

## Claremont's Garner House 840 N. Indian Hill Blvd, Claremont



The Garner House in Memorial Park, Claremont, is under the care of Claremont Heritage and has become the city's center for historic programs. Originally built in 1926-27 by Bess and Herman Garner, the home was surrounded by an orange grove. Both Mr. And Mrs. Garner graduated from Pomona College in 1910; he was a very successful businessman and inventor of an air cleaner for truck engines. His company—Vortex Co.—is still in operation just south of the location of the home. Mrs. Garner was a history buff, an author, chair of the school board and very active in community affairs.

Designed by Los Angeles Architect Arthur Munson, the building had 15 rooms and six bathrooms. The first floor had an entry, two guest bedrooms and a bath, large living room, library, dining room, kitchen, maid's room, bath and utility rooms. On the second floor were two wings—one for the parents and the other for their three boys.

Before the Garners build the home, it had been the site of a house since the mid nineteenth century. One was an adobe for the sister of the owner of Rancho San Jose which included Pomona, Claremont, La Verne and San Dimas. Tales of buried treasure in the park were told.

One tale describes a Mexican Rancho owner who buried gold "*under a great limb, bending sharply upward like an elbow.*" This was a perfect description of the Sycamore tree that once stood in front of the house! However, no gold was ever found.

Today, some of the house has been restored to its 1920s look. The Garner family donated some of the original furniture while other furnishings are new but recreated to look like original items.

All the wrought iron work is original and hand forged by craftsman, Hayrold Glick. Claremont Heritage has taken great pains to protect the home while using it as their offices, archives and gift shop.

In 1930, Mr. & Mrs. Garner built The Padua Hills Theatre and supported the theatre and the Mexican Players who performed there until it closed in 1974. Claremont Heritage has most of the theatre programs, some costumes and set designs from that location and have done oral histories with several of the players. The Padua Hills Theater has recently undergone a five-million dollar renovation that allows programs to once again be performed there.

The Garner House is located at 840 N. Indian Hill Blvd. in Claremont and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Their phone number is 909-621-0848. It's well worth the visit.