

Teacher's Guide

RLC Virtual Tour for Students

Welcome to the Virtual Tour of Rancho Los Cerritos! You can access it at this link:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=ZxY79Zfq5Ws>

As you explore the Rancho in this virtual format, you and your students will be able to “move” through the adobe house and “step” into most of the exhibit rooms and, thus, get a glimpse of what life was like on a Southern California rancho during the 1800s.

Move through the space in several ways:

- Clicking on a circle you see on the ground will take you to that circle (or move you towards that circle if it is too far away)
- Using the arrow keys on your keyboard to move forward (up), backward (down), left and right
- Using the WASD keys on the keyboard to move forward (W), backward (S), right (D), and left (A)—these will be familiar to anyone who plays video games on a PC

Notice different colored pins:

- YELLOW pins provide a short overview of each room and indicate how it was used.
- GREEN pins pose questions for students to discuss, related to what they are observing.
- RED pins identify rooms that are not part of the tour because they date to a later period.

Within each room, we suggest that students start by reading the RED pin, then make their own observations about what they see, and finally consider the questions posed by the GREEN pins.

TEACHER INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS: Today, Rancho Los Cerritos is a City, State, and National Historic Landmark in north Long Beach. The five-acre site is located on the ancestral homeland the Indigenous people known today as the Tongva. The adobe house was built in 1844 as the headquarters for a cattle ranch belonging to John Temple, who had emigrated to Alta California (which was part of Mexico) from Massachusetts. Temple sold the ranch lands in 1866 to Flint, Bixby & Co., which operated a sheep ranch here that was managed by Jotham Bixby. After the Bixby family moved out in the mid-1880s, the adobe was rented to various families who worked on nearby dairies and farms. Over the next few decades, the Bixby family sold off portions of the property to become new cities, including Long Beach, Signal Hill, and Lakewood. Their nephew, Llewellyn Bixby, bought the remaining five acres in 1930 and remodeled the adobe, adding plumbing, electricity, heating, and landscaping. His family owned the house until 1955, when the City of Long Beach purchased the property. Since that time, the historic house museum that welcomes visitors of all ages.

Move inside the gates.

RED TAG: Courtyard: Welcome to Rancho Los Cerritos! This building is made of adobe, or sun-dried mud bricks. The two-story central portion straight ahead was mostly for the owners, and the two single-story wings on your left and right were for work and workers. The main entrance to the building was through the green gates behind you. Use your mouse to move around the adobe house to see what life was like here during the 1800s.

GREEN TAG 1 [courtyard photo]: These two photographs were taken in 1872. Compare the modern view you can see with the historic photographs. What has changed? What is still the same?

TEACHER INFO: Students might notice that the roof above the wings of the house have changed from flat to pitched and that the roofing materials on the central portion have changed from shingles to red clay tiles. Students also might notice that the landscaping has changed, from dirt to plants, and that a brick terrace and sunporch have been added in front of the central doorway. Students might notice that the people in the 1872 photo are wearing clothes that look “old

fashioned” or rather “formal,” compared to what someone might wear when visiting the Rancho today, and they might notice that the historic photograph is in black and white versus the virtual tour, which is in color. On the other hand, students might notice that the large white building, as well as the building’s layout and windows, look very similar in both images.

GREEN TAG 2 [courtyard function]: The rooms along the right-hand side of the courtyard were used for different kinds of work when this building served as the headquarters for a ranch. Before exploring those rooms, make a list of three types of ranch work that you think might have been done in this courtyard before the space was landscaped.

TEACHER INFO: During the 1800s, RLC served as the headquarters for a cattle ranch, then for a sheep ranch. Since ranch work was done in the courtyard, this area was a busy place. In fact, wagons were brought into the courtyard when their wheels needed to be fixed, and horses were brought into the courtyard when their horseshoes needed to be replaced. Laundry could have been done in the courtyard too. A packed-dirt courtyard was practical; landscaping (as you see today) would not have been.

Turn right and “walk” into the first door you see, which is in the far-right corner of the courtyard.

RED TAG: Foreman’s Room. John Temple, who purchased Rancho Los Cerritos in the 1840s, operated a mercantile (store) in Los Angeles and a cattle ranch here. Temple hired a foreman named Jose Simon Rocco to manage the cattle ranch. Rocco supervised the rancho’s vaqueros (Spanish for “cowboys”). This space served as both his office and bedroom.

GREEN TAG 1: [Ledger (record book)]. The Rancho’s foreman recorded important information in the rancho’s ledger. What do you think he might have included? (Hint: A foreman works for the rancho owner, so he had to make reports.)

TEACHER INFO: Like any other type of business, cattle ranchers kept records of their products, their expenses, and their income. The majordomo, who oversaw ranching operations for the owner, had to keep accurate records of how many cattle were branded or slaughtered each year, how many cowhides and how much cow fat (tallow) were produced for trade, what each worker had earned and been paid, and what type of supplies were needed or had been purchased. That way, the rancho (rancho owner) would know how successful the cattle ranch was.

GREEN TAG 2: [Cattle brands.] The vaqueros rounded up the newborn calves every spring and marked them with a hot branding iron. Why do you think the vaqueros did that? How many items can you find in this room that vaqueros might have used to do their job?

TEACHER INFO: There are branding irons hanging on the left wall, and one leaning against the table. Brands are made of iron, which can be heated in a fire. They have a long handle so that a vaquero can use the tool to sear the design into the calf’s skin, while wearing leather gloves, without burning their hands. Vaqueros rode horses to catch the calves, so there is a saddle on display. They also used reatas (Spanish for ropes) to lasso the cows and spurs to control their horses through pressure. You can spot examples of these tools hanging on the walls.

Exit this room and turn right; go into the next door.

RED TAG: Laundry Room. When RLC was a working sheep ranch in the 1870s, two men were responsible for washing everyone’s clothes. Originally from China, their names were Ah Ying and Ah Fan. They used equipment like you see in this laundry room.

GREEN TAG 1: [Bucket.] There was no running water in the adobe during the 1800s. Can you guess where Ah Ying and Ah Fan might have gotten water to do the laundry? Which items in this room could be used to carry, store, and/or heat laundry water?

TEACHER INFO: Children will probably spot buckets, but there is another tool in the room that would help carry two heavy buckets of water at a time. In the back window, there is a yoke that can be worn across someone's shoulders. A bucket can be hung from each side of the yoke, so the person carries the weight with their back rather than their hands/arms. This is important since water weighs approx. 8 pounds per gallon, and it could take up to 50 gallons of water to do a week's worth of laundry. Water came from a well in the garden. They could heat the water in the large tin caldron (also in the back window) on the stove. If students look closely, they might also notice wood to heat the stove stacked on the floor.

GREEN TAG 2: [Washtub and wringer.] To do the laundry, Ah Ying and Ah Fan used a washboard and wringer. By observing these tools, can you figure out how they got the clothes clean? Make a list of any other the items you see that the laundrymen would have used to do their job.

TEACHER INFO: Many students will have had some experience with doing laundry today, whether at home or in a laundromat, but few may have thought about how modern machines work. The equipment in this room tells that tale, through an historical lens: clothes are soaked in water (like how a modern machine fills with water), which can be heated on a wood-burning stove (like how our modern machines are heated with gas or electricity), then the garments are scrubbed against the washboard to force the soap through the material and carry the dirt away (like the modern agitation cycle), then water is removed with a wringer (like the modern spin cycle), then clothes are hung to dry (like the modern dryer). To eliminate wrinkles, clean clothes can be ironed (whether in modern or olden times, ; however, the irons in this room must be heated on a stove). The sock stretchers hanging on the wall allow wool socks to hold their natural shape.

Exit this room and turn right; go into the next door; from the hallway, turn right.

RED TAG: Furniture Storeroom. RLC's rancheros (Spanish for "ranch owners") raised cows for their hides and tallow, as well as sheep for their wool. The money they made from selling these valuable products was used to support their families and to pay the workers. Cow hides could be made into leather goods like boots and saddles, cow fat (tallow) into soap and candles, and wool into blankets and clothing.

GREEN TAG 1: [1872 photograph.] The men in this photograph used sharp iron shears to clip the wool fleece from each sheep. How many pairs of sheep shears can you spot? If a man earned 5 cents for each sheep he clipped, how many sheep would he have to shear to earn \$2.20 in a day? Or \$10.50 in a week?

TEACHER INFO: J. Bixby & Co. had 25,000-30,000 sheep. Sheering was a big job. It was done twice a year, spring and fall, and the operation took four to six weeks. Shearers were paid a token for each sheep their sheered, and they each sheered 40-60 sheep per day. The shearers exchanged their tokens for payment on Saturday afternoons, then took Sunday off and started work again on Monday morning. This photograph was taken in front of the Bixbys' wool barn, featuring the itinerant sheep shearers who sheered RLC's sheep in the spring of 1872. It includes several dozen men, several of whom are displaying their sheep shears. Answers to the student questions: X shears are visible in the photo, 44 sheep in a day, and 210 sheep in a week.

GREEN TAG 2: [Chairs.] The people living at RLC stored extra furniture in this storeroom until it was needed. List three household items you see and describe how they might be used. List three ranching items you see and describe their function.

TEACHER INFO: The people who lived at Rancho Los Cerritos in the 19th century had to be both self-sufficient and prepared to welcome visitors because the adobe was located several miles

from its neighbors (Rancho Dominguez and Rancho Los Alamitos) and more than 15 miles from the pueblo of Los Angeles (a journey that took several hours). Family members from the central California Coast or the East Coast would often visit for weeks or months at a time. Extra mattresses, chairs, beds, children's toys, dressers, and lanterns are stored here to accommodate them. Waste not, want not. Ranching items are also displayed in this space, since RLC does not currently have a barn. These items include sheep shears, harnesses for horses, scythes, and a sharpening stone.

Exit this room and turn right; go into the opposite door at the other end of the hallway.

RED TAG: Food Storeroom. When this adobe was the headquarters for a sheep ranch, three dozen people lived and worked at the Rancho. Ah Ying and Ah Fan (who you learned about in the laundry room) also did the cooking. They prepared three meals a day for the family and the ranch workers.

GREEN TAG 1: [Basket of vegetables.] In the 1800s, there was no electricity at RLC. "Perishables" – foods that tend to spoil quickly without refrigeration – came from cows, chickens, pigs, and the garden. Can you identify four kinds of perishable food? Can you also spot a device for turning fresh cream into butter?

TEACHER INFO: Perishable foods (like milk, meat, and fruit) were produced at the Rancho. Such foods had to be stored in a cool place, like the food storeroom, since they can spoil quickly without refrigeration. Students should be able to identify squash, eggs, potatoes, fresh onions and peppers, cheese, and ham. There was also an abundance of mutton (sheep meat) and beef, milk and cream, and oranges, figs, and pomegranates, but none of these can be seen here. There are two different types of butter churns on display, at the far right (ceramic butter churns with an external wooden stick for agitation) and on the lower shelves on the left (glass butter churns with an internal metal paddle that is agitated by spinning the crank attached to the metal lid).

GREEN TAG 2: [Barrel of flour.] Known as "non-perishables," dry goods are foods that can be stored for a long time without refrigeration. They were often shipped in barrels, sacks, and crates in the 1800s. Can you identify four different types of non-perishable food? Can you guess where any of them came from, originally?

TEACHER INFO: Dry goods – aka non-perishables – were shipped to Los Angeles from around the globe, then purchased in bulk for the Rancho. Students should be able to identify coffee (Brazil), oatmeal (Scotland), molasses, and beans. In addition, students might be able to identify the braids of dried onions, peppers, garlic hanging on the wall, or to guess that there is tea in the tins and flour or cornmeal in the barrels. The food in the baskets would be considered perishable, in that they spoil more quickly without refrigeration.

GREEN TAG 3: [Dazey butter churn.] The gears of this Dazey butter churn mechanized the task of making butter. Gears, levers, and wheels were integral to labor-saving devices of the 19th century. Do you see any other butter churns in this room?

TEACHER INFO: The Second Industrial Revolution had a tremendous impact on the economy in the mid/late 19th century. We usually think about mechanization in terms of large factories that ran on steam, coal, or electric power to produce consumer goods (as well as bigger buildings, bridges, roads, trains, etc), but there were also dramatic changes in consumer products that were mechanized... like this non-electric Dazey butter churn, which uses a crank (wheel and gears) to turn a paddle (lever), which speeds up the process of making butter by increasing the power (effort) of the person doing the churning (spinning the wheel). Several traditional butter churns are on display too, in the far-right corner of the food storeroom.

Exit this room and turn left to exit hallway. Exit hallway and turn right; go into the next door.

RED TAG: Blacksmith Shop. A blacksmith is someone who heats iron items in the forge to shape or repair them, including tools, branding irons, and horseshoes. This workshop also has space for doing woodwork, sharpening blades, and repairing wagon wheels.

GREEN TAG 1: [Forge and bellows.] A blacksmith's forge can be made very hot with burning coals. Why would a blacksmith need the forge to be hot? How do you think his forge could be made hotter? Scroll left/right on the photo for a hint.

TEACHER INFO: This room was purpose-built as a blacksmith shop back in the 1840s. The circular openings high in the wall are vents, which allow the hot smokey air to be drafted out of the room. They also keep the light low, so that the blacksmith can tell how hot the iron is – by looking at its color (red, orange, yellow, or white hot). It has to be the right temperature for him to shape it. Then he cools the hot metal in the bucket of water next to the forge. If the coals are not hot enough to heat the iron he's working with to the proper temperature, he can pump air from the bellows to increase the heat of the coals. By scrolling left/right, students can "work the bellows" (pumping air through the bellows heats the coals in the forge).

GREEN TAG 2: [Whetstone] A whetstone is used to sharpen blades. This one can be pumped with one's feet, almost like a stationary bicycle. Do you see any tools on display that would need sharpening? Can you think of something else the people who lived here in the 1800s would have needed to sharpen?

TEACHER INFO: The whetstone, or grinding stone, was used to sharpen sheep shears, knives, and other tools with blades. One would sit on the seat, pump the peddles, and hold the blade nearly parallel to the stone's edge to sharpen it. The water cup hanging from its mount has a pinhole in its bottom, allowing it to cool the blade slightly during the sharpening process. A working ranch also has wooden items in need of repair, whether a chair leg, a gate post, or otherwise. In this portion of the Blacksmith Shop, carpentry work could be done. A carpenter might also be able to make furniture like the table in the Foreman's Room or the book cabinet in the parlor.

Exit this room and turn right; skip next door and proceed through the glass door into the sunporch.

RED TAG: Sunporch. This glass-enclosed sitting area was added when the house was remodeled in 1930-31. It did not exist when this was a cattle or sheep ranch, as you saw in the photograph of the courtyard.

RED TAG: Stairway & Hallway. This adobe's interior staircase was unusual, since most adobes were single story buildings. Those that did have a second floor often had a staircase on the outside of the building. This inside hallway was also unusual for an adobe building. Most adobes were built over time, so people usually had to exit the building to move from one room to the one next to it (as you saw in the work wing). Can you guess what's upstairs?

Proceed through the French (glass paned) doors, opposite the door you just used.

RED TAG: Parlor. In the 1800s, the parlor was the area where the family gathered in the evening and where they entertained guests.

GREEN TAG 1: [Franklin stove.] If you look closely, you can find evidence of two U.S. statesmen in this room. One is pictured in the photograph hanging on the wall, the other is represented in the name of the stove sitting in the corner. Why do you think there was a stove in this room, if this is not where cooking was done?

TEACHER INFO: Abraham Lincoln never visited the Rancho, but he was very important to the Bixby family. They were abolitionists from Maine who supported President Lincoln – and were devastated when he was assassinated the year before they moved here. As for the Franklin Stove, there was no electricity when the adobe was built, and the structure did not include fireplaces either, so this wood-burning stove was the only way to heat the building when it was

cold. There is a container of safety matches hanging above it on the wall, to light it. There is also a small upholstered “footwarmer” near the stove. Smaller than a footstool, it could be filled with hot coals to warm the feet when traveling by buggy on cold days and nights. The stove is located downstairs; because heat rises, the upstairs rooms would be warmed as well.

GREEN TAG 2: [Stereoscope] Looking around the room, can you find evidence of how the family spent their leisure time? Name two things the children did for entertainment, and two more that the adults did.

TEACHER INFO: The internet and television were not available in the 19th century, so when the family gathered together here in the evenings, after all the day’s chores were done, they enjoyed different kinds of entertainment. Depending on how students categorize “adult” and “child” entertainment, there is a cabinet full of books to read, a fiddle to play, a stereoscope and a family album for looking at photos, a toy stove, a doll, and a deck of cards. The doll is a family heirloom, handed down from mother to daughter in the Hathaway-Bixby family (her name is Elizabeth). The book cabinet was made on site in the Blacksmith/Carpentry shop. The cards are pictured with a counting board, used in a game called cribbage.

Exit this room through the other door and go up the stairs; at the top of the stairs, follow the hallway past two doors on the right and enter the first door on your left

RED TAG: Child’s Bedroom. Harry Bixby was the son of the sheep rancher who owned RLC in the 1870s. This bedroom was where Harry slept, and also where he did his schoolwork. He and his siblings were taught to read and write at home. They also did chores around the ranch and enjoyed playing outdoor and indoor games too.

GREEN TAG 1: [McGuffey’s Readers pages.] These pages come from called an 1800s textbook called a “McGuffey’s Reader,” which Mrs. Bixby used to teach her children how to read and spell. You might notice that the spelling words have marks above the vowels to help the reader pronounce them correctly. When you say them out loud, can you hear the different “o” sounds in old and fox?

TEACHER INFO: Since the closest public school was in downtown Los Angeles, which was several hours’ journey by buggy, the Rancho’s children were taught to read, write, and do sums by their mother and aunts. Boys and girls were also taught their stitches (basic sewing), which was useful for making and mending garments, and how to do other essential tasks. McGuffey’s Readers were a set of primers, for “primary school” students (akin to modern grades 1-8), which included lessons on reading, writing, public speaking, penmanship, arithmetic, and more. The lessons generally included basic moral teachings too, and the lessons got harder as a student progressed from Level 1 to Level 8.

GREEN TAG 2: [Velocepede] In addition to schoolwork and chores, Harry Bixby had many interests. By looking at the items in the room, can you name three activities he liked to do outside? Do you notice anything unusual about the tricycle in the corner?

TEACHER INFO: According to his diary and his cousin Sarah, Harry liked to play marbles*, do puzzles*, go fishing*, enjoy tea parties, play croquet, roller skate, fly kites*, collect birds eggs*, and ride bikes*. Your students can see evidence of the activities marked here with an asterisk, including fishing, bike riding, kite flying, and collecting eggs. The “velocipede” on display comes from France. It is more of a tricycle than a bike, but if students look very closely they might be able to tell that – unlike our modern bikes and trikes – this velocipede was pedaled with one’s hands... and steered with one’s feet.

Exit this room and turn left; go into the next door

RED TAG: Master Bedroom. The master bedroom, where the owners of the rancho slept, was the largest room in the house during the 1800s. There are also spaces in this room for reading, writing, sewing, and other activities.

GREEN TAG 1: [Sewing machine.] Howe sewing machines like this one were first built in 1845. While mechanized, it is not electric. How do you think this one operates? How do you think that clothes were made before the invention of the sewing machine?

TEACHER INFO: Prior to the advent of mechanized (but not electrified) sewing machines like this, cloth was sewn by hand. That was a much more labor-intensive process. Elias Howe's "treadle" sewing machine revolutionized sewing through mechanization. The treadle is the mechanism operated by a pedal, which converts the foot's pumping motion into rotating motion. Along with cranks, treadmills, and treadwheels, treadles allow human and animal machine power in the absence of electricity. The machine's top bobbin was also part of the magic, since it allowed thread to be continuously stitched through the material. Howe sewing machines were a precursor to the ones popularized by Singer.

GREEN TAG 2: [Washbowl and basin.] The adobe house didn't have running water (and no indoor plumbing) when the Bixby family lived here, but the residents still needed to bathe, brush their teeth, and go to the bathroom. Can you find at least two different items in this room that they would have used for such tasks?

TEACHER INFO: Students may search for a sink, toilet, or bathtub. In the 19th century, daily washing up would have been done on a much smaller scale, with a smaller basin and a vessel to store/pour water. A washbowl and basin are displayed in the window, and a toothbrush and shaving supplies are sitting atop the smaller dresser. For their toileting, the choice was the privy (outhouse) in the garden or the commode near the bed. (Students who have been camping may know what an outhouse is.) As for the commode (or chamber pot), there is a bowl inside the box that was used as a toilet. Without indoor plumbing, the waste in the commode be not simply be flushed down a drain – someone had to empty it. Your students may notice the green bathroom at the far end of the bedroom. This was added when the house was remodeled in the 1930s, not when the adobe was first constructed in the 1840s.

Head back down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairway, turn left to walk into the final room.

RED TAG: Dining Room. The ranchero (Spanish for "ranch owner") and his family ate their meals in this dining room. When they had guests, extra chairs could be added to the table, which itself could be expanded. The ranch hands ate in a separate dining room in the north wing.

GREEN TAG 1: [Tea pot] The Bixby family, who had a sheep ranch here in the 1870s, enjoyed meat, vegetables, fruit, cheese, bread, eggs, cookies, and donuts. They drank tea, coffee, milk, and water with their meals. What evidence of these foods and drinks can you spot in the dining room?

TEACHER INFO: The Bixby family owned a sheep ranch, so most of the meat they ate was "mutton" (a gamey version lamb, which comes from a younger sheep). A sheep was slaughtered nearly every day to feed the 30+ family members and workers who lived at RLC in the 1870s. They also raised cows, so there was beef and dairy products like cheese and milk, as well as chickens, so there were eggs and poultry meat. The vegetables came from a Chinese peddler – a farmer who grew them elsewhere and came weekly in his wagon to sell the fresh vegetables to the cook, Ah Ying. The fruit – which included oranges, grapes, figs, pomegranates, and olives – came from the trees and vines originally planted as part of John Temple's garden (back in the 1840s). Water was pumped up from a well. Coffee, tea, beans, flour, sugar, and other dry goods (which students saw in the food storeroom) were purchased in bulk in Los Angeles. [Maybe draw a quote from adobe days regarding the daily meals Sarah remembers?]

GREEN TAG 2: [Highchair] There are lots of chairs in this room – and a special one for the baby! How many chairs can you count in all? Why do you suppose there are so many? When you look closely at the highchair, you'll notice it has wheels on the bottom and a lever in the back. What do you think it could become? And what might the glass item on the tray be for?

TEACHER INFO: As the students look around the dining room, they will notice that there are 6 regular chairs at the table, 4 additional chairs lining the walls, and a highchair. The table itself could be expanded to accommodate guests, which was important because the Bixby family had relatives who lived at Rancho Los Alamitos (near present-day CSULB), in downtown Los Angeles, in central California (near Mission San Juan Bautista), and back in Maine. So some guests came for a meal or two, and others came to stay for a month or two! The baby's **highchair** – which is a great example of late-19th-century technical innovation – converts to a stroller by manipulating the rear lever that lowers the seat and engages the wheels with the ground. The glass item on the tray is a baby bottle that dates to the 1870s, and its rubber tubing is original.

THANKS FOR TAKING THIS TOUR! Please let us know about your experience...

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