

## The Early History of Chatsworth Lake Manor

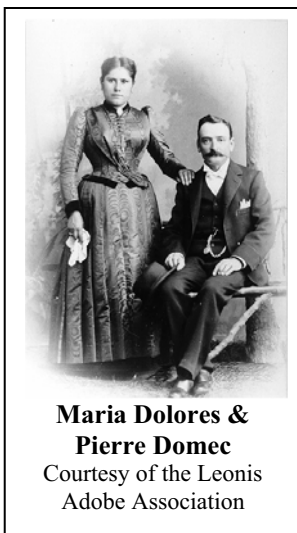
By Ann & Ray Vincent – Chatsworth Historical Society

In 1797 a Chumash Native American, Odón Chihuya, was born at Humaliwo (Malibu), and later lived at the San Fernando Mission. His granddaughter, Francesca Domec, was granted a 148 acre homesteaded in 1901 in what is now Chatsworth Lake Manor.

It's impossible to start the history of Lake Manor without mentioning the early Indian tribes that inhabited our hills, living along the creeks amongst the rock shelters provided by our spectacular Chatsworth rock formations.

In 1812, Odón married Eusabia, and they had four children. Two of their daughters, Maria Dolores and Espiritu, would marry two Frenchmen, Pierre Domec and Miguel Leonis.

In 1836, at the age of 39, Odón moves to the site of the Chumash village known as Huwam, located at the mouth of Bell Canyon. Odón receives his Decree of Emancipation from the San Fernando Mission in 1838, and by 1843, his son-in-law Urbano and Urbano's son Manuel join him on the land to be later known as Rancho El Escorpion. Together they file a claim for two leagues of land (close to 9,000 acres), however they are granted only one half of a square league. Juan Sepulveda, the Second Alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles, surveys off a parcel that was actually only a quarter of a league (1,110 acres), even though it was ratified as half a square league. Over the next twenty five years Odón and all future partners, including his son-in-laws Domec and Leonis, dispute the boundaries, occupying and using all 9,000 acres of land at various times. Those disputed acres included the Chatsworth Lake area east to Topanga.

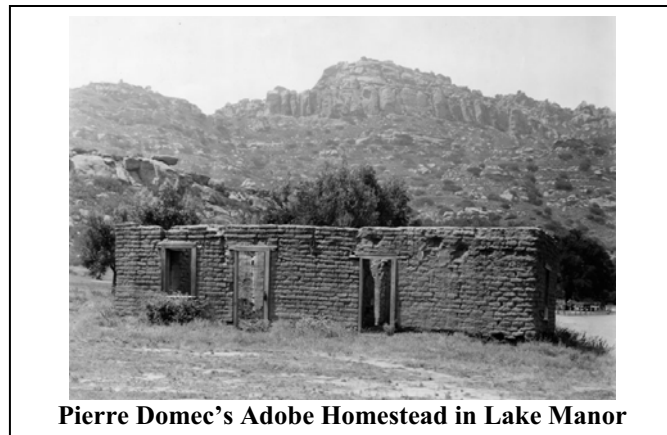


**Maria Dolores & Pierre Domec**

Courtesy of the Leonis Adobe Association

Odón's son-in-laws were both enterprising men, however the Lake Manor story follows Pierre Domec, while Miguel Leonis ended up in Calabasas. Pierre arrived in Los Angeles from France in 1844 at the age of 24 and worked as a cooper in charge of the wine cellars of his compatriot Jean Louis Vignes. By 1849, 29-year old Pierre is living with Maria Dolores at a lime-burning operation at El Escorpion in the Chatsworth lake area. Lime had a ready

market in Los Angeles for mortar in brick construction, the process of tanning cowhides, and in sanitation. His business was profitable. His first adobe was near the lime kiln off of Woolsey Blvd.; however by 1870, Domec had built a second adobe located just west of the



**Pierre Domec's Adobe Homestead in Lake Manor**

current Lake Manor Church. That homestead led to the Domec Family being granted 148 acres of government land through the Homestead Act in 1901.

Pierre died in 1883 and his wife Maria Dolores died in 1884. Throughout his life he was a respected businessman and managed property for himself and others.



By 1927, the P.D. Estate Company was formed to manage the Lake Manor property with shares distributed to sisters Francesca and Caledonia and their niece Maria Moore. Cabin sites were sold in the 20's and 30's, giving rise to the Chatsworth Lake Manor that we know today.

The two eldest Domec daughters Francesca and Celedona never married. Their younger sister Maria Antonia Domec Moore had a grandson named Henry Acosta. In the 1940 census Henry Acosta lived in Lake Manor and shortly after that married Florence and had two children John and Yolanda. They lived at 23144 Smith Road. In 1952 John Acosta was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Chatsworth Park Elementary School. Does anyone know where he is now? It would be fun to find him.

Floyd Berry was one of the early developers (1925) of the Lake Manor subdivisions. He set up his surveyor's equipment in a tent on the site now occupied by The Lake Manor Chapel. Working around the clock (at night, with kerosene lanterns), he supervised the plotting and laying out of all of the roads and subdivisions we enjoy today.

In 1927 the LA Times first mentioned **Chatsworth Lake Manor**. "As the result of the discovery of valuable therapeutic water from mineral springs on the Domec Estate, plans are being made for the establishment of a great health resort. The estate has been renamed Chatsworth Lake Manor."