



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

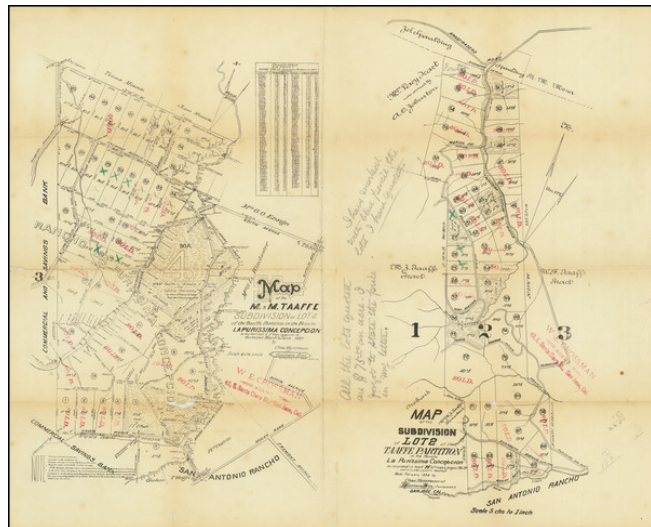
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[Los Altos Hills]. Map of the M & M Taaffe Subdivision of Lot 4 of the Taaffe Partition in Rancho La Purissima Concepcion . . . Surveyed March & June 1897 [and] Subdivision of Lot 2 . . . February 1894 . . .

Stock#: 73981dt
Map Maker: Hermann Bros
Date: 1897 circa
Place: San Jose
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 16 inches Whole Sheet
Price: \$ 2,800.00



Description:

The First Partition of Los Altos Hills

Rare pair of early maps for Los Altos Hills, as surveyed by Charles Hermann of the Hermann Brothers of San Jose.

The present maps illustrate the holdings of Mary Taaffe and Mathilde Taaffe, following the subdivision of the 2800 acre ranch which had been acquired by their father Martin Murphy in 1855. This subdivision among the 4 children of Murphy would be the beginning of the division of the area which is now Los Altos Hills, California.

The present map was apparently owned by an early land speculator. A number of lots are marked as sold, with a few early owners listed. The pencil notes read:

- All the lots quoted are \$75.00 an acre. I forgot to state the price in my letter
- I have marked in blue the lots I have quoted.

Los Altos Hills History

The history of Los Altos dates to the arrival of the Martin & Mary Murphy Family, one of the three families

Drawer Ref: Northern
California 2

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that pioneered the California trail which is now called Donner Pass. Along the way, Murph's eldest daughter Elizabeth Yuba Murphy-Taaffe was born -- the first American child born in California. The family would become an important California family, with the Bear Flag Revolt occurring on their property in Sonoma, they were founders of Santa Clara University and started the first wheat farm in California. The larger family would become the largest private landowners in the world, with Marin owning 10 Million acres in California. After settling in the Santa Clara Valley, Martin purchased Rancho La Purissima Concepcion, the future Los Altos Hills in 1855 for \$7,000, as part of the expansion of his Bay View Ranch.

In 1863, Martin & Mary Murphy give 2,800 acres of Rancho La Purissima to their daughter Elizabeth Yuba Murphy-Taaffe as a wedding gift, when she marries William Post Taaffe, a tract of land which would have valued at over \$20 Billion today. Upon their deaths, the property was transferred to their four children, William, Martin, Mary and Mathilda.

The property would thereafter be subdivided among the 4 children, with Sections 2 and 4 going to Mary and Mathilde. The 2 large ranches were eventually parceled and sold as smaller ranches for cattle grazing and vineyards, mostly of Zinfandel grapes. Many Italian and French vintners lived on Purissima Road until a blight destroyed the vineyards near the turn of the century. Soon after, orchards of apricots, plums and prunes flourished.

It would be another decade before the first development in the area, when Paul Shoup, an executive of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and his colleagues formed the Altos Land Company in 1906 and started the development of Los Altos. The company acquired 140 acres of land from Sarah Winchester. Shoup wanted to link Palo Alto and Los Gatos by making Los Altos a commuter town. It continued a train-a-day operation to and from San Francisco. it would be another 50 years before the town of Los Altos Hills was incorporated.

Rarity

The map is unrecorded. Stanford holds a later map (1904) showing the 4 lot subdivision, but otherwise, there are no other recorded maps reflecting the Taaffe partition.



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Detailed Condition:

Minor loss at one fold. Folding splits.