Los Angeles, there was a small ghost town that was home to the longest continually producing oil well in the world. Naturally, I had to check this out and bring you the details.

Mentryville is very easy to get to from the 5 (Golden State) Freeway and is hidden in the hills just South of Six Flags Magic Mountain. You can drive to the actual ghost town, but if you want to check out the remains of the oil well, you need to walk up the trail about a mile and a half. Or, take your mountain bike. I saw a couple of mountain bikers having a blast coming down the trail.

Probably the neatest thing about Mentryville is its seclusion; you'll truly get a feel for what life was like back in 1876. If you haven't seen *There Will Be Blood*, you may want to see it before you go; you'll have much more appreciation for the workings of an old-time oil town.

Here's the story from www.mentryville.org, Mentryville's official Website:

"It was a hot September day in 1876 when Charles Alexander Mentry brought in

California's first commercially viable oil well. The location was Pico Canyon, 35 miles north of Los Angeles in the western Santa Clarita Valley. Oil was piped six miles east to California's first successful refinery in present-day Newhall and shipped out by rail. Eventually the Pico oil works were folded into John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Co. of California. Production slowed in the late 1920s but didn't entirely stop until 1990. When finally capped, Mr. Mentry's discovery well was the longest continually producing well in the world.

"Experienced drillers from Pennsylvania came to work the Pico oil field. Bachelors stayed in bunkhouses; family men erected cabins and even a schoolhouse and bakery in the town they called Mentryville. There was the first village in Southern California to be lighted by natural gas. Alcohol consumption was forbidden; the men spent their earnings in nearby Newhall, where saloons outnumbered churches. Today, Mentryville is a ghost town, its few remaining structures standing as silent reminders of the birth of the California oil industry.

"Located at the end of Pico Canyon Road off of I-5 at Lyons, Mentryville is an 851-acre state park at the north end of the Santa Clarita Woodlands. The park has been operated



Make sure you pay the "Iron Ranger" as you enter Mentryville.



If you would like a tour, which is highly recommended, make sure you call (818) 768-2302.



The Mentryville "one room" schoolhouse.



Here I am checking out an old tanker truck.

since 1995 by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, a joint-powers authority headed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The City of Santa Clarita is a joint-powers partner. Mentryville offers hikers, bikers and equestrians not only a glimpse of California history,

but also shaded trails into the rugged and lushly vegetated headwaters of Pico Canyon and the Santa Susana Mountains. From Mentryville, the trail leads to Johnson Park at 0.7 miles, a serene picnicking spot once favored by the oil men who toiled in the fields, and the remains of the oil rig are another 0.7 miles up the canyon."



This is the sign you'll see off the 5 Freeway going north from Los Angeles.



Info:

- **Website:** Before you go, check out their Website at www.mentryville.org. There's lots of historical information here that's distributed by the Friends of Mentryville, a nonprofit organization that brings Mentryville back to its original splendor.
- **Directions:** Take the 5 (Golden State Freeway) to Valencia. Take the Pico Canyon Road (Lyons Avenue) exit and proceed west along Pico Canyon Road approximately three miles. You'll come to a fork; keep left and take the dirt road past the gate. Stop at the "Iron Ranger" and pay the \$5 fee before heading into the parking lot (you can pay with a check or with cash).
- **Hours:** Mentryville is open daily from sunrise to sunset.

July Events

31st Lotus Festival

- July 11-13
The City's 31st annual Lotus Festival anticipates the annual blooming of the lotus plant with a celebration including music, art, crafts, food and ceremonies. The festival is scheduled for Friday, July 11, through Sunday, July 13. The festival takes place Friday, July 11, from 5 to 9 p.m.; Saturday, July 12, noon to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, July 13, noon to 8:30 p.m. Location is Echo Park Lake, Park Avenue between Glendale Avenue and Echo Park Boulevard, just north of the Hollywood (101) and Pasadena (110) freeway junction, near Dodger Stadium.
- Information: www.laparks.org/grifmet/lotus.htm

Festival of Sail

- Aug. 15-18
The majestic Tall Ships return to the Port of Los Angeles at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 15 with a grand parade of sail into port to kick off Festival of Sail LA 2008. More than a dozen ships will be participating, including the US Coast Guard's 297-foot *Eagle* as well as *HMS Bounty* and *HMS Surprise*, which have been featured in major Hollywood films. Activities include boat tours, dockside demonstrations, maritime-themed entertainment and an educational area for young and old alike. Parking at various locations around the Port will be available free. Food will be available for purchase on site, and at nearby restaurants. The Warner Grand Theatre will present special showings of movies featuring two of the ships in the Festival of Sail.
- Information: (888) LAMI-808 or www.lafestivalofsail.info

Reading Magic

- All summer
Abracadabra and alakazam, the Los Angeles Public Library is conjuring up some Reading Magic this summer. All children ages 4-12 are invited to join the free summer reading club at the 71 Los Angeles Public Library branches and at Central Library. Sign up at a library or online at www.lapl.org, and read and enjoy library services all summer long. Children who join the reading club during the summer will receive a free book bag, folder, bookmark and certificate of completion. Throughout the season, branches will host performers and authors and conduct book clubs, craft groups and storytelling.
- Information: (213) 228-7481

Warner Grand Theatre

- All month
Have you been to the revived Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro? The theatre, which retains its atmosphere and décor from the day when it was built, in 1931, is managed by Cultural Affairs and presents a lively schedule of film festivals (both classic Hollywood and foreign), live performances from area entertainers and theatre companies, and is the launch location for area walking tours and preservation tours. It is truly one of the City's gems.
- Information: www.warnergrand.org

Ticket Guy Recommends



"I recommend Wild Rivers. It's summer, it's hot, and you need to stay cool, so take your husband or wife and head on down to Wild Rivers in Irvine. Oh, don't forget to bring the kids, too."

