

The History and Heritage of Town and Country Manor

Adapted from an article by Norman B. Rohrer published in a "Power for Living" bulletin insert in April 1961.

The history of Town and Country Manor began long before 1975 when the main part of our campus opened in Santa Ana. It began with an unsuspecting lady who had more faith than many of us combined.

Meet Mrs. Suppes

Mrs. Jennie Suppes (pronounced suh-pees) was born in 1870, growing up in Illinois. While teaching school in a small town, Jennie met the man she would soon marry. During their first years of marriage, Jennie and her husband did not attend church, but God had plans for Jennie, so He quietly got her attention on an unassuming spring day. While Jennie was dusting a bookcase, a volume called *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* fell open on the floor.



As Jennie began reading the story, the first seeds of faith were planted.

"I began to see Christ in a new light," she says. "I discovered that it was not a church that saved me, but Christ...the crucified One!"

For one month she secretly read this book, authored by a former priest named Father Chiniquy. When she told her family that she had taken a bold step of faith and trusted Christ as her personal Savior, her husband and mother-in-law chose to accept Christ that same day. Later, Jennie's mother also converted and would one day help Jennie as she fulfilled God's vision.

In 1900, Jennie's husband was killed in an accident, leaving her with two small boys. Through her grief, Jennie trusted in God's plan. Shortly after, Jennie moved her family to California seeking a warm climate

for her oldest son's poor health. While living in Santa Ana, California, she became active in a Gospel church and continued to grow in her faith.

A Vision and a Miracle

Sadly, Jennie lost her youngest son at 18, and soon thereafter, her oldest boy went overseas as a soldier in World War I. Mrs. Suppes, "stormed the throne of grace," as she says, for the American boys on the front line. When she got word that her son was sick, she wrote to him, "be of good cheer...the Lord showed me that the war will end this fall, and you may be home for Christmas!"

"Don't be foolish, Mother," her son wrote back, "to think the war will end so soon. All the leading men say it will be at least two years."

"But, praise God," Mrs. Suppes said, "the armistice was signed that November!"

One day, not many weeks later, she read that the United States Government had paid \$100,000 for the Arrowhead Hotel as a rest home for gassed soldiers. Mrs. Suppes laid down the paper and looked up to God. "Why, You are greater than the United States Government," she prayed, "and they are providing rest homes for their soldiers."

Suddenly she dropped to her knees with the biggest vision she had ever caught of God. She asked God for \$50,000 for a furlough home for missionaries...His soldiers.

"God filled my heart with a burning faith. I was so sure it would come, that if it had dropped down from heaven in a sack, I would not have been surprised."

Her friends at church were not as confident of the \$50,000, but Mrs. Suppes would not be discouraged.

She sold her business and in three months had begun her venture with a home for single missionaries in Los Angeles. Every morning for five years she told the Lord that He was greater than the United States Government, and with uplifted hands she thanked Him for the \$50,000 He would send.

Then one day there came exciting news. Oil had been discovered on some unimproved ground she owned in Norwalk, CA, and a well was producing 5,000 barrels a day. When the well had paid her \$50,000 it stopped producing.

“I believe now,” Mother Suppes says, “that if I would have asked for \$100,000 or \$200,000 the oil well would have pumped to that amount. We limit God with our little faith.”

Breaking Ground

Though she was nearly 50 years old at the time, Mrs. Suppes bought a large barley field in Glendale and started building the Suppes Memorial Home. She personally cared for many details, and when her money waned, she would simply pray for more. One morn-



Then: The Colony and Suppes Memorial Home

ing, kneeling by her bed, she held up four pennies. “Now, Lord, I’m down to four cents,” she prayed. “So put some money into my hand so I can help the missionaries.” Several hours afterward, a businessman came to her house and paid her \$3,000 in cash for a nearby lot she owned—putting the money into her hand which she needed for current bills.

As time went on, Mrs. Suppes realized that many residents at her home would be in need of medical care as they aged. Always a visionary, she partnered with the Christian and Missionary Alliance to create the 44-

bed Glendale Alliance Center. In 1954, Mrs. Suppes gave ownership and management of the properties to the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The Vision Expands

By 1970, the Glendale property had outgrown its ability to expand. A site search was conducted with the objective of relocating the residents and developing a planned retirement community in Orange County. One of the properties that seemed to fit the development criteria was a ten acre orange orchard, which is the present location of Town and Country Manor.

There were a few obstacles and challenges related to its use. There were hundreds of mature citrus trees, a large irrigation system and limited access to the property. Several members of the Board met at the site and prayed that the Lord would remove all the obstacles if it were His desire for the Alliance to make this bold move.

The owner of the property was pleased to see that such a fine project was being proposed, and, to the delight of the Board, he agreed to prepare the site so that all of the conditions for development were met. Included in the transaction was the extension of Lawson Way, installation of all street lights, curbs, sidewalks and the conditional use permit by the City of Santa Ana.

“The answers to our prayers exceeded what we had asked the Lord,” said Steve Lazarian, Board Chairman.

Since Town and Country Manor was built in 1975, it has upheld Mrs. Jennie Suppes vision of showing God’s love through the caring and serving of its residents. It is now a Continuing Care Retirement Center; offering Independent Living, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing services.



Today: Town and Country Manor