

THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE SWEETWATER AREA
(CALIFORNIA)

A Thesis
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the Faculty of the Department of History
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Master of Arts

by
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PREFACE

The writer's interest in the Sweetwater area derives from eighteen years of residence in the region. Throughout the district are abandoned railroad beds, deteriorating buildings, and ornate houses of an older era. These evidences created a desire to know more about the area and led to the selection of the topic of this paper.

The Sweetwater area, lying along the bay between San Diego and the border, is, agriculturally and industrially, the most important in San Diego County outside the city of San Diego. In the Spanish and Mexican periods the region was a grazing country in which several land grants were made to Mexican citizens. With the coming of the Americans to the district began the development of National City and civinity. The Kimball brothers of New Hampshire acquired the Rancho Nacional and deured the construction of the California Southern Railroad, bringing the western terminus of the Santa Fe system to National City. The Santa Fe interests developed the water resources of the Sweetwater River and promoted the growth of towns and citrus culture. Within a few years after the advent of the railroad, National City and the south bay area boomed tremendously and experienced a great industrial growth, even threatening to surpass San Diego. However, the boom had collapsed by 1890 and local affairs became dull for

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a long time, but there was a reconstruction on a sound economic basis. Since that day the region has developed into a leading lemon producing area and in recent years has progressed industrially.

For the Spanish and Mexican periods the expedientes found in the Spanish Archives provided the most useful information, as did the records of the San Diego County Recorder for the early American era. Newspapers and contemporary magazines provided much source material for the years 1870 to 1890.

The survey, covering as it does over one hundred and sixty years of occupation by Europeans before 1890, is of necessity brief, and much of interest has been omitted; yet an attempt has been made to present the outstanding events in an orderly sketch.

Although the writer makes no claim to great discoveries in a purely historical sense, he feels that this work is a contribution because much of the material used is not widely available, and he has gathered data from widely scattered records and has attempted to assemble them in a logical and unified manner.

The writer wishes to extend thanks to Mr. John Davidson of the San Diego Historical Society for his great interest and cooperation, to Mr. R. B. Reinbach for the

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Los Angeles, 1942.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Discovery of San Diego Bay	1
Geography of the Sweetwater area	2
Ethnological background	5
II. MINOR LAND GRANTS IN THE SWEETWATER AREA	8
The land grant system	8
The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	13
American regulations	14
Rancho Janal	15
The grant of Janal	17
Janal in the American period	18
Rancho Otay	19
The grant of Otay	19
Otay in the American period	20
Rancho Jamacha	21
The grant of Jamachá	22
Jamachá in the American period	23
III. MAJOR LAND GRANTS	25
Rancho Milijo	25
Santiago E. Arguéllo	26
The proceedings for Milijo	27
The grant of Milijo	30
Milijo in the Mexican period	33

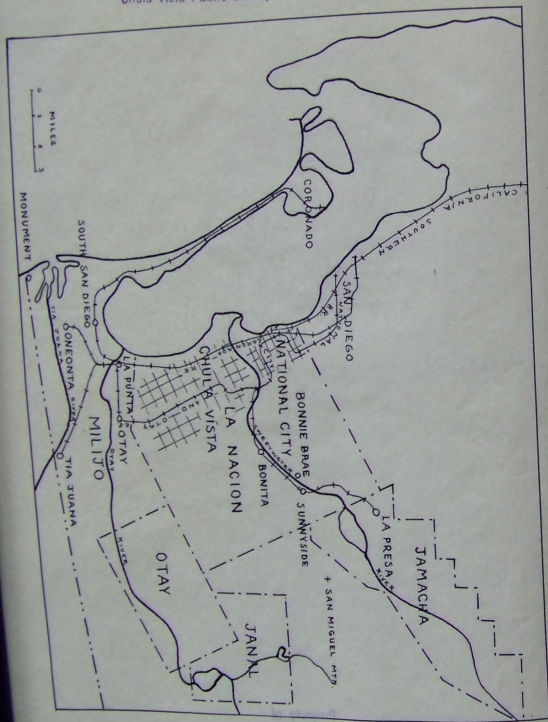
CHAPTER

PAGE

III. MAJOR LAND GRANTS, continued

Milijo before the Land Commission	35
The squatter problem	36
Milijo before the Land Office	38
Rancho de la Nacion	39
Juan Forster	40
The grant of De la Nacion	43
Rancho de la Nacion before the Land Commission	44
Rancho de la Nacion in the American period	44
IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CITY	46
The Kimball brothers	46
The founding of National City	47
Attempts to secure a railroad	47
The California Southern Railroad	50
The early growth of National City	54
The incorporation of National City	56
The commercial development of National City .	57
The decline of National City	61
The Santa Clara gold rush	61
V. THE SAN DIEGO LAND AND TOWN COMPANY	63
The organization of the Company	63
Chula Vista	64
The Sweetwater dam and irrigation project . .	67
The National City and Otay Railway	71

CHAPTER		Vii PAGE
VI	BOOM TOWNS	76
	Paradise Valley	77
	Bonita and Sunnyside	78
	Bonnie Brae	78
	La Presa	80
	San Miguel City	80
	San Miguel Mountain	81
	Otay	82
	La Punta	86
	South San Diego	88
	Oneonta	89
	Monument City	89
	Tia Juana	90
	Bibliography	94



CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the report of Cabrillo's voyage it was recounted that on Thursday, September 28, 1542, the voyagers sailed along a northwest coast and discovered a "very good closed port" in 34 21, which they named "San Miguel" because the next was San Miguel's day. While the expedition lay in the port a great storm arose, but hardly anything of it was felt because the harbor was so good. This storm was from "the west-southwest and south-southwest and violent."¹

The story of this "very good closed port," particularly the land adjacent to the southern extremity, is the theme of this study. The area under consideration is the region which lies south of the San Diego city limits and north of the international boundary, a region approximately ten miles from north to south and extending from San Diego Bay and the Pacific Ocean eastward to the prominent landmarks of San Miguel Peak and the San Ysidro mountains, a distance of about twenty miles. An attempt is made to show the economic and social development of the cities and towns of National City, Chula Vista, Otay, Tia Juana, and lesser places down to the year 1890. The history of the land titles of the Mexican grants

¹ Henry R. Wagner, Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century, 84-85.

within the district and the development of the railroads and water systems is included.

Thirteen years after the Mission San Diego de Alcalá was established, the harbor was surveyed by a pilot, or navigator, of the Spanish fleet, Don Juan Pantoja. This plan of the port, made in 1782, gave the outstanding landmarks of the upper bay as Points San Augustín, San Jose, and San Miguel. The Otay river emptying into the bay was labeled "River that has water always." Near the La Punta area was marked a Ranchería of Indians "named from the punta."²

The bay of which Cabrillo spoke so highly can be described as a crescent-shaped basin about fourteen miles long. It varies in width from one quarter mile at its entrance between Ballast Point and Zuniga Point to a maximum of two and one half miles near National City. It is separated from the ocean by a long, low, narrow sandspit which extends from the mainland in a northwesterly direction ending in two peninsulas, often called islands, each about one and one half miles wide, and separated by an indentation known as Spanish Bight. Between the cities of San Diego and Coronado, on the peninsula, the bay narrows to about one half mile in width, dividing the port into two divisions. The area of the water surface is about twenty-one square miles.

² Juan Pantoja, "Plan for the Port of San Diego."

Before the federal government began to improve the harbor the whannel through the outer bar was five hundred feet in width and 22.5 feet deep at mean lower low water. The middle-ground channel was of the same depth, but crooked. The channel inside the harbor was about one third mile wide and thirty feet deep up to San Diego and narrower and shallower up to National City, which is eleven miles from the outer bar.³

Bordering the bay on the east is a plain of two to three miles in width running entirely through the region. Opening onto this plain is a series of narrow valleys, each with a general east-west direction. These, from north to south, are the Paradise, Sweetwater, Otay, and Tia Juana valleys. The largest and longest of the valleys is the Sweetwater Valley which extends far eastward into the mountain range that continues north from the peninsula of Baja California. The Tia Juana Valley turns southward, enters Mexico, and forms the route for the oldest stage road and the present rail route to the Imperial Valley. Between the larger valleys are mesas of fertile soil cut in many directions by small canyons. The most important of the canyons are Telegraph Canyon, Poggi Canyon, and Long Canyon.

Prominent landmarks include San Miguel Peak, 3,575

³United States, War Department, Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, The Ports of San Diego and San Luis Obispo, California, 1-4.

feet in height, the Jamul Mountains, enclosing the Jamul Rancho of the old days on the west, and the San Ysidro Mountains, forming a backdrop for the town of the same name. Nestling at the feet of these mountains are the Sweetwater Reservoir and the 6tay Lakes.

Two features of the geography and climate of the area should be noticed. The first is the nature of the peninsular mountains which extend northward from Lower California. These mountains, ranging in height from four thousand to six thousand feet, extend in a general north and south direction blocking access to the interior from the coast at San Diego Bay. Only one pass suitable for a rail route extends east across the mountains from the bay area. This route, now used by the San Diego and Arizona Railway, runs through Mexico, has heavy grades and tortuous curves, and has not been used until recently. The result of the comparative physical isolation of the district from the East has been to cause the trade of the region to flow through Los Angeles and to retard the urban growth of the area.

The second feature is the exceptionally light rainfall of the Sweetwater area. The small precipitation occurs during the winter and gives the region a Mediterranean climate. For this reason agriculture during the Spanish and Mexican, as well as early American, periods was confined to grazing and the raising of grains. The early settlers

concerned themselves with hides and tallow, Not until the advent of the Santa Fe railway in 1885 did a change in agriculture take place. The opening of the railway brought a transition from grazing and grains to fruit culture, which has since characterized the economy of the region.⁴ This change became possible with the development of the Sweetwater irrigation projects in the late 1880's.

The ethnological background for the history of the Europeans in the area can be briefly summarized. The Indians who lived in the region at the arrival of the white man have been named the Diegueño tribe. The Diegueños, of the Yuman linguistic family, contained two subdivisions, the North Dieguenis and the South Diegueños. The North Diegueno group⁵ included the Indians living in the area under consideration.

The North Diegueños had come from over the mountains on the east and conquered the early San Dieguitans five or six hundred years previously. Their success in warfare can be attributed chiefly to their introduction of bows and arrows. They also introduced bone tools, pottery, basketry, and portable and stationary mortars for grinding acorns and seeds. These round-headed Indians made their camps in regions of

⁴ Nicholas Mirkowich, "Urban Growth in the San Diego Region," Economic Geography, XVII(1941), 310.

⁵ Swain, Bowden, and French, "History of the Indians of San Diego County," 92.

rock formation near adequate water supply.⁶

The Indians lived in rancherías which were collections of crude huts made of tule grass and covered with earth. The distinctive feature of the village was the temescal, or sweathouse, which the men occupied regularly. This tribe is the southernmost known to have made use of the typical California sweathouse.

The foods, arts and implements of the Diegueños were crude and simple. The inhabitants of the bay area never attempted agriculture, but lived on fish and mollusks. The arts consisted mainly of pottery cook pots and water jars. The implements were few besides the weapons already mentioned. For boats on the bay the natives used tule balsas propelled with double-bladed paddles.⁷

The Diegueños were divided into exogamous patrilineal clans. Twelve known North Diegueno clans existed. Alexander S. Taylor in his map of the California Indian tribes, published in 1864, located the one nearest Chula Vista as the Otats, extending south of the Tia Juana river and in Mexico.⁸

⁶ Swain, Bowden, and French, "History of the Indians," 11-12.

⁷ Alfred Lewis Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians of California, 721-22.

⁸ Robert F. Hiezer, "Alexander S. Taylor's Map of California Indian Tribes, 1864," California Historical Society Quarterly, XX (1941), 172.

This clan or tribe gave its name to a great many local places, although the name was spelled in various ways such as Ohjai, Otai, O'Tay, and Otay. Otay was also the name of an Indian rancheria located at the southern end of the bay.

Besides the rancheria of Otay, other rancherias located in the south bay district included Janal, which gave its name to a Mexican land grant, San Miguel or Magate, Milijo on the south bank of the Tia Juana River, and La Punta on the bay shore at the mouth of the Otay River.⁹

The natives took to Christianity slowly and always exhibited a spirit of independence which was characteristic of all the Yuman tribes. Kroeber described the natives as¹⁰

proud, rancorous, boastful, covetous, given to quarrels, passionately devoted to the customs of their fathers, and hard to handle. Not especially formidable as foes, they did not shrink from warlike attempts.

A detailed history of the Indians is not undertaken in this study because they did not affect the development of the Sweetwater area to any great extent.

⁹
Lena B. Hunsicker and Winifred Davisson, "San Diego County Place Names."

¹⁰
Kroeber, California Indians, 711-712.

CHAPTER 11

MINOR LAND GRANTS IN THE SWEETWATER AREA

The Sweetwater area contained five Mexican land grants: Jamachá, Otay, Janal, La Nación, and Milijo. The history of these provides a good representation of the land grant system under Mexico and the United States for it includes the complete records of successful claims for which patents were issued, and of rejected claims, with the resultant strife between the grantee and settlers. The grants issued also represented the early policies of the Mexican government and the later wholesale distribution of lands by Governor Pío Pico just before the American conquest. The story of these local grants was typical of the history of Mexican and early American California.

1. THE LAND GRANT SYSTEM

The land grant system in California can be divided into two periods: that of the Spanish government before 1822, and that of the Mexican rule from that date to the conquest of California in 1846. The policy followed by Spain in granting lands allowed for the occupation of the land under a usufructuary title only, that is, if granted the right to use and enjoy the fruits or profits of the estate, without impairing the substance. The Spanish

government did not wish to encourage private ownership of the land, which in theory belonged to the king, and as a result only about a score of grants were made during the Spanish occupation of California. The Mexican policy was more liberal. It allowed for private ownership with the power of disposal. Its generosity can be judged by the 812 grants submitted to the United States Land Commission for validation.¹

The beginning of the land grant system occurred in 1784 when Governor Pedro Fages received two applications for grants near San Gabriel Mission. Governor Fages referred the request to the Commandante-General of the Provincias Internas, Ugarte, who in turn referred the question to Galindo Navarro, whose position corresponded to that of an attorney-general. In 1786 the answer to the request returned, and according to Bancroft:²

His reply authorized Fages to make grants in private, not to exceed three leagues, however, and outside of the four leagues which the Laws of the Recopilacion allowed the pueblos: but the grantees were not to injure the missions or pueblos, and certain other conditions were imposed. . . including building of a stone house on each rancho and keeping of at least two thousand head of livestock.

Authority for the granting of lands in California was found in:³

¹ Lela Margaret Weststeyn, "The Expansion of the Land Grant System under the last two Mexican Governors Manuel Micheltorena and Pio de Jesus Pico," 1.

² H. H. Bancroft, History of California, 1, 609.

³ Weststeyn, op. cit. 3.

1. The General Laws of the Indies.
2. The instructions of Bucareli to Rivera in 1773.
3. Ugarte's instructions to Pages in 1786.
4. The Decrees of the Cortes of New Spain in 1813.
5. The Mexican Colonization Law of 1824.
6. The Mexican Colonization Law of 1828.

The colonization law passed by the Mexican Congress on August 18, 1824, provided for a very liberal land policy. Any Mexican citizen of good character or any foreigner willing to become a naturalized Mexican citizen could acquire land by grant. This grant might be as large as eleven square leagues in area-- one league to be of irrigable land, four arable but dependent on rain, and six for grazing-- with freedom from taxes for five years. The ranchos in California were of princely size as a result. A league contained more than 4,438 acres and a rancho of four or five square leagues was considered small.⁴

The law of the 21st of November, 1828, provided for a still more liberal policy than that of 1824 in allowing a grantee to secure the rights of ownership of the land with the power of disposal and also provided the conditions and procedure for receiving the grant. The applicant presented

⁴ Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, Spanish Arcadia, 189.

a petition giving the situation of the land and the qualifications and claims of the petitioner, together with a diseno, or map to the governor. The governor in turn ordered the proper official to investigate and inform him of the justice of the claim and the accuracy of the information. After this investigation, the governor gave an order, or vista, granting the petition. This collection of documents, petition, vista, diseno, etc. was then forwarded to the Departmental Junta where the governor's ^{approval} was approved or disapproved.

Each document was attached to the preceding one and forwarded to the next party. This collection comprised the expediente.⁵

After complying with the proceedings the petitioner sought out the local judge who gave his juridical possession of the land, by which the boundaries were marked out and the necessary landmarks placed.⁶ In giving possession the judge stated the area of the land in square leagues, usually modified by the words "poco mas o menos". The quantity was guessed and sometimes amounted to double the area stated in the grant.⁷

The United States courts in dealing with this phrase

⁵ Weststeyn, "Expansion of the Land Grant System." 7.

⁶ California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, V, 459, Juan Forster, "Expediente No. 491, for De La Nacion."

⁷ Sanchez, Spanish Arcadia, 190.

interpreted it in part:

[When] the intention was to grant all the land within the boundaries named, then the words "poco mas o menos" must be considered as operative to pass to the grantees such fractional part of a league as may be found in excess of the quantity named in the grant.

Cause for trouble and litigation abounded in the loose manner of defining and locating the boundaries of the grants. A classical example of such a boundary mark was the limit of one given as "the place where Don Bernardo Yorba sits on his white horse."⁹ Another grant, the Rancho San José in Los Angeles County, took as a boundary point "a large oak in which was placed the head of a beef and some of its limbs chopped."¹⁰ In stating the boundary of the Rancho Milijo near the mouth of the Otay River, José A. Estudillo "made as a line a tree known as 'El Saucó.' "¹¹

William Heath Davis stated that 1,045 grants were made by the governors of California, eight hundred of which were stocked, averaging 1,500 head to each rancho. Thus there were 1,200,000 head of livestock in Mexican California.

⁸ Ogden Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases Determined in the United States District Court of the Northern District of California, Appendix, 142.

⁹ Sanchez, Spanish Arcadia, 190.

¹⁰ Charles C. Baker. "Mexican Land Grants in California," Historical Society of Southern California, Annual Publications, IX (1912-14), 241.

¹¹ California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, I, 464, Santiago E. Arguello, "Espediente No. 60, for Milijo."

Davis added that California in proportion to population was the richest country dominated and inhabited by citizens of Castilian extraction. Indians did the manual labor of the land's development. The period of the greatest prosperity of the ranchos occurred between 1828 and 1846 when there was ready sale for hides and tallow with the English and American traders.¹²

The tenth article of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, February 2, 1848, concerning titles to private lands in the territories acquired from Mexico was stricken out by the United States Senate. However, in a protocol signed at Querétaro on May 26, 1848, there was included this explanation:¹³

The American government by suppressing the Xth article of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo did not in any way intend to annul the grants of lands made by Mexico in ceded territories. . . Conformably to the law of the United States, legitimate titles to every description of property, personal and real, existing in the ceded territories are those which were legitimate titles under Mexican law in California . . . up to the 13th of May, 1845.

In pursuance of the treaty of 1848 Congress passed an act, approved on March 3, 1851, entitled "An Act to ascertain and settle private land titles in the State of California."¹⁴ This act provided in part:

¹² William Heath Davis, *Sixty Years in California*, 602.

¹³ Baker, "Mexican Land Grants," 236.

¹⁴ Thomas Donaldson, *The Public Domain*, 378-79.

1. A commission of three commissioners to act for three years.
 2. Claimants under Spain and Mexico were required to present their claims to the commissioners, sitting as a board, with evidence in support of the same.
 3. The commissioners were to issue subpoenas, administer oaths, take testimony, and decide as to the validity of their claims, and report their decisions to the United States district attorney of the district in which the decision was made.
 4. Appeal by the claimant and the district attorney to the district court, and further appeal to the Supreme Court was authorized.
 5. Lands claimed, but whose title was rejected, or those not presented within two years from the date of the act, were deemed to be public lands of the United States; for such lands confirmed patents were to issue upon surveys to be made by the surveyor-general.
- Subsequent laws of Congress provided an extension of the time limit for one year later than that set forth in the foregoing regulations.

The issuance of patents on lands proceeded slowly. Charles J. Baker made a study of the grants in Los Angeles County and found that of the seventy-nine entries of patents recorded in the county, the first was recorded on April 3,

1860, and the last on December 7, 1897. He found that it was ten years before the government confirmed any title, over thirty-five years before the last could call the land his own. By 1869, twenty-one years after the treaty, only twenty-six or one-third, of the patents were yet recorded.¹⁵

11. RANCHOS JANAL AND OTAY

Ranchos Janal and Otay are sometimes spoken of as being one. This is because they were granted to members of the same Estudillo family. Another reason for their being thought of together is that under Mexican grants both had the name Otay. Today on certain maps¹⁶ the grants are shown as "Otay (Dominguez)" and "Otay (Estudillo)." However, local usage refers to the Dominguez grant as Janal and to the Estudillo rancho as Otay.

The grantee of Rancho Janal was José Antonio Estudillo, who was a member of one of the "best old families in California as judged by the average prominence of its members."¹⁷ He was born at Monterey in 1805. His father, José María Estudillo, the founder of the family in California, was a native of Antequera in Baja Andalucia, Spain, and a

15

Baker, "Mexican Land Grants," 236-37.

16
Topographic maps of the United States Geological Survey.

17

Bancroft, History of California, 1, 794.

lieutenant in the cavalry. The mother of José Antonio was María Bertrudis Morcasitas, a native of Mexico.¹⁸

That José Antonio Estudillo was an outstanding figure of early California can be seen from a brief survey of his career. Offices which he held included those of revenue collector and treasurer at San Diego (1828-30), member of the Diputación (1835), temporary governor (claimed 1835), alcalde and juex at San Diego (1836-38), treasurer (1840), justice of the Supreme Tribunal (1840-42), and town treasurer and county assessor at San Diego under the American rule. In 1829 he received the grant of Janal, while in later years he received other grants at Temecula and San Jacinto. In addition he owned land at San Juan Capistrano.¹⁹

The wife of José Antonio Estudillo was María Victoria Dominguez, a native of San Diego. Dona María was the daughter of Cristobal Dominguez, sergeant of the cavalry and a native of Loreto. Her mother, María Reyes Ybanez, came from her native town of Santa Cruz de Mayo in Sinaloa.²⁰ The grantee of the third Spanish grant, at San Pedro, Juan Jose Dominguez, was her grandfather.²¹

¹⁸

San Diego Mission, "Libro de Matrimonios," No. 1538.

¹⁹

Bancroft, History of California, 1, 793-94.

²⁰

San Diego Mission, "Libro de Matrimonios," No. 1538.

²¹

N.B. Greene, "Genealogies of the Spanish Pioneers," Section 11.

The marriage of Don José and Dona María took place on the first Monday in March, 1824. To this marriage six children were born. A daughter, Guadalupe, married Santiago E. Argüello, grantees of Rancho Milijo.

On March 24, 1829, Governor José María Echazandia extended a provisional title to José Antonio Estudillo for

a part of the place named Otay situated towards the Sierra, in the direction of Janal and Jamul, from the summit of the hills, at the foot of which is the posa called Tinaja which belongs to the Sitio of Dona Magdalena Estudillo, so that the area of the land conceded to the said Don Antonio is one league square, or a little more, with the limits marked out by Captain Portilla;

The governor granted the land because such ranchos will offer an inducement to foreign commerce in hides, tallow, and grain, which will be beneficial to the country.

As usual in Mexican grants, certain restrictions were imposed upon the grantee. The title was to be provisional until approved by the Supreme Government and subject to any conditions "which may be stipulated in relation to the distribution of the lands." The grantee obligated himself to pay the tithes due or which might be required of the rancho. The title was registered in the Book of Registry

22

23

Greene, "Genealogies," Section 11.

California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, VI, 440, José Antonio Estudillo, "Expediente for Janal." A sitio was the equivalent of one square league, or 4,438,464 acres.

of Brands and Marks, in San Diego, on March 26, 1829.²⁴

Victoria Dominguez and the heirs of José Antonio Estudillo claimed Janal before the Land Commission. They filed their claim on September 9, 1852, and it was confirmed by that body on December 19, 1854. An appeal was dismissed on June 8, 1857.²⁵ President Grant signed letters patent on June 13, 1872.²⁶

During the American period numerous parties owned Rancho Janal. In 1872 José Antonio Estudillo, Piedad Estudillo, José G. Estudillo, Jose M. Estudillo, and the estate of Miguel a Pedorena owned the property.²⁷ For a brief time during the 1880's the land belonged to Frank and W.C. Kimball, developers of National City. In 1894 the title passed to E.S. Babcock, builder of Hotel del Coronado, and his wife.²⁸

Grazing constituted the principal use of the land of Janal. The grant had been made for the purpose of producing hides, tallow, and grain. In 1888 the Otay Press described

²⁴ California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, V1, 441, Estudillo, "Espediente for Janal."

²⁵ Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases, Appendix, 46.

²⁶ San Diego County, Recorder, Book of Patents, " I, 93.

²⁷ San Diego, The Weekly Union, February 22, 1872.

²⁸ San Diego, Union, January 16, 1938.

the land as "looking green with wild oats and alfileria now six inches high, and on which a herd of cattle and 5,000 sheep are now grazing."²⁹

Rancho Otay became the property of Magdalena Estudillo, a sister of the grantee of Janal. She based her claim to the rancho on two Mexican grants, the first of which was issued by Governor José María Echeandía in 1829. The second grant bore the date May 4, 1846, which shortly followed the validation of the first. Governor Pío Pico made the second grant.

The degree granting the land in 1846 stated that the concession was for her benefit and that of her family. The land involved included³⁰

the tract of land known by the name of Otay, bounded by the Tinaja; by the high road leading from the Mesa to the Rancho de la Nacion; by the boundaries of the land of the Tia Juana; and by the said Mesa.

The decree further stated that since the title already had been granted by Echeandía and validated and the investigations required by the laws of 1824 and 1828 were completed, she was granted the place in the name of the Mexican nation, subject to the approval of the Departmental Assembly. The grant stated the following:³¹

29

Otay, California, Press, November 29, 1888.

30

California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, Vl, 541, Magdalena Estudillo, "Espediente for Otay."

31

Ibid., 542

1st. She may enclosed without prejudice to the crossings, roads, and serntudes; she shall enjoy it freely and exclusively, rendering it to the use or cultivation that may be most convenient. 2nd. She shall be subject to the possession which has been recognized by the proper authorities. 3d. The land contained and which is granted to the interested party is of the extent of two square leagues on the limits of which necessary marks shall be placed.

On June 12, 1846, in Los Angeles, the Departmental Assembly issued a degree approving the grant.

The grantee, Magdalena Estudillo, claimed Otay before the Land Commission. Her claim, filed on November 1, 1852, was confirmed by the Commission on November 4, 1853. Confirmation by the District Court on February 11, 1856, and dismissal of an appeal on February 24, 1857, followed. The claim as allowed contained 6,657.98 acres.³² President Grant signed letters patent on January 20, 1872.³³

Dona Magdalena deeded the rancho to Santiago E. Arguello and Guadalupe Argüello on August 4, 1854. The Arguellos immediately transferred the ownership to Jose Ruez Escajadillo. Other owners in addition to those named previously included Victoriano Torre, Antonio Sanchez,³⁴ and Antonia Fernandez Somellera prior to July 1, 1872.

³²

Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases, Appendix, 60.

³³

1, 176.

San Diego County, Recorder, "Book of Patents,"

³⁴

424-25.

San Diego County, Recorder, "Deed Record," Vol. E,

In that year the first American owner, Solon S. Sanborn gained title. This pioneer sold a half-interest in the grant in the same year to Captain Mathew Sherman, Civil War veteran, mayor of San Diego in 1891, and developer of the property known as Sherman's Addition. The San Diego Land and Town Company acquired the land in the 1880's and in 1900³⁵ filed a subdivision map of part of the rancho.

111. RANCHO JAMACHÁ

Rancho Jamachá, a tract of over 8,000 acres which extended along the Sweetwater River for a distance of eight miles, was granted to Apolinaria Lorenzana by Juan B. Alvarado on April 27, 1840. Doña Apolinaria was a native of the City of Mexico from whence she came to California in 1800. She was an orphan and, like all the foundlings of her asylum, received the name of the Archbishop of Mexico. In California she lived in San Luis Rey and Santa Barbara. She never married, but devoted her life to charity and teaching. For her work she became known as "La Beata." In addition to receiving Jamachá she also received the grant of La Canada de los Coches, a small place of twenty-eight acres, also in San Diego County. In 1878 she lived in Santa Barbara,³⁶ entirely blind and supported by friends and public aid.

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San Diego, Union, January 16, 1938.

³⁶

R.W. Brackett, A History of the Ranchos, 39.

In the petition of Apolinaria Lorenzana, presented on August 17, 1833, she stated,³⁷

That having obtained from the predecessor of Your Honor, Don Manuel Victoria, a provisional grant of the place named by the Indians Tamachá, as shown by the accompanying petition, upon which a decree was made in my favor; and having petitioned for the said place, to which there has been no opposition up to the present time; and desiring to own the same, as my own, so that I may continue to increase my stock, I pray Your Honor to grant me said place of Tamachá.

Dona Apolinaria presented her claim for Jamachá to the Land Commission on November 1, 1852. It was confirmed by the Commissioners on November 4, 1853. The case was taken to the District Court where it was confirmed on February 4, 1856. Further appeal was dismissed on February 23, 1857. The claim as allowed contained 8,881.16 acres.³⁸ President Grant signed the patent on April 11, 1871.³⁹

In 1852 Robert Kelly and Colonel Eddy purchased the rancho. Kelly, a native of the Isle of Man, came to California in 1850. He disposed of his holdings in 1858.⁴⁰ In 1872 the owners of various parts of the rancho were listed as: William H. Keighler, 1,480 acres; S. S. Sanborn, 493

³⁷ California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, 1, 135, Apolinaria Lorenzana, "Espediente No. 17, for Jamachá."

³⁸ Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases, Appendix, 61.

³⁹ San Diego County, Recorder, "Book of Patents," 111, 452.

⁴⁰ Brackett, History of the Ranchos, 40.

acres; estate of J. B. MacGruder, 2,960 acres; estate of E. B. Pendleton, 986 acres; and unknown owners, 2,910 acres.⁴¹

Eleven years later, in 1883, the owners were Uri Hill L.C. Stockton, James Murphy, William H. Ware, N.H. Conklin, Mary A. Eddy, E. A. Pendleton, William H. Keighler, and the San Diego Land and Town Company.

The latter, a subsidiary of the Santa Fe Railroad Company,⁴² had purchased their property with the intention of securing water for irrigation from the Sweetwater River.⁴³ This company succeeded in its endeavor by constructing the Sweetwater Dam in the southwest corner of the rancho. This was the first important water development project in San Diego County. Construction on the dam, one of the largest in the world at that time and considered an outstanding engineering triumph, began in November, 1886. The hugh structure was completed two years later.⁴⁴

Isham's springs, at the foot of the San Miguel Mountain constituted a major business after 1887, named for the developer, Alfred Huntington Isham. The waters became widely advertised as a medicinal product and secured world-wide fame

⁴¹ San Diego, Weekly Union, February 22, 1872.

⁴² Brackett, History of the Ranchos, 40.

⁴³ History of San Diego County, 90.

⁴⁴ Brackett, loc. cit.

after their endorsement by the London Lancet. The mineral water was sent to all parts of the world, and the business prospered so greatly that the owners once refused a million dollars for the springs. Failing banks and an article entitled "The Great American Fraud", in Collier's Weekly, caused the demise of the business. Many legends still survive concerning Isham's Springs.

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Brackett, History of the Ranchos, 41.

CHAPTER 111

MAJOR LAND GRANTS

1. RANCHO MILIJO

Rancho Milijo occupied about thirty square miles of very desirable land in the lower Tia Juana and Otay River valleys. In this region are located the towns of Otay, Palm City, Nestor, and San Ysidro. The grant was one of the richest in San Diego County as judged by the productiveness of the soil. The place was also known as Rancho La Punta because of the location of a ranchería of that name on the grant.

The grantee of Rancho Milijo was Santiago E. Argüello a member of one of the most outstanding families of Spanish and Mexican California. His father, Santiago Argüello, made an honorable military and civil career in California serving the army and government in numerous positions. José Darío Arguello, his grandfather, served as temporary governor of Alta, California and as permanent governor of Baja California. Among the grantee's aunts and uncles were Jose Ignacio Maximo, the first native-born priest of Alta, California, Maria de la Concepción Marcela, famous for her love affair with Count Rezanov, and Luis Antonio, the first Mexican Governor of California. His mother was Pilar Ortega, a daughter of the

¹ Raymond K. Morrison, "Luis Antonio Arguello, First Mexican Governor of California," 2-3.

discoverer of San Francisco Bay.²

Santiago E. Argüello was born in the Presidio of Santa Barbara in 1813. In 1833 he petitioned for Milijo, which he received provisionally on November 25, 1833.³ His subsequent career was noteworthy. Offices which he held included receptor at San Diego (1833-34), suplente in the Assembly and juez⁴ at San Diego (1845-46), and captain in Stockton's battalion. Under American rule he was elected to the office of county Assessor at San Diego in 1851.⁵

He married Guadalupe Estudillo, a daughter of José Antonio Estudillo, grantee of Rancho Janal.⁶

Don Santiago was one of twenty-two children. The support of such a large family constituted a problem for his father, and on April 20, 1833, he made application for Milijo; "the object set forth in soliciting the place is to help my father in the support of his numerous family." More fully, the petition stated:⁷

² N. B. Greene, "Genealogies of the Spanish Pioneers", Section 11.

³ California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, 1, 460-61, Santiago E. Argüello, "Espediente No. 60, for Milijo."

⁴ H. H. Bancroft, History of California, 1, 702-3

⁵ San Diego, Herald, September 4, 1851.

⁶ Greene, loc. cit.

⁷ Argüello, "Espediente No. 60, "Spanish Archives, 1, 456-57.

1, Santiago E. Arguello, before your Honor's superior authority, with greatest respect, and by the permission of my father represnet: That the place of Milljo lies adjacent to that which my father occupied, and as said place is vacant, and I desire to be next to my father's, I request Your Honor, to grant me said place as much as for the reasons as I have stated as from the fact, it is the watering place of the stock of my aforesaid father and thus remain in the same Canada, and unite the two places together: . . .

The petition stated that the place would have been requested previously, but a brother-in-law, Augustine Zamorano, California's first known printer,⁸ had thought of asking it for himself. The place asked for was described,⁹ and the purpose for which it would be used was stated.

The said place on the side of the coast, is bounded by the high road that leads to lower California, on the East, by that of Tijuana, on the south by vacant lands, and on the North it lays three or four leagues of the Nacional Rancho as Your Honor may ascertain, by the annexed map. At present I have no stock, but I offer in the course of this year, to put thereon three hundred head of bovine cattle, and some horses.

In response to the petition, Governor Figueroa requested the military commandant at San Diego to report if the petitioner possessed such requisites as would entitle him to be heard on the petition. Also, the commandant was to give him information¹⁰

⁸ Robert Ernest Cowan, A Bibliography of the Spanish Press of California, 1832-45, 4-5.

⁹ Arguello, "Espediente No. 60," Spanish Archives, 1, 456-57.

¹⁰ Arguello, loc. cit.

if said he petitions for, is included within the twenty leagues bordering on a foreign territory, or ten leagues bordering on the shore, mentioned in the law of the 18th day of August, 1824; if it has or does belong to the property of any individuals, Mission, corporation or pueblo, or if it is known as vacant land, with everything which may serve to elucidate the matter.

The information was desired because article four of the Colonization Laws of 1824 stated that lands within twenty leagues of a foreign country, or ten of the coast, could not be colonized without the approval of the supreme executive power. Article eighteen of the laws of 1828 stated that the lands occupied by missions could not be occupied.¹¹

The commandant at San Diego, Santiago Arguello, replied that since the petitioner was his son, he, too, had an interest. Nevertheless, he promised to make a strict report, as his honor required. The land in question was not within twenty leagues of a foreign territory, lay within one league of the sea, and did not belong to any individual or corporation. However, during times of drought the corporal in charge of Rancho Nacional had watered stock at Milijo, but the land did not belong to the Rancho Nacional as it was three or four leagues removed. The land had been asked for twice previously, by Juan Bandini and Augustine Zamorano, which indicated that it was not owned by anyone.

In regard to his son, the commandant replied that the

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Baneroff, History of California, 11, 516; 111, 24-5

petitioner was twenty years old, could stock the place, and asked for it in order to bring together the property of the family. Thus, the petitioner would be able to fulfill the requirements for the proposed grant.¹²

Upon receipt of the foregoing information Governor Figueroa sent another request to the Constitutional Alcalde of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, before whom Santiago E. Argüello would present himself with witnesses. The alcalde was to question the witnesses on the following points:

1. Did the witnesses know Santiago Argüello? Was he a Mexican by birth? Was he a man of good conduct?
2. Did he own any property? Did his father own any? Did he have the means to stock the land? What was the number of cattle and horses with which he meant to stock the land?
3. Did the land belong to the Nacional Rancho? To any individual, corporation, mission, or pueblo? Was the land fit for agriculture or grazing? Was it irrigable? What was its extent?

The interrogation was carried out as required. Don Santiago appeared before the alcalde, José Antonio Carrillo, and presented two witnesses, Antonio Machado and Francisco Sepulveda. The two made the sign of the cross by their

¹² Argüello, "Espediente No. 60," Spanish Archives, 1, 457-58.

names and declared that Santiago E. Argüello was a native of the territory, possessed no property of the nature stated, and owned stock. They further stated that the land was vacant and had been used only at the time when a Captain Ruiz was commandant, and then on account of the drought. The land was not irrigable; the greater portion was fit for grazing and good for wheat. In regard to its size, it extended six thousand varas from east to west, and one thousand five hundred to three thousand varas from north to south.¹³

Upon receipt of this information, Governor Figueroa issued the following decree:¹⁴

Don Santiago E. Argüello is declared owner in fee of the land known by the name milijo, bounded by the Rancho Nacional of San Diego, the Rancho of Tijuana, the hill range of San Antonio and the road leading to Lower California, subject to that which may be stipulated and besides, that the stock of the Nation be allowed to graze there in case of necessity.

Five regulations accompanied the grant. Neither he nor his heirs were to divide, alienate, or mortgage the property. He was permitted to enclose the land, use it as he wished, and was to build within one year a house which he should inhabit. He was to seek out the proper judge and secure juridical possession. The land was of one square league in extent. Finally, if any of the regulations were

¹³ Argüello, "Espediente No. 60," Spanish Archives, 1, 459.

¹⁴ Ibid., 460-61.

violated he was to lose the rights to the land.¹⁵

The Committee on Colonization and Vacant Lands approved the grant on May 10, 1834, while the Deputation did the same on May 17th. In view of the approval of "The Most Excellent Territorial Deputation," the Governor issued a decree on June 26, 1834, confirming the grant as made previously.¹⁶

The next step in securing ownership involved the delivery of juridical possession. This was done on the 12th of June, 1837, when José Antonio Estudillo, First Alcalde and Judge of the First Instance of the Pueblo of San Diego, appeared at Milijo accompanied by the colindante, or commandant, of the Rancho Nacional, Santiago E. Arguello, and two witnesses. The judge informed the colindante of the purpose of the meeting, which was to measure and give possession of the place of Milijo. As the colindante made no objections, the judge had the required measurements completed.

The method used in making the measurements was typical of California and interesting. The judge appointed two measurers and informed them of their task, after which they took the oath that they would discharge their duties faithfully. Then they measured a cord to the length of one

¹⁵ Argüello, "Espediente No. 60," Spanish Archives, 1, 460-61.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1, 462.

hundred varas, having a stick attached to each end. Measurements then commenced¹⁷

at the point where the ridge (cuchilla) comes down to the road of San Antonio running in a northerly direction twelve thousand five hundred varas, making as a line a tree known as "el Sauco," to the south thirteen thousand varas to a little hill known as "Piedras de Cumbre" (steep rock) was fixed as a boundary and from East to West, ten thousand (varas) measuring the same number of varas from the "Camino de los Caballos del Rancho de Otay" to the shores of the Bay from East to North; not completing the tract granted to him containing Eleven Square Leagues as shown by the title presented, since the same was occupied by the Rancho known by the name "de la Nacion"; wherefore measurements were concluded to the satisfaction of the interested party and the colindantes.

The judge then gave juridical possession.

In the granting of land as described there are two points of importance. The first had to do with Figueroa's policy of stipulating that the land should never be sold, transferred, or mortgaged. This provision attempted to prevent foreigners from buying the land at a low price and in time becoming landowners in California.¹⁸

The second point of importance is that the official measurements were conducted with an absence of accuracy and precision as demanded under American law. This caused much litigation in later years during the American period, but

¹⁷ Arguello, "Espediente No. 60," Spanish Archives, 1, 463-64.

¹⁸ Lela Margaret Weststeyn, "The Expansion of the Land Grant System under the last two Mexican Governors Manuel Micheltoarena and Pio de Jesus Pico," 9.

under conditions of the time gave satisfaction. To the landowners precisely defined boundaries had no practical significance. The rancheros put up no fences to keep the neighboring herds from running together. The owners of the huge estates considered the open lands almost as a common pasture.¹⁹

The raising of cattle constituted the principal occupation of the rancheros; Otay rancho was granted for the purpose of producing hides and tallow; Milijo was requested so that the cattle of Santiago Argüello and his son could be united. In this case the grantee proposed to stock the place with three hundred head of cattle. He continued stock raising even during the American period. In 1853 he purchased four hundred head of cattle, brought from Baja California by Abel Stearns, for \$12,000. These he shortly took to the San Francisco market.²⁰ The next year he sold cattle to drovers from "up country," the average pay being \$32.50 per head.²¹

Probably the oldest house in this district stands at La Punta on a hill overlooking the bay and Otay Valley. Santiago E. Argüello built this old adobe in the year 1828

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- 19 Robert G. Cleland, The Cattle on a Thousand Hills,
 36. San Diego, Herald, September 3, 1853.
 20
 San Diego, Herald, September 3, 1853.
 21
Ibid., April 15, 1854.

or 1829, according to one writer who visited the place about
 twenty years later.²² This date is probably too early,
 however, because the petition and testimony as given in the
expediente stated that the land was vacant in 1833. A grant
 required that a house be built within one year. Probably
 the Arguellos erected the old adobe in 1834 or 1835.

Of the legends which grew up about the place, one of
 the most interesting appeared in the Otay Press:²³

When there were no hotels, here at the old adobe
 mansion on the bluff, the old sea captains were cor-
 dially entertained. When a ship was seen an old red
 petticoat was hoisted on a pole, and the captain knew
 a welcome awaited him, bright and warm as the color
 of the novel signal flag.

This story, however, was refuted in the paper's next issue
 where it was pointed out that ships approached the shore
 when arriving at San Diego harbor at a distance of four or
 five miles from La Punta-- a distance much too great for
 observation of such a small flag.²⁴

Many accounts of the Arguello homestead tell of the
 family and the pleasant affairs held there. The house was
 the birthplace of Mrs. A. H. Wilcox, wife of the captain of

22

John C. Moore, "La Punta," Otay, Press, November

15, 1888.

23

Otay, Press, November 8, 1888.

24

Ibid., November 15, 1888.

Arguello Adobe, La Punta
The Arguello Adobe, La Punta, is a fine example of the Spanish Colonial style of architecture. It was built by Don Juan Arguello, a Spanish soldier and settler, in the early 18th century. The adobe is located in the town of La Punta, in the county of Santa Clara, California. It is a two-story building with a central tower and a courtyard. The walls are made of adobe and the roof is made of tiles. The adobe is a well-preserved example of the Spanish Colonial style of architecture in California.

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Arguello Adobe, rear view

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the schooner "Vaquero."²⁵ Captain Wilcox and his wife were prominent in the social life of early San Diego. Another daughter became the wife of William B. Couts, San Diego County Recorder.²⁶ Mrs. Couts later, in 1888, owned the La Punta home.²⁷ In those "good old times. . . La Punta was an open house for all visitors and strangers."²⁸

Santiago E. Argüello claimed Milijo before the Land Commission. He filed his claim on November 1, 1852, and it was rejected by the Commission on December 20, 1853. An appeal to the District Court was also rejected on September 20, 1855.²⁹

During September of 1853, while the case was being decided by the Commissioners, the Argüellos sold the tract to Jose Antonio Aguirre for \$30,000, payable in three installments of \$10,000 each.³⁰

On July 23, 1866, Congress passed "An Act to quiet Land Titles in California, " section seven of which act

²⁵ San Diego, Herald, January 28, 1854

²⁶ San Diego County, Recorder, "Book of Brands," 1, 37.

²⁷ Otay Press, November 8, 1888.

²⁸ Ibid., November 15, 1888.

²⁹ Ogden Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases Determined in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, Appendix, 60.

³⁰ San Diego, Herald, September 3, 1853.

provided:

. . . that where persons in good faith and for a valuable consideration have purchased lands of Mexican grantees or assigns, which grants have been subsequently rejected, or where the lands so purchased have been excluded from the final survey of any Mexican grant, and have used, improved, and continued in the actual possession of the same. . . such purchasers may purchase the same, after having such lands surveyed under existing laws, at the minimum price established by law.

Under this act Doña Guadalupe applied in 1870 for the purchase of the Milijo grant. Hearings on her claim ended October 29, 1870. She based her claim for the land as a purchaser of the place from a Mr. Reiner, who had purchased the place at a sheriff's sale of the rancho.

In the meantime another disturbing factor entered the situation; that of the squatter. The Act of 1851 placed the burden of proof of ownership upon the Mexican grantees, and thus greatly inflamed the minds of land-hungry settlers against the large ranch owners. This provided what was to them a plausible basis for so-called squatter's rights. The settlers of the post-Gold Era were not too respectful of the boundaries of the land grants, for the lure of cheap land had brought American immigration across the continent. When the settlers arrived in California, they found the best land owned by the rancheros.

31

George P. Sawyer, ed., United States Statutes at Large, 220.

32

San Diego, Weekly Union, November 3, 1870.

who, they said, had too much land for most of it was unoccupied. Therefore, they proceeded to settle on these lands.³³

The speech of Mariano Alamor, in the historical novel, "The Squatter and the Don," well described the situation:³⁴

So then we became obliged to present our titles before said land commission to be examined and approved or rejected. While these legal proceedings are going on, the squatters locate their claims, raise crops on our lands, which they convert into money to fight our titles.

The problem of the squatter was illustrated at La Punta, the ranch house and headquarters of Rancho Milijo. In the days when the lands were being settled, many made claims on the rancho. These squatters were generally poor. Customarily, when the settlers ran low in meat, fifteen or twenty would select some beef on the range belonging to the Arguellos and during the night kill it and have a barbecue. Often this was their only source of fresh meat.³⁵

The case for the purchase of the land by Guadalupe Arguello attracted considerable attention in the county. About sixty witnesses appeared, most of them wishing to prevent the sale of the land upon which they had settled. The settlers involved numbered seventy-five or eighty.

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Cleland, The Cattle on a Thousand Hills, 62.

34

C. Loyal, The Squatter and the Don, 21.

35

Lena B. Hunsicker and Winifred Davidson, "San Diego County Place Names."

General Volney E. Howard was the attorney for the claimants; W. H. and D. Cleveland for the settlers.

The Weekly Union, sympathetic to the settlers, stated that

The farmers who have settled at the head of the Bay are among the very best citizens of the county, and have toiled faithfully, in spite of the most discouraging obstacles of drought, etc., to develop the agricultural resources of that portion of the country. Having settled in good faith, on what they believed to be government land, and expended much money and labor in their improvements, they naturally feel deep concern where their hard earned homes are at stake, and they are determined to contest the claim to the utmost.

The Register of the Land Office in Los Angeles decided the case on April 7, 1871, in favor of the settlers.

Señora Argüello immediately appealed to the Commissioner of the General Land Office,³⁷ who on February 5, 1871, decided adversely to her claim and allowed sixty days for further appeal. When the sixty days elapsed without appeal, the General Land Office advised that the case was closed.³⁸

However, on July 3, 1873, Mrs Argüello appealed to the Secretary of the Interior,³⁹ and on October 29, 1873, he also decided against her application.⁴⁰ The case was ended.

³⁶ San Diego, Weekly Union, November 3, 1870.

³⁷ Ibid., April 13, 1871.

³⁸ Ibid., December 12, 1873.

³⁹ Ibid., July 24, 1873.

⁴⁰ Ibid., November 6, 1873.

On January 8, 1874, a notice appeared in the local Weekly Union advising the settlers to make final proof and payments for their respective lands at the office of Alfred James, Register of the Land Office in Los Angeles.⁴¹

11. RANCHO DE LA NACION

The Rancho de la Nación was perhaps the most important of the Mexican land grants in the San Diego County area excepting the pueblo lands of San Diego. This grant of some 27,000 acres extended along the bay shore from San Diego south to La Punta and eastward to the base of San Miguel Mountain. Included in this area are the towns of National City and Chula Vista.

Originally known as Rancho del Rey, and allotted for presidential grazing purposes in 1795, it became known as Rancho de la Nación when Mexico secured its independence. The tract was granted to Don Juan Forster in 1845. In 1868 the grant passed into the hands of Frank A., Warren C., and Levi Kimball, brothers from New Hampshire. The gift of much of this land to the Santa Fe railway interests secured the extension of that railroad to San Diego and National City in the early 1880's.

The grantee of Rancho de la Nacion was Juan Forster,

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San Diego, Weekly Union, January 8, 1874.

a native of Liverpool, England, who was born on September 16, 1814. After living in the great seaport town for seventeen years, he followed his uncle to Mexico in 1831. The uncle, James Johnson, a brother of his mother, Eulana Johnson Forster, had migrated to Guaymas eight years earlier and there had established a firm known by the name of Johnson and Aguirre. John Forster went to work for his uncle helping in the business of trading hides, which were secured in California, for manufactured articles from New England. For a time Forster helped also in the pearl fishing industry in the Gulf of California.

For use in its trading and fishing business the firm operated a two-masted brigantine, the "Facio," which in 1833 Johnson, known as Captain Santiago Johnson, and Forster sailed to California on a trading voyage. When John Forster returned to Guaymas it was as commander of the "Facio".

Three years later at the age of twenty-two, Forster settled in Alta California, became a Mexican citizen, and indicated his change in allegiance by taking the name of Don Juan Forster. In 1837 he married María Ysidora Pico, a sister of Pio Pico and General Andrés Pico. The Forster family lived in Los Angeles and San Pedro. In the latter place Forster became captain of the port. By 1844 he had transferred his activities to San Juan Capistrano where he

became a great cattle man.⁴²

During his career Forster acquired the ranchos Mission Viejo and Trabuco, and the ranchos De la Nacion, San Felipe, and Santa Margarita y las Flores in San Diego County.⁴³

Forster made his home at San Juan Capistrano Mission from 1845 to 1864. After the purchase of Santa Margarita y las Flores in 1864, he moved there to spend the rest of his life, for he died at his ranch home on February 25, 1882.⁴⁴

As has been mentioned, the tract of land known as Rancho del Rey had been set aside for presidial grazing purposes in 1795 and was administered by the commandante of the Presidio at San Diego.⁴⁵ When the Mexican revolution terminated, all lands which had formerly belonged to the Crown became the national lands of Mexico.⁴⁶ The tract then became known as Rancho de la Nacion, often briefly called Rancho Nacional. In 1828 the rancho was kept up in a manner and furnished meat and horses for the government troops.

⁴² Laguna Beach, South Coast News, April 13, 1937.

⁴³ Terry E. Stephenson, "Forster vs. Pico," Historical Society of Southern California, Quarterly, XVII (1935) 143-46

⁴⁴ Laguna Beach, South Coast News, April 13, 1937.

⁴⁵ R. W. Brackett, History of the Ranchos of San Diego County, California, 69.

⁴⁶ Weststeyn, "Expansion of the Land Grant System", 6.

occasional murmurs were heard at that time that the cattle were almost exhausted. Consequently, all the tithes of cattle were added to the rancho. It was reported that the stock in 1828 consisted of 250 cattle and 25 horses.⁴⁷

On July 3, 1843, Juan Forster petitioned the California government for the grant of the rancho. He stated that he owned more than a thousand head of stock of various kinds, mostly cattle. The request was to be for the benefit of his family who had grown up in California.⁴⁸

José Antonio Estudillo had previously obtained a concession for the land, but had allowed his title to lapse because of his inability to carry out the provisions of the grant. After ascertaining this fact and with the knowledge that the place had been vacant for ten years, Governor Micheltorena granted Juan Forster a provisional title on July 26, 1843. This provisional grant was given with the reservation that as long as the government might find it necessary it should be allowed to keep cattle and horses on the ranch. The grantee, however, could commence his improvements and cultivation immediately.⁴⁹

47

Bancroft, History of California, I, 546.

48

California, Secretary of State, Spanish Archives, V, 465, Juan Forster, "Espediente No. 491, for De la Nacion."

49

Ibid., V, 466.

On December 11, 1845, Pío Pico, Governor of California decreed that Forster was the owner of the land as provisionally granted by Micheltorena. The concession provided that Forster might enclose the land and devote it to any use which was convenient. He was required to build within one year on the land a house which should be inhabited. The grant contained approximately six square leagues.⁵⁰

On May 8, 1846, the Assembly referred the petition to the committee on Vacant Lands, and on the 22nd the committee recommended that the grant be made. The Assembly gave final approval to the grant on June 3, 1846.

The Alcalde at San Diego, Santiago E. Argüello, assisted by José R. Argüello and Francisco M. Alvarado, on August 25, 1846, measured the land and gave possession thereof to Don Juan Forster. The boundaries were run:

Commencing at the edge of the beach (playa) thence in a North East direction fifteen thousand varas, the line terminating at the ojoaji (Spring) of the serro (hill) of San Miguel at which point an aliso was marked. Whereupon being on the Sauco (alders) the boundary of the Punta de Ohjai, the line was run to the North West two thousand varas terminating on the high road at the loma (hill) which forms the Canada of Los Chollas, at which point a stake was driven. Whereupon the measurements were concluded, which measurements gave the Rancho six square leagues, a little more or less, according to the least calculations that could be made.

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Forster, "Espediente No. 491, for De la Nacion," Spanish Archives, V, 466.

At the conclusion of the measuring Forster was placed in⁵¹ Juridical possession.

Forster filed claim for the land on November 6, 1852, before the United States Land Commission, which confirmed the grant on October 24, 1854. The grant as finally allowed by the United States contained 26, 631, 94 acres.⁵² The patent signed by President Andrew Johnson for "de la Nacion"⁵³ was registered at San Diego on February 27, 1866.⁵³

The Rancho remained in Don Juan's hands until 1856 when, on September 22, he sold the place to Jules B. Bayerque for a sum of \$25,000. The title passed to Romano Bayerque and then to Francois L. A. Pioche. It was from Mr. Pioche that in January of 1868 Frank A. and Warren C. Kimball purchased the 26,000-acre grant. The purchase price on this last sale was \$30,000.⁵⁴

These two and a third brother, Levi W. Kimball, immediately laid off the townsite of National City and started the modern development of the south bay area, the story of

⁵¹ Forster, "Espediente No. 491, for De la Nacion," Spanish Archives, V, 466.

⁵² Hoffman, Reports of Land Cases, Appendix, 63.

⁵³ San Diego County, Recorder, "Book of Patents," 1,7.

⁵⁴ Abstract Title Company, "Abstract of Title," February 3, 1906.

which follows in the next chapters. Immediately the land increased in value, the Kimballs refusing to sell it for \$130,000 in 1871.

55

Brackett, History of the Ranchos, 69.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CITY

The Kimball brothers, Frank A., Warren C., and Levi W., came to California from New Hampshire in 1860. In San Francisco and Oakland the three set up the firm of "Kimball Brothers" which engaged in business as building contractors.

Early in January, 1868, Frank Kimball decided to retire from the firm and seek a more healthful climate. His search carried him to the southern part of the state, where after six months he discovered the opportunity for which he was looking.¹ In June of the same year he, with his brother Warren, purchased the Rancho Nacional for the sum of \$30,000.²

At that date not a house had been built in or south of San Diego since the United States government army barracks were completed in 1852. The purchase of the six miles of water front was made in such dull times because the brothers were much pleased with the harbor's potential capacity for commerce, the climate of the region, and rich soil with its vast range of productions.³

¹ Earle Marble, "The California Southern," The Golden Era, XXXVI (1887), 703.

² Abstract Title Company, "Abstract of Title," February 3, 1906.

³ National City, Record, March 18, 1886.

During the next month, July, 1868, the surveying and subdividing of the property began under the direction of George S. Morrill. Immediately following the survey, the plat of National City was prepared. Blocks of two and one half acres, including the surrounding streets, were laid out. The streets were eighty feet wide and ran in the direction of South 71⁰ West. Avenues were at right angles to the streets and of the same width, except National Avenue, the east boundary of the town, and Eighth Avenue which were one hundred feet wide. The exterior lines of the blocks were 250 feet on all streets and avenues.

The task of clearing the land at the new townsite ended and construction of the residence of Frank A. Kimball started on August 1, 1868. This was the first house in National City. Progress in the new town lagged, however, for in 1869 only twelve houses were erected in National City as compared to over four hundred in San Diego.⁴

In 1869 General M.C. Hunter, acting as attorney for the Memphis and El Paso Railroad Company, entered into an agreement with Frank and Warren Kimball, the owners of National City. Bonds conditional under a forfeiture of two million dollars to locate the terminus of that trans-continental railroad at National City were issued. The Memphis

⁴ National City, Record, September 28, 1882,

and El Paso made a failure of its attempt to build to the coast, and, as a result. the bonds were turned over as a portion of the bankrupt corporation. There they remained until Colonel T. A. Scott and the Texas and Pacific Company arrived upon the scene.

Colonel Scott's appearance in 1871 gave National City its second railroad boom which continued until 1873. Scott had purchased the charter and franchise of the Memphis and El Paso Company. As an inducement to the new company to build to the bay region, San Diego gave nine thousand acres of city land on a verbal promise. The National City developers would not accept a verbal agreement, but entered into a bond with the parties representing the new Texas and Pacific Company in return for a donation of eleven thousand acres of the National Ranch and one half of the National City tract. The failure of Colonel Scott and the Texas and Pacific Company in the panic and financial troubles of 1873 returned to the Kimball brothers, by the limitations of the bond, the eleven thousand acres and the National City property.⁵ With the collapse of the boom in 1873 over one half of the population of National City withdrew. Times⁶ were indeed dull in the struggling town.

⁵ National City, Record, March 18, 1886.

⁶ Ibid., September 28, 1882.

In 1878 Frank Kimball entered into correspondence with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company and in June of the next year proceeded to Boston. While there he entered into bonds with G. B. Wilbur and Lucius G. Pratt who were authorized by the Board of Directors of the Santa Fe Company to execute papers for the building of a railway from San Diego Bay to Yuma.⁷

Later, in 1879, a consolidation of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe with the Saint Louis and San Francisco railroad brought about a reorganization of those companies with the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company. An agreement was made among the three roads to "build and complete the Atlantic and Pacific railroad to the Needles, on the Colorado River, before making any move in the state of California." The time required for such construction was estimated to be two or three years. Again by the limitations of the bond, the lands belonging to the Kimballs were surrendered and returned.⁸

Early in 1880 Frank Kimball went east in another attempt to secure the railroad's construction. The same general offer as had just been rejected was made to a Boston syndicate headed by the president of the Santa Fe

⁷ National City, Record. September 28, 1882.

⁸ Ibid., March 18, 1886.

company, Thomas Nickerson. This offer was accepted on
July 23 1880.⁹

The resulting agreement included the following points. The California Southern Company was to be formed and a road of standard gauge constructed from San Diego Bay to connect with the Atlantic and Pacific railroad in California. Work was to begin at the earliest possible moment, and before January 1, 1881, the company was to have completed twenty miles of road, starting at San Diego Bay, or have performed in good faith work which was the equivalent. Work and contracts not less than \$250,000 in amount should constitute the equivalent. Before July 1, 1882, at least 116 miles were to be completed. The connection with the Atlantic and Pacific should take place before January 1, 1884. If these conditions were not met, trustees were to hold the donated lands in trust for the original donors.¹⁰

The lands donated in return for the construction of the railroad consisted of 10,000 acres of land in the National Ranch and National City. Certain lands already sold were excepted. Included in the donated lands were the unsold properties belonging to the Kimball brothers, the property of the San Diego Bay Land Company, and the Kimball

⁹ National City, Record, March 18, 1886.

¹⁰ Marble, "The California Southern," 708-09.

Brothers Water Company. The brothers also agreed to sell no land within fifteen miles of San Diego Bay for a period of five years except on behalf of the new land syndicate which was to be formed. The new syndicate, which had the handling of the railway holdings as its purpose, consisted of Frank A. Kimball, Warren C. Kimball, Kidder, Peabody, and Company, B. P. Cheney, George B. Wilbur, Lucius G. Pratt, and Thomas Nickerson.

Frank Kimball agreed to purchase for sale to the syndicate the following properties at a price not greater than that indicated:

Otay Rancho	6,661 acres	\$7,000.
Janal Rancho ()	2,220 acres	\$3,775.
Horton Tract	1,700 acres	17,000.
Cleveland Tract	20 acres	12,000.
McLaren Tract	40 acres	2,285.

In addition he was to secure a tract of four hundred acres for a reservoir for the National Ranch at a price of not more than \$2,000.

Upon delivery of the deeds for the above to the syndicate, the Boston financiers agreed to pay the Kimballs \$100,000 for their five sixths interest in the properties and the syndicate. The two Kimball brothers retained a one twelfth interest each in the new company.

11 Frank A. Kimball, et al., "Articles of Agreement," July 26, 1880.

The California Southern Railroad was chartered on October 12, 1880, for the purpose of building a line from National City to San Bernardino, the proposed junction point with the Atlantic and Pacific road. Benjamin Kimball of Boston became president of the company and Frank A. Kimball one of the directors. Work began on the railroad in November of 1880. The first rail was laid without fanfare at National City in June following. On July 27, 1881, the first "special" train left National City. By November, 1882, the road was completed to Colton on the Southern Pacific line.¹² Daily passenger service between National City and Colton began on March 19, 1883.¹³

Here trouble developed for a time because the Southern Pacific secured an injunction preventing the crossing of their line and the extension to San Bernardino. The California Southern threatened to sell out to the Southern Pacific interests, but Frank Kimball prepared to enforce the bond conditions and the plan to sell failed.¹⁴ These difficulties, however, cleared up and by September 13, 1883 the company completed the line to San Bernardino.

¹² William E. Smythe, History of San Diego, 404-5

¹³ Los Angeles, Daily Herald, August 10, 1883.

¹⁴ Frank H. Mandeville, Tourist's Guide to San Diego and Vicinity, 5; Los Angeles, Daily Herald, August 10, 1883.

Trains ran for a few months on the road before a more serious blow fell. In February, 1884, great storms washed out the road in Temecula Canyon. Over thirty miles of track were carried away; scarcely one hundred yards remained intact between Ocnaside and Temecula. Timbers drifted one hundred miles out to sea. Funds for repairs were raised by a second mortgage and the line was repaired at a cost of more than \$250,000. Later, a new route to Santa Ana from Oceanside replaced the direct line east through Temecula Canyon, causing the abandonment of the latter line.

In 1885 through traffic to the East began over the California Southern, On November 15 the first train left for the East. Six days later the first train from across the continent arrived in National City.¹⁵

By contract the western terminal , shops, and wharves were to be located at National City. The railroad owners laid out terminal grounds " larger than any in the United States," erected temporary shops, to be replaced with brick buildings, equal to those built at Sacramento by the Central Pacific.¹⁶ The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, which¹⁷ assumed control of the California Southern in April, 1886,

¹⁵ Smythe, History of San Diego, 404-5.

¹⁶ National City, Record, March 18, 1886.

¹⁷ Ibid., April 22, 1886.

was "determined to make a city there" and abandon its "un-¹⁸safe roadstead at San Pedro." The company stated further:

It has long been a joke that Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties are a part of the "back country" of San Diego, but it is fast being recognized as a stern reality, and the railroads are among the first to see it.

However, in spite of such apparent support by the Santa Fe, the machinery and men were "temporarily" removed from the National City shops in 1889. Hope that a change in the management of the Santa Fe would affect a restoration of the National City shops and offices did not materialize.¹⁹ Since that time the shops at National City have been unimportant, while the road from Los Angeles has been a branch line, not the main line to the East as planned by the local developers.

New settlers began to arrive soon after the laying out of the town of National City. Among the first was Theron Parsons who in his diaries gave details of early happenings. Land in the 'sixties sold for twenty-five dollars an acre with four years to pay. In June of 1870 Elizabeth Gilman Starr opened her new school. Three years after the arrival of the Kimballs an express two-horse passenger carriage service to San Diego was established

¹⁸ San Diego Land and Town Company, Guide to the San Diego Bay Region, 18.

¹⁹ National City, Record, April 23, 1889.

according to Parsons.²⁰ In January, 1873, National City had a population of two hundred.²¹

In this same year the Kimball brothers constructed a wharf at their new townsite. On October 1 the first steamship ever to navigate the bay as far as National City lay at the wharf.²² This steamer, the "Orizaba," and others soon were frequent callers at the new pier.

Another early arrival at the new wharf was the schooner "Johanne" which in August, 1873, docked with poles and wire for the military telegraph line which was to run from National City to Prescott, Arizona. Construction of the line began on October 4, 1873, under Captain William E. Dove, commanding Company B, Twelfth Infantry, which was detailed for the work. The line, erected under civilian foremen, reached Prescott on November 19.²³

The beginning of the construction on the California Southern railroad caused a boom complex to spread over National City. A correspondent to the San Diego Union wrote:²⁴

²⁰ Theron Parsons, Extract from his Diaries," June 6, 1870.

²¹ San Diego, Weekly Union, January 30, 1873.

²² Ibid., October 3, 1871.

²³ Ibid., November 20, 1873.

²⁴ San Diego, Union, October 2, 1881.

Perhaps we were too sanguine of our future, and needed a check, for it cannot be denied that most of the people here thought that National City was cutting something of a figure. . . . Since the railroad company have secured 38,000 acres of land on and adjoining National Ranch; since 6½ miles of water front in National City are owned and being improved by the Company; since the said Company has erected machine shops, storehouses, blacksmith shops, warehouses, coal houses, roundhouses, and a wharf, and laid several miles of track, with more to lay on the terminal grounds; since houses are going up on every hand and demand exceeds supply; since hotels and boarding houses are full to overflowing, and every man, woman, and child has employment, . . . ; and since, in view of these little improvements, with ships unloading their cargoes, lighters and steam tugs in constant use, it is not strange we should be so set up in our own estimation.

The population of the new town, over one half of New England parentage, quickly set up business establishments. Large brick kilns began operating in 1881. The International Hotel opened under the management of the San Diego Land and Town Company in 1882. Frank Burgess began printing the National City Record on September 28, 1882. Other business enterprises included general stores, a jewelry store, a bakery and restaurant, a planing mill, several carpenter shops, an implement warehouse, hotels, and numerous real estate offices.

During 1887 the residents presented a petition to the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County asking for incorporation of National City. One hundred twenty-five

persons signed the request, dated May 16. The election to decide the question and to select officers, held on July 23, resulted in a vote of 116 to 3 in favor of incorporation. The supervisors canvassed the votes and officially declared National City to be a municipal corporation of the sixth class.²⁶

The first meeting of the new Board of Trustees saw the drafting of an ordinance regulating the saloons of the city. The liquor interests lost no time in finding an error in some of the notices and bulletins announcing the date of the election and protested that the incorporation and the election of officers were illegal. Therefore, a second vote was ordered for September. This second election²⁷ favored incorporation by 190 votes to 16.

In June 1887, Frank Knox of Woodland, California, commenced the construction of a carriage factory at Twenty-fourth Street and National Ave. The new organization quickly developed into a leading industry, turning out carriages and light wagons. The factory completed more than twenty vehicles a week during the first few months of operation. Later in the same year the company was incorporated as the National Carriage Company, with a capital stock of

²⁶ National City, Record, July 28, 1887.

²⁷ Ibid., September 15, 1887.

Steele Block, National City

National Carriage Factory

28
\$50,000.

After the completion of the California Southern great interest grew in other railway plans, none of which materialized, however. The first and most talked-of was the so-called Bee Line from National City to Yuma over the route of the present San Diego and Arizona Railway. From 1886 to 1890 prospects for the Bee Line appeared hopefully in the papers. In 1889 the San Bernardino Times Index reported actual construction on the road. In the same period the Record announced a plan by the International Development Company of Mexico to complete in 1887 a standard gauge railroad from National City to Ensenada and thence to La Paz, Baja California, and to Yuma, Arizona. In 1888 the San Diego and Ensenada Railway surveyed its line from National City to the Monument.

²⁹In June of that year the telegraph line of the railway was opened to Ensenada, while in December a preliminary survey was completed from the Monument to Ensenada.³⁰

Banking establishments opened for business in 1887. The Citizens' Bank of National City was organized in the office of the San Diego Land and Town Company in May. A

²⁸ National City, Record, December 15, 1887.

²⁹ Ibid., June 27, 1889; September 25, 1887; February 2, 1888.

³⁰ Otay, Press, June 21, 1888.

second bank, The National City Bank, opened its doors during August in the Warren C. Kimball Block.³¹

A summary of the year 1887 revealed a \$500,000 building record. Real estate transactions averaged \$60,000 per month, or nearly four million dollars for the year. Lumber sales amounted to \$215,000, carriage factory sales were \$16,000 for six months, olive oil sales were \$9,000, and shipping amount to three million dollars in value.³² National City's population was estimated to be 1,500 at the time.³³

Early in the next year a franchise for a railroad circling the bay from San Diego to Coronado was issued. The promoters of the Coronado Railroad, or Belt Line as it was more often designated, were H. L. Story and E. S. Babcock, developers of Coronado Beach, who used this project as an adjunct to their main development. The road's purpose was to provide a means for running Pullman cars from the East directly to Hotel del Coronado. The line began operation in June, 1888, and soon ran excursions directly from Los Angeles to Coronado. Typical excursion trains on the line consisted of two or three "double-decker" passenger cars capable of carrying fifty passengers.³⁴

³¹ National City, Record, May 20, September 1, 1887.

³² Ibid., December 12, 1887.

³³ Douglass Gunn, Picturesque San Diego, 64.

³⁴ Otay, Press, June 21, 1888.

About the time the Belt Line was being built, National City received its first street cars. The Seventh Avenue Street Railway, owned by J. C. Crenshaw, began operation in April, 1888. The first cars were horse drawn, light, the equipment scarce, and the track poor; their operation was "more an aggravation than a convenience,"³⁵ After a brief suspension of operations for repairs and reconstruction, satisfactory service began in the fall. The line provided frequent service from the California Southern depot to Eight Street and Highland Avenue,³⁶ two widely separated sections of the town.

Perhaps the most important event of 1888 was the completion of the Sweetwater dam and irrigation system.³⁷

The industries established during 1888 included the National City Reduction Works and the National City Soap Factory. The reduction works refined gold ore from Arizona, Lower California, San Bernardino County, and San Diego County. The plant had a capacity of forty-five tons daily.³⁸

Boom times continued into the summer of 1888 when the property valuation, according to the tax list, amounted to

³⁵ National City, Record, October 18, 1888.

³⁶ San Diego Land and Town Co., San Diego Bay Region, 68.

³⁷ Infra, 67-69.

³⁸ National City, Record, July 5, 1888; June 13, 1889.

\$2,250,000-- an increase of one hundred per cent over the previous year's valuation.³⁹ But hard times soon commenced to be felt. Although land sales continued, a different attitude among the buyers was evident. No longer did the prospective purchaser stand in line to be the first to buy a corner lot in a new section. Instead he took his time, prospected the land at his leisure, and took advantage of the great decrease in prices. Ten acres could now be had (1889) for the previous price of a corner lot.⁴⁰ By the middle of 1889 the city had lost nearly 10,000 population.⁴¹

Among the causes of the decline in population were the general depression throughout the nation and the loss of confidence in the region due to the removal of the railroad shops.

A minor event which caused great temporary loss of population, and perhaps a great permanent loss, was the Santa Clara gold rush in Lower California. Early in March of 1889 the Ensenada newspaper made an announcement of a rich strike in the Santa Clara region fifty miles east of that city and 135 miles from National City. A report in the Record stated

³⁹ Otay, Press, August 16, 1888.

⁴⁰ National City, Record, March 13, 1890.

⁴¹ Ad Pearson, "San Diego Forty-nine Years Ago," II, 16. This figure is so large that it is highly improbable.

the entire population of the bay region has been stark mad, staring, raving, gold-mad. There has been one great impulse to reach the gold fields first. Doctors have left their patients, lawyers have abandoned their clients; merchants have consigned their stocks to underlings while they went to investigate the new El Dorado, and mechanics have left their tools and their employers to shift for themselves.

Forty-eight firms and men of National City declared themselves as not going to the goldfields. Berth rates doubled on the south coast steamer to Ensenada within twenty-four hours after the first announcement. Regular National City and Otay trains became so crowded with gold seekers that the trains ran in sections to Tia Juana. Everyone except the brakeman on a California Southern train deserted for the fields. Soon, however, returning parties brought word of played-out mines and most of the National City civic leaders returned. ⁴² With their homecoming ended the last great event of importance before 1890 in National City.

42

National City, Record, March 7, 1889; March 24, 1889.

CHAPTER V

THE SAN DIEGO LAND AND TOWN COMPANY

The San Diego Land and Town Company was a corporation composed almost entirely of stockholders and directors of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. This group of Boston capitalists came into possession of thousands of acres of land in the bay region by virtue of the contracts entered into at the time of the construction of the California Southern Railroad. These gifts of the Kimball brothers and the city of San Diego, supplemented by purchases, gave the railroad owners a total of forty thousand acres in the vicinity of San Diego, National City, and the Rancho Nacional. The San Diego Land and Town Company was organized to develop these lands.

Because lands a hundred miles north were selling at \$100 to \$250 an acre and because the stream of settlers coming to California was increasing, the owners decided through the company to develop the land. This was to be done by means of a new exclusive town, Chula Vista; a railroad, the National City and Otay Railroad; and the Hugh Sweetwater dam and irrigation project. The company determined to furnish the land "with water, roads, railroads, and all that was necessary and convenient." All this was done "in the present

California style-- in advance of settlement."¹

The corporation set aside a large 5,000-acre section of land on the south side of the Sweetwater Valley as the site of their new town and orchard development which they named Chula Vista and chose Colonel William G. Dickinson to direct the subdivision. Colonel Dickinson came directly from Kansas where he had laid out several towns; his experience admirably fitted him for his position as general manager.²

In 1886 Chula Vista consisted of but four houses on National Avenue with a windmill for a water supply. Then came the graders and surveyors to clear the land and lay off the tract. The land east of National Ave was laid off into forty-acre blocks; those west of National Avenue were of sixty acres.³ These blocks were subdivided into lots of five acres, each lot facing an eighty-foot street.

The subdividers placed restrictions upon the purchase of land in Chula Vista. The five-acre lots could be purchased only by those who would agree to build, within six months of purchase, a house of modern style costing not less

¹ San Diego Land and Town Company, Guide to the San Diego Bay Region, 12.

² Earle Marble, "The California Southern," The Golden Era, XXXVI (1887), 709.

³ Robert T. Vaughan, "Growth of the Otay District," The Chula Vista Star, August 15, 1941.

then \$2,000. This house had to be set back 125 feet from the street. The price was set at five hundred dollars an acre with terms of one third cash, one third in one year, and one third in two years, with interest at ten per cent on the unpaid balance.⁴ These restrictions resulted in the construction of houses equivalent to ones costing \$4,000 to \$6,000 today. Most of the houses were of high quality, elaborate, and of three stories.

The Land and Town Company spent large sums in the Chula Vista development. They conducted nation-wide advertising campaigns in which folders for free distribution were sent out in batches of 150,000.⁵ By the end of 1887 the improvements, exclusive of water development, amounted to more than \$50,000. The extensive advertising and the improvements soon attracted numerous settlers. The Record listed thirty-five property owners in December, 1887, one year after the opening of the tract.⁶ In 1888 one hundred houses were listed as under construction.⁷

In 1888 a new policy in regard to land sales was introduced. The company offered to every man who applied a twenty-acre tract furnished with water, on condition that

⁴ San Diego Land and Town Company, San Diego Bay Region, 24-27.

⁵ National City, Record, September 8, 1887.

⁶ Ibid., December 22, 1887.

⁷ San Diego Land and Town Company, loc. cit.

the applicant plant it with trees and take care of the orchard for five years. The company agreed to furnish one half of the lemon and orange trees. At the end of the five years ten acres was deeded to the planter, while ten acres of orchard land was available for sale by the company.⁸

The Land and Town Company employed other promotion schemes. Among these was the building of houses for rent or sale. These houses, large six- to ten-room affairs, were modern and contained running water piped directly from the new Sweetwater dam. By this procedure the new settler was enabled to buy a completed homestead which he could occupy immediately upon his arrival.⁹

By the close of 1890 there were 490 acres of land planted to orange and lemon orchards in Chula Vista; 370 acres were privately owned and 120 acres were planted and owned by the Land and Town Company.¹⁰

The work involved in clearing the land of brush and preparing it for planting was great. In order to accomplish this at the least cost the company employed Chinese laborers. The presence of the Asiatics caused some criticism among Americans. Complaints were made that the Chinese were

⁸ Otay, Press, December 17, 1888.

⁹ National City, Record, January 10, 1889.

¹⁰ Ibid., January 1, 1891.

smuggled across the frontier from Lower California from whence they found their way to National City or Chula Vista and employment. Residents charged that the Chinese arrivals averaged twenty per day.

The second great project of the San Diego Land and Town Company was the construction of the Sweetwater dam. This dam, located in the Sweetwater Gorge seven miles east of National City, had for its purpose the furnishing of water for domestic and irrigation purposes in the National City, Chula Vista, and adjacent areas. The construction of the dam was considered one of the major engineering feats of the time because of its size. The length of the dam at the top was 396 feet, its thickness varied from 46 to 12 feet, while its height measured 90 feet. The materials used were solid granite and cement. A reservoir covering 700 acres with a capacity of 21,000 acre feet formed upstream from the dam. Work began on November 17, 1886, and the dam was completed on April 7, 1888. The total cost amounted to \$200,000.¹²

Contracts for the project were let to Hamilton and Burkhart who began the work with sixty men, but in the next month Proctor and Null, the old contractors for the Santa Fe Railway, took over the work. These same contractors also

¹¹ National City, Record, December 15, 1887.

¹² San Diego Land and Town Company, San Diego Bay Region, 16.

constructed the National City and Otay Railroad. Mr. J. D. Schuyler became the engineer in charge of construction.¹³

Soon on a hill overlooking the dam-site a tent city appeared. The population of this city consisted of workmen who cleared the valley lands lying between the two high water marks, secured the materials for the dam from the quarries, or worked on the dam itself. The workmen used materials from nearby sources whenever possible in building the dam. They quarried blocks of granite, three to four tons in weight, a short distance down the gulch from the dam and carried them to the dam by wagon. Sand and small rock were taken from the river bed above the dam.¹⁴

National City celebrated the completion of the dam and the piping of the water to their city by a big water festival held on April 19, 1888. It was the largest celebration held up to that time in National City. The new city band appeared in public for the first time. The Coronado Belt Line ran its first trains from National City and San Diego on that day. The National City and Otay Railway carried crowds from San Diego and all bay points. It was estimated that three thousand persons attended the affair which included music, speeches, and the exhibition of fruits. The Otay Press

¹³ National City, Record, January 13, 1887.

¹⁴ Ibid., December 12, 1887.

commented:

The display of fruit was from the National Ranch and if this was a specimen of what could be raised without this water supply, what may we expect of this land in the future?

The opening of the water system began a new era in the history of the Sweetwater region. Henceforth the development of orchards and vegetable gardening took the place of grain farming and cattle grazing. The ample supply of water made possible the newer type of agriculture.

Operation of the system was not entirely smooth at first. On August 13, 1889, the Circuit Court, sitting in Los Angeles, rendered a decision against the San Diego Land and Town Company in favor of a certain George Neale. The decision provided that a writ of injunction was to issue restraining the company from obstructing the natural flow of the Sweetwater River through Neale's land and from flooding the land unless the company paid him damages of \$122,567.50, the assessed value Neale's land, within thirty days. The land in question involved 350 acres needed in the reservoir basin.

The original intention had been to build the dam only fifty feet high, and at that time Neale offered to sell his land for \$30,000, or almost \$50 dollars an acre. Later, when it was decided to build the dam ninety feet high, the

company endeavored to buy the land but the lowest figure Neale would accept was \$300 an acre. As all the other land in the basin had been purchased for sixty to seventy-five dollars an acre, the company considered this an exorbitant price and instituted a condemnation suit. They were disappointed as the jury assessed the value, or damages, at \$288 an acre. Neale then asked the court to compel the company to pay the amount or uncover the land, which the Circuit Court ordered to be done within thirty days.¹⁶

After offering Neale \$75,000 in cash, the company began drawing off water from the dam at the rate of 100,000,000 gallons a day until by December the water was only twenty-six feet deep behind the dam, or four feet below the level of Neale's land. Since the water remaining was only one twelfth of the capacity of the reservoir, the company feared a water shortage. Accordingly, they negotiated with the San Diego Flume Company whereby surplus water from the flume would be diverted into the Sweetwater River above the dam.¹⁷

Much litigation took place until February, 1891, when a new trial was ordered. As this put the case back to a situation similar to that preceding the trial, the two parties arrived at a compromise agreement. Terms of this

¹⁶ National City, Record, August 29, 1889.

¹⁷ Ibid., July 21, 1891.

18
 compromise were not disclosed.

The National City and Otay Railway was the third project of the San Diego Land and Town Company. San Diego city and San Diego County issued franchises for the rail network late in the year 1886. On December 27, 1886, the Land and Town Company completed the organization of the National City and Otay Railway Company. They also prepared and filed articles of incorporation at the same time. The charter called for routes from National City to Otay, San Diego, Sweetwater Valley, and Spring Valley. Officers of the corporation were William G. Dickinson, president, Frank A. Kimball, vice president, and E.A. Hornbeck, secretary-treasurer.

19
 Construction on the road began at San Diego early in 1887 and was completed to National City by June 16. Extension of the network continued for some time until in 1888 the line consisted of more than thirty miles of track. The rail route began at Fifth and L streets in San Diego and ran to a depot at Sixth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street in National City. It then proceeded east on Twenty-fourth Street to the "terrace" district and into Sweetwater Valley. The line branched at Sweetwater Junction; one line proceeded

18 National City, Record, February 19, 1891.

19 Ibid., December 30, 1886.

eastward up the valley through Bonita, Sunnyside, and Bonnie Brae to Sweetwater dam and La Presa, while the main line continued southward through the 5,000-acre Chula Vista development to Otay, Fruitland, Oneonta, and Tia Juana. From Oneonta stage coaches provided transportation to the Monument. The cost of the line was in excess of \$200,000.²⁰

Several extensions were planned but never carried into effect because of the collapse of the boom in 1889 and 1890. It had been planned to build the line eastward up the Otay Valley,²¹ and an extension from La Presa to Lakeside,²² a distance of fifteen miles, received a favorable report. In 1889 it was rumored that the line would connect with the Peninsular Railway of Lower California whose surveys ran from Tia Juana to Ensenada²³ and to Yuma.

The road was of standard gauge, used six by eight inch ties, and originally had thirty-pound rails. Heavier rails replaced the original ones in 1888 because the traffic was greater than expected.²⁴

²⁰ Frank H. Mandeville, Tourist's Guide to San Diego and Vicinity, 37.

²¹ Otay, Press, May 10, 1888.

²² Ibid., July 19, 1888.

²³ National City, Record, February 24, 1889.

²⁴ Otay, Press, April 5, 1889.

Local papers recorded interesting descriptions of the equipment. The Record described the new engine which arrived as a "handsome piece of machinery, and it is built like an ordinary locomotive. It is a seventeen tonner, and can climb hills with a big load."²⁵ Later locomotives were larger, the "San Miguel" having six drivers and weighing twenty-six tons.²⁶ The locomotives received names as well as numbers. Among those named before 1890 were the "National City," the "Chula Vista," the "Sweetwater," the "San Miguel," and the "Tia Juana."²⁷

The early passenger cars were "set on double sets of trucks like regular railroad coaches,"²⁸ The first cars had seats running lengthwise of the coach. However, when the cars were remodeled the seats faced forward. At the same time rattan seats "with comfortable curves" were installed. After the cars had been carpeted, they had "all the appointments of a first class car." Open passenger and excursion cars in addition to regular style coaches were used.²⁹

²⁵ National City, Record, November 10, 1887.

²⁶ Otay, Press, August 16, 1888.

²⁷ Ibid., June 14, August 16, 1888; National City, Record, November 11, December 15, 1887.

²⁸ National City, Record, April 6, 1887.

²⁹ Otay, Press, February 7, 1889.

The line enjoyed heavy passenger travel from the start. The Land and Town Company reported that 422,000 persons were carried during the first eleven months of operation. ³⁰ So heavy did the traffic become that the schedule adopted after one half year of operation called for twenty-five trains daily from National City: six to Otay and Oneonta ³¹, five to La Presa, and fourteen to Chula Vista.

As the land boom progressed special excursions, designed to show prospective land owners the whole south bay area, were introduced. These sixty-mile excursions left San Diego early in the morning and proceeded to Sweetwater Dam where an hour was devoted to marvelling at the great engineering achievement and the mountain scenery. From there the train carried the visitors through Chula Vista and Otay to Oneonta. At Oneonta a stop for dinner was made at the new hotel, after which the train continued on to Tia Juana. At Tia Juana an opportunity to visit old Mexico presented itself. A stage line ran from Tia Juana across the border to the Tia Juana Hot Springs on the old Santiago Arguello rancho. The excursion returned to San Diego in time to catch the evening train over the newly completed "Short

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Mandeville, Guide to San Diego and Vicinity, 37.

³¹

National City, Record, February 16, 1888.

Line" to Los Angeles. The excursions and other traffic often made the total number of passengers carried on a Sunday exceed 2,500.

32

Otay, Press, July 26, 1888.

BOOM TOWNS

At the present date ¹wrote the editor of the Record in 1888 there are only nine cities laid out about the bay. They are as follows, in their order: Otay, Tia Juana, South San Diego, South Coronado, Coronado Heights, Pacific Park, International City, and "Head of the Bay." It has not been a good season for new towns either. 1

Other cities promoted by professional "boomers" and real estate firms brought the total number to well above a dozen in the region between San Diego and the border.

Towns were laid out on paper and sold at auctions twenty miles away. Brass bands and auctions were to be seen on street corners in San Diego selling lots at San Miguel and elsewhere. ² Special excursions ran to newly subdivided lands where on the opening day the crowds thrilled to balloon ascensions. Auctioneers told wild tales of the possibilities of the section. When the boom collapsed things were very dull for a while, but the Sweetwater and South Bay area ³ built up on a more stable basis.

This chapter attempts a brief description of the most important of these boom towns. They are described in the

¹ National City, Record, January 19, 1888.

² Ad Pearson, "San Diego Forty-nine Years Ago," 11, 4-5.

³ R. T. Vaughan, "Growth of the Otay District," Chula Vista Star, August 15, 1941.

order in which a visitor on a National City and Otay Railway excursion would have visited them.

At the depot in National City the visitor would have taken the Seventh Avenue Street Car eastward to Paradise Valley. The valley, according to legend, received its name in 1869 when an old seafarer, Captain Crain, after a long voyage around the "Horn" remarked that it was "Paradise." In 1886 a dozen families inhabited the valley. In the same year a large sanatorium began operation under the direction and ownership of Dr. Anna M. Longshore Potts.⁵

Dr. Potts, a specialist in women's diseases, had been a traveling lecturer. Her travels carried her throughout the world to New Zealand, Australia, and Great Britain. Her Paradise Valley enterprise developed into the large Paradise Valley Sanatorium and Hospital of the present day.⁶

At Sweetwater Junction, between National City and Chula Vista, the San Diego Oil and Natural Gas Company began "boring for oil, gas or anything of value" in 1888.⁷ No gas nor oil, however, was found.

⁴ Lena B. Hunsicker and Winifred Davidson, "San Diego County Place Names."

⁵ National City, Record, March 18, 1886.

⁶ Ibid., September 1, 1887.

⁷ Ibid., June 28, 1888.

Eastward up the Sweetwater Valley lay the towns of Bonita and Sunnyside. At Bonita Henry Cooper, the developer, reported a strong demand for lots before the plans of the townsite had scarcely been completed in 1887.⁸ In 1890 the Sweetwater Fruit Company acquired Cooper's "Bonita Ranch" and planted the lands to orchards. Part of the orchards were to be operated by the company and some of them were to be subdivided into five-acre lots.⁹ At Sunnyside J. C. Frisbie, of Chicago, laid out a 246-acre tract in 1876. The place became noted for its successful fruit and grape culture.¹⁰

The most noted development in the valley took place at Bonnie Brae. The name was that of an orchard of H. H. Higgins, a Chicago music publisher. Mr Higgins came to California in 1871 and bought seventy-six acres of land overlooking Sweetwater Valley near the Sweetwater Gorge. He planted thirty acres to fruit trees of all kinds. Unable to secure trees in San Diego, he went to Los Angeles where he purchased the best oranges and lemons he could find. The seeds which he planted formed the basis for his nursery. From this nursery he sold trees to other early orchardists,

⁸ National City, Record, September 8, 1887.

⁹ Ibid., June 19, 1890.

¹⁰ History of San Diego County, 210/

W. W. Whitney, J. C. Frisbie, and Major Levi Chase.¹¹ By 1877 he had over two thousand trees, four hundred of which were five years old. He concentrated on four varieties, all of the thin rind lemon.¹²

The Bonnie Brae lemon became noted for the purity of its acid, the absence of its seeds, and most of all, the thinness of its skin. The lemon was derived from the Messina lemon seed from which Mr Higgins obtained a large amount of varieties. He kept the finer varieties while budding out the coarser ones.¹³

The orchard at Bonnie Brae was one of the finest in Southern California and first showed the fertility of the mesa lands lying between the river valleys. Previously these lands had been considered useless for orchard culture. Mr Higgins introduced irrigation. He excavated a large reservoir in the stream bed below his orchard and with steam pumps and windmills lifted the water to his land. He used unusual pipes in his irrigation system-- they were made of redwood logs bored out.

Mr. Higgins was born in 1820 of Scotch extraction, hence the name of his ranch. He received a common school

¹¹ T. F. McCamant, "Bonnie Brae," The Golden Era, XL (1891) 1020.

¹² San Diego, Weekly Union, June 21, 1877.

¹³ McCamant, loc. cit.

education. When twenty-three he moved to Chicago where he taught music and led the choirs of the First and Second Baptist churches. He also wrote music and handled pianos. When he left Chicago his business was one of the largest in the city. Ill health caused his migration to California.¹⁵

Other settlements in Sweetwater Valley included Aloha, Avondale, and Rockville. At the last named place the Excelsior Paving Company quarried granite porphyry. This northern company's plant had a crusher capacity of twenty tons per hour.¹⁶

La Presa, north and east of the Sweetwater Dam, was the terminus of the National City and Otay branch line. With the advance of the railroad, Schuyler and Fitzhugh placed the townsite on sale. The lots, with water rights, sold "like hot cakes in January."¹⁷ The town soon had its stores, hotels, and school. It became a shipping point for raisins, wool, and other products from the upper Sweetwater Valley.

San Miguel City, south of Sweetwater Lake, was a typical "boomer's" town. The Record described the opening of

¹⁵ T. F. McCamant, "Bonnie Brae," The Golden Era, XL (1891), 1020.

¹⁶ Otay, Press, July 14, 1888.

¹⁷ National City, Record, May 2, 1889.

¹⁸ Ibid., November 1, 1888.

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the place:

Last Saturday the sale of lots in the new town of San Miguel was opened by the Pacific Land Bureau. At \$50 each the lots went off like hot cakes, and the sale continued far into the evening, until the manager and clerks were exhausted. . . . When the books were closed it was discovered that 2600 lots had been disposed of. Sales of the same lots were active today (five days later) at \$100 per lot, and purchasers of Saturday are refusing \$150. The Land Bureau had disposed of 400 lots at \$100 each at noon today, the total sales amounting to \$170,000.

In San Diego men stood in line to buy lots in a place they had never seen. San Miguel had not been advertised and yet the Union chronicled sales of over \$130,000 in one day. Purchasers bought even before the land had been surveyed.²⁰

The excitement and enthusiasm soon died. In March, 1889, less than two years later, J. W. Reed purchased part of what was described as "the old San Miguel townsite" for the purpose of planting it to citrus trees.²¹

Even San Miguel Mountain, a three thousand foot peak, had its boom times. This haunt of the bandit Vasquez²² was one of the landmarks of San Diego's bay region and as such was exploited. In 1888 Captain Fitzhugh, developer of La Presa, proposed a burro train and guide service to the

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National City, Record, June 23, 1887.

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San Diego, Union, July 19, 1887.

21

National City, Record, March 28, 1888.

22

Ibid., February 28, 1889.

top of San Miguel.²³ This plan was carried through in 1890 by A. H. Isham and H.L. Story. No trip to San Diego was considered complete unless the visitor stood on top of "our Vesuvius without the volcano."²⁴ Later boosters talked and entertained great hope for a large astronomical observatory on the peak. The Proctor Memorial Observatory was proposed by Mrs. Richard A. Proctor who donated the money for the purpose. Aiding Mrs. Proctor was the San Miguel Investment Company, incorporated by Frank Knox, A. H. Isham, and others²⁵ for the purpose of building the observatory.

Otay, the first town south of Chula Vista, became the largest settlement between National City and the border. It was laid out in 1887 and quickly became a center of trade for the region at the south end of the bay. Its preeminence lasted until about 1900 when the Otay Press recognized changed conditions and moved to Chula Vista, the new trade center of the south bay area.²⁶ Disastrous floods in 1916 completed the decline of the once prosperous village.

The town, undoubtedly named for a local tribe of Indians, was planned, subdivided, and placed on sale by the

²³ National City, Record, September 6, 1888.

²⁴ Harr Wagner, "San Miguel," The Golden Era, XXXV (1890), 693.

²⁵ National City, Record, August 21, 1890.

²⁶ Otay, Press, July 14, 1900.

real estate firm of Guion, Hamilton, and Hartley. The place was boomed as a "grand junction point for the National City and Otay Railroad" which had just been completed to that point.²⁷

An interesting episode accompanied the first Otay lot sale. The promoters made plans for handling the crowds that were expected to arrive over the new railroad. The sale was not a success, however, for on the day of the sale all the engines broke down, delaying the arrival of the buyers. A later more successful sale replaced the first ill-fated venture.²⁸

The townsite consisted of 120 acres divided into lots 50 by 150 feet. These lots sold for amounts ranging from one hundred to two hundred dollars each. Terms were originally one third cash, one third in three months, and one third in six months. Interest rates averaged ten per cent.²⁹ Five per cent was taken off for cash.

Otay developed rapidly. Six months after the opening sale A. J. Jenkins established the Press, a weekly newspaper which continued in the town until it moved to Chula Vista

²⁷ National City, Record, September 29, 1887.

²⁸ Ibid., October 13, 1887.

²⁹ Otay, Press, April 19, 1888.

in July, 1900.³⁰ Soon there were numerous residences, a livery stable, stores, a post office, and a hotel in the "thriving little burg."³¹ In May, 1888, the local paper reported that the Otay Valley was filling up fast. "During the last few days fourteen families have passed up Main Avenue to settle up the valley."³²

Guion, Hamilton, and Hartley entered into negotiations in December, 1888, with partirs from Oak Park, Illinois,³³ relative to the establishment of a watch factory at Otay. This, the outstanding activity of Otay's boom, quickly became established. In February, 1889, the developers broke ground for a three-story brick factory building, thirty-eight by one hundred feet in size, and an office building. The Otay Watch Company ordered 270,000 bricks and twenty-five loads of lumber for the factory.³⁴ The company purchased an electric light plant from the Pierce-Morse Block in San Diego and began to furnish light for the factory and the town as well.³⁵

³⁰ Otay, Press, March 29, 1888; July 14, 1900.

³¹ Mandeville, San Diego and Vicinity, 23-24.

³² Otay, Press, May 24, 1888.

³³ Ibid., December 13, 1888.

³⁴ Ibid., February 28, 1889.

³⁵ National City, Record, May 16, 1889.

Toward the end of the year the financial affairs of the watch company became involved. Frank A. Kimball of National City and E. W. Morse of San Diego came to the aid of the firm with their money. Mr Kimball became president as a result. A call for more employees, men with families preferred, was sent out.³⁶ The factory which over \$70,000 turned out its first watch in May, 1890. Immediately the output amounted to twenty-five per day.³⁷ But the company stopped work after running only six months. The watches were satisfactory, but they were a new make on the market and sold slowly. A lack of operating capital caused the factory to close in October, 1890.³⁸

An industry of importance was the sheep and wool industry of the Otay Valley. In the winter months the sheep owners drove their flocks into the Otay region from their grazing grounds in Lower California. Some of the herds grazed as far as one hundred and seventy miles south into the peninsula where they fed on the grasses of the hills and mountains. In the late 1880's approximately 30,000 sheep were driven yearly to the American side of the border. Hugh O'Neil drove 16,000 and Nieto Echenique drove 20,000 head

³⁶ National City, Record, December 26, 1889.

³⁷ Ibid., May 22, 1890.

³⁸ Ibid., November 20, 1890.

into the Otay region in 1889. These sheep remained on the American soil during the lambing and shearing seasons, thus saving the custom duty of twenty per cent on lambs and ten percent on wool. Shearing took place in March and April. About two hundred tons of wool were clipped at each spring clip. The wool was noted for its freedom from burrs and granite. The lambing season produced 18,000 lambs.³⁹

At the foot of the Otay Valley was La Punta, the ranch house of the Millijo grant. Nearby was Fruitland, the ranch and home of Captain A. H. Wilcox, a son-in-law of the old grantee, Santiago E. Arguello. When the National City and Otay and the Coronado Belt Line railroads were constructed Fruitland became a station on each line and a junction between the two.

In 1871 Captain Wilcox leased his eighty-two acre ranch to Henry von Poser who made the place a pleasure resort for San Diegans.⁴⁰ During the 'seventies the pleasant wooded picnic grounds were the terminus for pleasure drives from the city of San Diego. The Fourth of July celebration in 1872 was attended by two hundred fifty people-- most of the adults of San Diego.⁴¹

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Otay, Press, February 14, 1889.

⁴⁰ San Diego, Weekly Union, December 3, 1871.

⁴¹

Ibid., July 11, 1872.

Zack Montgomery, later United States Assistant Attorney General under Cleveland,⁴² purchased the Wilcox place at La Punta in 1881. He set out the ranch to orchards and vineyards.⁴³ The Montgomery ranch retained its productivity until the Otay flood of 1916 demolished the ranch buildings.⁴⁴

When Montgomery left for Washington he placed the ranch in the charge of his son John, who held an M.S. degree and spent much time inventing mechanical devices, studying astronomy, and solving the riddle of flight. In 1883 he built a man-power flying machine which did not work. Later in the same year he constructed a glider which he tried out in an early August morning. He took his huge "effigy" of a sea gull up to the west edge of Otay Mesa and faced the Pacific. His brother James and two sisters reported that when the ocean breeze became strong he made his first flight of six hundred feet. A second attempt ended in the breaking of the glider. This first flight, whose existence was attested to by his brother and sisters, was the first ever made by man. The event took place eight years before the flights of Otto Lillienthal.⁴⁵

⁴² National City Record, March 25, 1886.

⁴³ San Diego Weekly Union, September 25, 1881.

⁴⁴ Windsor Josselyn, "He flew in 1883," Harpers, CLXXXII (1940), 28.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27-31.

E. E. Shaffer began the operation of the Otay Salt Works at La Punta in 1873. The salt was evaporated from the sea water taken from the bay. The shallow water area was transformed into huge vats, water let into them, and later evaporated. The salt was harvested from the vats, dried by steam-heated appliances, and ground by mills into table salt. By 1888 the works turned out five hundred tons annually. Mr. Shaffer solved his transportation problems by hauling the salt to San Diego in his two small sailing sloops.⁴⁶

At the extreme south end of San Diego Bay, immediately west of the Otay River, lay the two thousand acre townsite of South San Diego. Included in the development company,⁴⁷ formed in 1887, was Judge George Puterbaugh of San Diego. The town gained quickly in population due to an unique land scheme. Three lots were given to settlers if they would build a good house thereon.⁴⁸ In 1889 the company planned a harbor to be reached by a canal one hundred feet wide and seven feet deep with a landing basin of ample proportions. A ferry boat capable of carrying weapons, passengers, and freight to San Diego and way points was contemplated.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Otay, Press, May 10, 1888.

⁴⁷ San Diego, Sun, September 26, 1887.

⁴⁸ Otay, Press, August 9, 1888.

⁴⁹ Ibid., January 1, 1889.

No record of such service was found, however.

Oneonta, one mile south of South San Diego, received its name because the first settlers, 1886, came from Oneonta, New York. A four hundred and fifty acre tract was opened by the Oneonta Land, Water and Town Company in 1888. The opening sale attracted nearly a thousand visitors and forty-one lots sold for \$3,800.⁵⁰ This place secured its post office grocery store, meat market, telephone line to San Diego, and large hotel in a few months. The Oneonta Hotel and the Oneonta Company hoped that a large resort trade could be built up. Walks and footbridges across the bayou to Oneonta Beach were erected. They built a bath house at the beach and put in a life-line for the accommodation of the visitors.⁵¹ Oneonta, the terminal of the railway, gained importance from this fact. From the railroad's end ran a stage line to the Monument at the extreme southwest corner of the United States.⁵²

Monument City was among the earliest of the towns in the area. In 1869 a townsite was laid out, buildings erected, a school started, a post office applied for, a voting precinct granted, and the streets surveyed.⁵³ The Monument

⁵⁰ National City, Record, January 19, 1888.

⁵¹ Otay, Press, July 26, 1888.

⁵² Mandeville, San Diego and Vicinity, 24.

⁵³ San Diego, Bulletin, August 21, 1969.

voting precinct originally included all of the Otay and Tia Juana Valleys.⁵⁴

The main attraction at Monument City was the international marker. Contemporary reporters described the monument as "not particularly notable; although the manner in which some vandals have chipped off bits of it for souvenirs might indicate as much." The unusual aspects of the trip to the corner of the United States attracted many visitors.⁵⁵ Monument and a new dream town, International City, became noted for their prize fights, confidence men, gamblers, and drunks during the boom times,⁵⁶ but otherwise remained rather unimportant.

Tia Juana occupied the land between the present town of San Ysidro and the border. The name Tia Juana (Aunt Jane) is believed to be a Spanish corruption, through resemblance in sound, of Tiwana, an Indian word meaning "by the sea."⁵⁷

American Tia Juana began in 1865 when George Washington Barber kept a merchandise store on the left bank of the Tia Juana River where it crossed the boundary. In

⁵⁴ Otay, Press, November 8, 1888.

⁵⁵ San Diego, Weekly Union, December 14, 1876.

⁵⁶ Otay, Press, July 18, 1888.

⁵⁷ Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, Spanish and Indian Place Names of California, 47.

1866 William Lane, a native of Wales, purchased 160 acres on the site of the town and also went into merchandising.⁵⁸ Five years later Colonel Thomas Scott began grading here for his Memphis and El Paso railroad from San Diego to Yuma.⁵⁹ Early in 1887 Joseph Messenger purchased sixty acres from William Lane and sold half to the firm of Hart and Stern of San Diego, the promoters of Tia Juana.

On August 17, 1887, the usual opening auction sale of lots was held; sales totaled \$70,000. The railway reached Tia Juana in 1888 and the town flourished because of the travel on the road. The desire to visit a foreign land took literally thousands over the railway daily. Visitors congregated in such numbers on Sundays at Tia Juana that "it was an impossibility to get them back by rail until Tuesday or Wednesday."⁶⁰

Along with the crowds came the undesirables-- gamblers, toughs, and the like. The Earp brothers of Arizona were there. Vergil and Wyatt Earp promoted prize fights, bear and bull fights, and all kinds of games near Messenger's store. Ad Pearson, writing much later, described the

⁵⁸ Otay, Press, June 28, 1888.

⁵⁹ "Development of the San Diego Bay Region," The Golden Era, XLXVI (1887), 665.

⁶⁰ Ad Pearson, "San Diego Forty-Nine Years Ago," 11, 67.

games:

Every known game of chance could be found running wide open on the streets Sunday afetr Sunday, from the big wheel, Rouge et Noir, and Faro, to the little elusive"pea under the walnut shells."

The survey of the boom towns of the Sweetwater area has shown the unrestrained enthusiasm of the later 1880's. This boom was created by the desire to buy and sell land quickly and thus become rich overnight. About 1890 the boom collapsed and the district settled down to rebuilding on a more secure basis.

In the rebuilding which has taken place since 1890 several of the towns and developments mentioned in this chapter have ceased to exist. Oneonta, South San Diego, Monument City, La Punta, La Presa, and San Miguel City are in this catagory. Others exist in a dormant or declining condition. Tia Juana has become known as a part of San Ysidro, a town of later years; Otay is a decaying village while Bonita and Sunnyside are mainly names for post offices. The two most important towns of the area, National City and Chula Vista, are growing modern cities whose foundations were solidly laid before the year 1890.

This study, therefore, has traced the background of the modern Sweetwater area. The coming of the Spanish

61 Ad Pearson, "San Diego Forty-Nine Years Ago,"

people and the granting of lands by the Mexican government laid the foundations of land titles and society in the region. With the coming of the Americans, particularly the Kimball brothers, the area began to take on an American atmosphere. Cities were laid out, railroads were built, and irrigation projects were completed. The grazing industries gave way to farming and citrus culture. Industrial and commercial enterprises sprang up. With the coming of the Santa Fe system, the land values increased immensely and the "great boom" was in progress. Then, shortly before 1890, the boom collapsed and a more sound development followed. It is with this background that an understanding of the present day developments in the area can best be approached.

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