



CHULA
VISTA
HERITAGE
1911-1986

Local
History
979.498
WEBSTER

CITY OF CHULA VISTA

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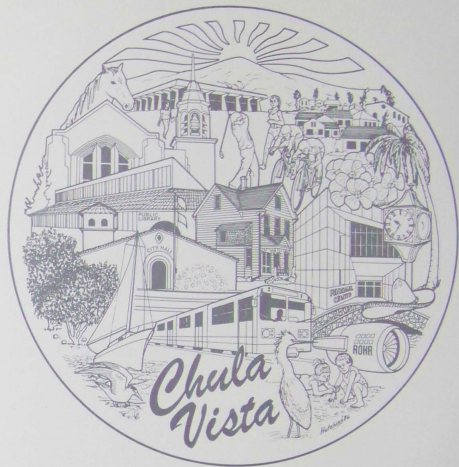
CHULA VISTA HERITAGE

1911-1986

Presented By
C. V. Diamond Anniversary Com.
17 October 1986

CITY OF CHULA VISTA

Local History 979.498 WEBSTER
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Chula Vista heritage, 1911-
1986



Prologue

When a community celebrates a significant milestone in its history it is important to pause and reflect upon the events, people and forces that have shaped its character. The area we now know as Chula Vista was claimed by Spain, Mexico and eventually the United States of America and the State of California. Thus hundreds of years of multi-national heritage have been woven into its character.

As a part of the City of Chula Vista's celebration of its 75 years of cityhood, this publication focuses on the founding of the community, its incorporation and growth in the Twentieth Century into the second largest city in San Diego County. As the 75th anniversary approached, Chula Vistans became increasingly aware of their unique heritage and began developing methods of protecting this resource. Historical sites have been designated, the Chula Vista Historical Society was founded and a historic building survey of 200 sites was completed.

This publication "Chula Vista Heritage 1911-1986" brings together the elements that have shaped Chula Vista and the evolving architectural styles that reflect the changing lifestyle and influence on our community. It is dedicated to all those who have made Chula Vista, from Frank Kimball, Colonel William G. Dickinson and James D. Schuyler, to all past and present residents of Chula Vista.



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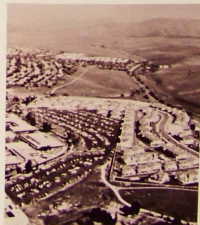
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Chula Vista residents early 1900s



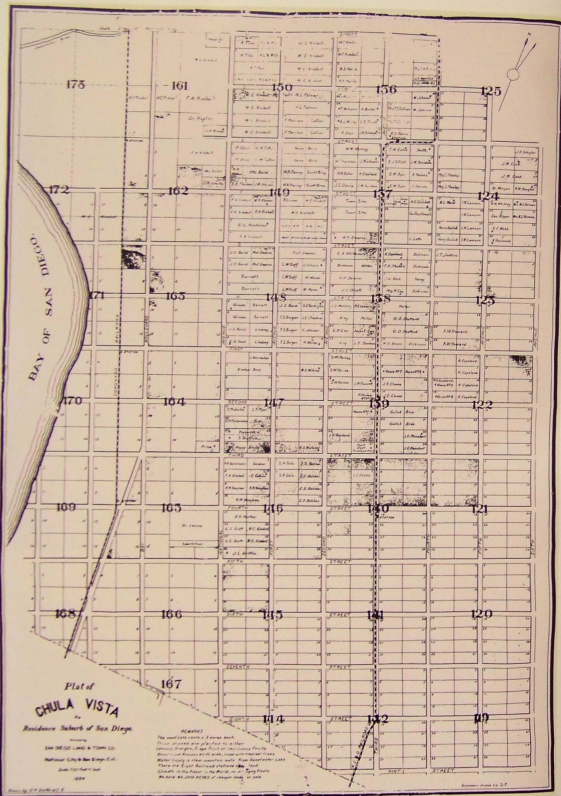


Third and F Streets looking west in 1903



Chula Vista front 1906

Nearly a century ago, carpenters and skilled craftsmen erected the first magnificent houses in Chula Vista, a residential suburb designed to attract wealthy fruit ranchers. Acres of citrus trees surrounded these orchard homes. Although the early settlers battled drought, flood, killing frost and economic hardship, many of the pioneers remained to become citizens of the City of Chula Vista when it incorporated in 1911. Succeeding generations contributed to the growth and charm of the pioneer village that eventually became the second largest city in San Diego County. Today the citrus orchards are gone, and only a handful of the original Victorian homes remain as an intriguing reminder of the past. The rows of bungalows, small Spanish-style houses, Monterey mansions, Tudor and Art Deco homes built between the turn of the century and modern times reflect the changing lifestyles of the people. These enchanting houses trace the history of the community and represent an important part of Chula Vista's heritage.



Chula Vista Begins:

ORCHARD HOUSES AND LEMON GROVES



Colonel Dickinson and Frank Kimball



Workers of San Diego Road and Traction Company, 1900

The area where Chula Vista and National City lie today was once known as Rancho del Rey, the "ranch of the king." The rancho was part of the vast territories north of the Rio Grande claimed by Spain. Set aside in 1795 as grazing land for the cattle and horses of the Spanish presidio in San Diego, Rancho del Rey later became part of the national lands of Mexico, when Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1821. The Mexicans gave the tract a new name, Rancho de la Nación. On July 3, 1843, John Forster petitioned the Mexican governor of Alta California for a land grant and officially obtained title to Rancho de la Nación on Dec. 11, 1845. Only a short time later, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded Texas and California to the United States and brought the Rancho under American control. On Oct. 24, 1854, the United States Land Commission confirmed the grant to Forster, and a patent to the 26,651.94-acre "de la Nación," signed by President James K. Polk, was registered in Forster's name on Feb. 27, 1866. By this time, however, Forster had sold his land, Rancho de la Nación had passed through the hands of the Beyerque family and Francois A. Pioche now owned the property.

Until the 1860s, Rancho de la Nación had been used mainly for grazing livestock, but in 1868, Frank Kimball, a newcomer to San Diego, saw great potential in the tract. In 1861, Frank Kimball and his brothers, Warren and Levi, had come west from Contoocook, N. H., to San Francisco, where they operated the Kimball Brothers, a company specializing in building and contracting. After Frank had worked there as a contractor for seven years, he decided to seek business opportunities in Southern California, in a climate more conducive to his health. In June 1868, Frank Kimball and his brother, Warren, purchased Rancho de la Nación from Francois Pioche for \$50,000 and set about developing a new town that would be known as National City. Their brother, Levi Kimball, later joined in some of the Kimball Brothers' enterprises in San Diego County.

Sweetwater Nov 1870



Colonel William B. Dickinson



General Store and Post Office 1881



First Hotel Chula Vista in 1897

Frank Kimball explored the Sweetwater Valley and discovered a gorge on the Sweetwater River a perfect place to build a dam. He acquired water rights along the river, for he knew that in this semi-desert region, rainfall alone would not sustain his new city. He also realized that his plans to build a metropolis on Rancho de la Nación depended on his ability to entice a major railroad to locate its western terminus in National City. Kimball was not alone in his dreams for Alonzo Horton, the founder of New San Diego, was also trying to bring a railroad to San Diego. For a time, Kimball and Horton were rivals, but by 1879, the San Diego Railroad Committee appointed Kimball to represent the area.

With the blessing of the City of San Diego and the Chamber of Commerce, Kimball made a number of unsuccessful attempts to entice one after another of the major railroad companies to run a line to San Diego and National City. He finally secured such a commitment in 1880. On one trip to Boston, Kimball had approached Thomas Nickerson, the president of the Santa Fe Railroad. Although reluctant at first, Nickerson, along with several other Santa Fe stockholders, agreed to form a syndicate that would organize and construct a railroad with the western terminus at National City. This railroad, to be named the California Southern, would run from National City to Barstow where it would connect with the Santa Fe Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. But to get this agreement, the Kimballs had to give the syndicate more than 10,000 acres, \$25,000 in cash, and 485 city lots with rights-of-way and valuable waterfront privileges. Additional acreage was provided by San Diego. The syndicate incorporated under the name of the San Diego Land and Town Company to accept and develop the subsidy lands. Frank and Warren Kimball each got a one-twelfth interest in the new company. The California Southern Railroad was chartered on Oct. 12, 1880, and Frank Kimball became one of the directors.

Railroad work begins

Work began on the railroad almost immediately, and by November 1882, track had been laid as far as Colton. At Colton, the Southern Pacific, a rival railroad, tried unsuccessfully to keep the California Southern from crossing its tracks to link up with the Atlantic and Pacific. Litigation eventually ended the impasse and by September 1883, the line had reached San Bernardino. On Feb. 28, 1884, a violent rainstorm washed out 30 miles of roadbed between San Luis Rey and Temecula. The line was rerouted and the tracks to Barstow completed. On Nov. 9, 1885, when the last spike was driven at Cajon Pass, San Diego and National City finally had a rail connection with the East. As Kimball had hoped and dreamed, National City had become the western terminus of a transcontinental railroad.

The great booms of the '80s in Southern California was essentially a real estate boom, but the railroads played a major role in starting it all. The boom began not as the result of the expected commerce from the transcontinental railroad link, but partly because of a price war between the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroads. In November 1885, the fare from the Mississippi River to Southern California was \$125. Then it was decreased to \$100, then \$95, and the climax came on March 6, 1887, when the Southern Pacific announced a fare of \$1. Although this ridiculously low price did not last long, the rates remained under \$25 for a year afterwards. Thousands of people, lured by tales of California's healthful climate, perpetual summer and quick and easy wealth, bought the cut-rate tickets and came west.

Upon arrival, the newcomers encountered professional boomers. These men tried to convince the unwary

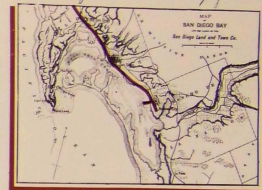
to buy land, often sight unseen, and urged them to purchase before the land prices rose even higher. Boomers employed such devices as free lunches, brass bands and even balloon ascensions to attract prospective buyers. Eager to participate in the anticipated riches, people would line up for hours to bid for lots at land auctions. Many of these land sales were for lots in "paper" towns, towns that existed only on the auctioneer's map and in the brochures and ads of unscrupulous land speculators. Some tracts had been laid out in river bottoms, on rocky hillides or on worthless desert lands.

During the boom in Southern California, the San Diego Land and Town Company decided to develop the subsidy lands in Rancho de la Nación. Five thousand acres had been set aside on which to create a new town. In June 1886, the San Diego Land and Town Company hired Colonel William G. Dickinson, a professional town planner, to accomplish this task. Colonel Dickinson, who came west from Kansas, previously had planned more than 70 towns along the Santa Fe line. After his arrival in National City in August, Colonel Dickinson spent the following weeks ascertaining what improvements were needed in order to develop the property. In addition to the need for surveying and planning the lots, Dickinson soon realized that the new townsite required a water system for irriga-

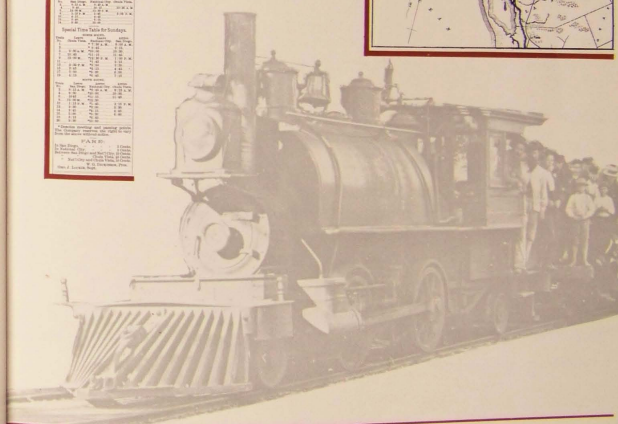
tion and a transportation system to provide access to the land and to acquire the capital necessary to construct these projects. Assured of funding, Dickinson returned to National City.

Colonel Dickinson decided to dam the Sweetwater River in the narrow gorge that had been discovered by Frank Kimball some years previously. On Nov. 17, 1886, pany started work on the project. Original plans called for a slender masonry structure only 10 feet thick at the base and 50 feet high. But on Feb. 8, 1887, when the dam had reached a height of about 20 feet, Dickinson hired engineer James D. Schuyler to redesign the project. The new work entailing for a dam 60 feet high with was still under construction, the plans were again changed and the top raised another 30 feet. Although the additional

Southern California Railroad map from 1894



SCHEDULE OF RATES	
FROM NATIONAL CITY TO SAN DIEGO	
First Class	1.00
Second Class	.75
Third Class	.50
Fourth Class	.25
Children (under 10 years)	Half
Children (10 to 18 years)	Three-quarters
Children (18 to 21 years)	Full
Children (21 to 25 years)	Three-quarters
Children (25 to 30 years)	Half
Children (30 to 35 years)	Three-quarters
Children (35 to 40 years)	Half
Children (40 to 45 years)	Three-quarters
Children (45 to 50 years)	Half
Children (50 to 55 years)	Three-quarters
Children (55 to 60 years)	Half
Children (60 to 65 years)	Three-quarters
Children (65 to 70 years)	Half
Children (70 to 75 years)	Three-quarters
Children (75 to 80 years)	Half
Children (80 to 85 years)	Three-quarters
Children (85 to 90 years)	Half
Children (90 to 95 years)	Three-quarters
Children (95 to 100 years)	Half



CHULA VISTA BEGINS: ORCHARD HOUSES AND LEMON GROVES

height enabled the reservoir to hold five times as much water. The drainage of the dam eventually caused some engineering problems for the San Diego Land and Town Company.

Reservoir Completed

Under Schuyler's direction, the arch masonry dam was built with rock spigared a quarter-mile downstream was built with Portland cement blasted to the site on a barrel. The structure was completed on April 7, 1888, and motor made from Portland cement April 7, 1888, at a cost of \$254,870. When the mains were opened in National City on April 19, everyone rejoiced. For now the residents finally had a reliable water system. No longer would they need to buy water at 25 cents a barrel as in Water Company, through the streets by the Kimball Bros. Water Company. The new town south of National City, christened Chula Vista (or "beautiful view") by James Schuyler, would also have water piped throughout the township.

Meanwhile, Dickinson had organized a railroad that would connect Chula Vista to National City and San Diego. This motor road, as it was called in those days, was in-

corporated in December 1886 as the National City and Ory Railroad. Begun early in 1887, construction of the line from San Diego to National City was completed by June 1888, about 30 miles of track had been laid. The trains, pulled by small engines called steam donkeys, traveled from San Diego through National City and across the Sweetwater Valley. At that point the tracks branched and one set headed east to the Sweetwater Dam and the resort town of La Presa. The other set went through Chula Vista town of La Presa. The other set went through Chula Vista town of La Presa. The other set went through Chula Vista town of La Presa. The other set went through Chula Vista town of La Presa.

The new transportation system made Chula Vista easily accessible to prospective land buyers; business and professional men in the new town commuted to their offices and markets in San Diego. The trains also carried

freight and hauled granite from the Sweetwater rock quarry. The National City & Ory Railroad made it possible for the general public to see the countryside and especially the Sweetwater Dam which, at the time, was one of the largest dams in the United States and represented a great engineering feat. San Diegans referred to the trip as a ride on the "dam train."

Although many speculators sold their lands at auction, the San Diego Land and Town Company approached the development of Chula Vista with a totally different attitude. The company wanted to induce permanent settlement and improvement of the tract, not just sell land. In this end, the 5,000-acre tract was cleared of brush, graded and subdivided into a gridiron pattern. The 40-acre blocks of five-acre parcels were laid out to the east of what would eventually be called National Avenue, with 60-acre blocks of 10-acre parcels to the west. Streets 80 feet wide were graded and sidewalks leveled. Hundreds of trees, including evergreen, pepper, olive, cypress, eucalyptus and palm, planted by the Land and Town Company, enhanced the appearance and value of the property. The company spent over \$50,000 on improvements.

Houses Must Cost \$2,000

In order to insure that every purchaser would add to the value of the land, and to discourage people from buying property for purely speculative reasons, Colonel Dickinson required each purchaser to sign a contract with this contract stipulated that every house built in Chula Vista had to be "of approved taste and plan to cost not less than \$2,000" and to be constructed within six months of the date the site was purchased. Dickinson wanted Chula Vista to be a gentleman's suburb of fine residences where hard-working businessmen or retired "capitalists" could relax. He hoped to make Chula Vista the finest spot on the globe.

Land sales in Chula Vista started in May 1887, when the names of 35 property owners were listed. By the end of the year, were noted in the National City Record. Over the next few years, Alfred Haines, Martin Ward, Lucious Wright, William Wilson, George Roberts, Garret Garrison, Col Rippey, C. C. Jones and James Madison Johnson all purchased lots, built homes and surrounded them with citrus trees.

GUIDE

Southern California

CONTAINS

San Diego Land and Town Company

RECOGNIZED BARRIERS THE PROPERTY AND MANAGER OF THE COUNTY AND SPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR LANDS TO BE OFFERED TO THE PROPERTY OWNERS

SALES BY

SAN DIEGO

Land and Town Company.

Parties seeking lands should look no farther, for here they will find the PRICES MODERATE, LANDS and the **Best Fruit Lands on the Continent.**

AT LOW PRICES AND ON EASY TERMS.

The additional copies of this folder, for sale only demanded information on terms contained within.

OSCAR L. BEARBIRD,
San Diego California Fruit Company,
San Diego,
California.

Send money by the Bank.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA!

Send me the Guide California, low cost at latitude 32 degrees, and all the best lands and vineyards of the San Francisco Bay Region, which are the most fertile in the world. I will give you the names of the best lands and vineyards of the San Francisco Bay Region, which are the most fertile in the world. I will give you the names of the best lands and vineyards of the San Francisco Bay Region, which are the most fertile in the world.

PRODUCTIONS.

California produces a wide range of products. All the finest varieties of grapes, peaches, pears, apples, etc., are raised in California. The products are of the highest quality and are well adapted for export.

At the Southern California Fruit Co. sale at San Diego, March 18th, 1887, the following lands were offered:

1. The County of Southern California, the best land of the Coast.
2. The best grapes in California.
3. For Paper Road in, Michael Oregon.
4. The third Annual Fruit Fair in San Diego, California, which was held at the San Diego Exposition, and which was the first of the kind in this State.

PRODUCTIONS.

California produces a wide range of products. All the finest varieties of grapes, peaches, pears, apples, etc., are raised in California. The products are of the highest quality and are well adapted for export.

Sweetwater Dam overflow in 1895

Index of 1894 pamphlet



Historical Site No. 4 "Our House," destroyed by fire, it was located at 661 3rd Avenue.



Historical Site Map

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Greg Rogers House
616 Second Avenue | 8. Haines House
671 Fourth Avenue |
| 2. Bolmer House
3 North Second Avenue | 9. Starkey House
21 F Street |
| 3. Condey House
210 Davidson Street | 10. Bronson House
612 Second Avenue |
| 4. Our House
Destroyed by fire (site only)
276 F Street | 10a. Bronson Carriage House
611 Second Avenue |
| 5. First Congregational Church
525 F Street | 11. Stafford House
640 Fifth Avenue |
| 6. Johnson House
525 F Street | 12. Chula Vista Woman's Club
357 G Street |
| 7. El Nido
669 Del Mar Avenue | |



Alfred Barber residence in 1892



151 Landis 1906



original detail still remains



Harold Conroy residence



Chula Vista Historic Site No. 3 200 Landis 1906

Homes constructed in Chula Vista during the late 1880s or early 1890s reflected the Victorian styles popular in the United States during that era. Common features included multi-textured exterior walls, strongly asymmetrical facades and steeply pitched roofs. Exuberant detailing with carpenter's lace, gingerbread and turned posts or spindles areas. The Queen Anne style, one of the Victorian styles popular in this country from 1880 to 1910, often featured a front-facing gable, patterned shingles, curvawy bay windows, ornate chimneys and a partial or full-width one story porch.

The first Chula Vista settler, Albert Barber, and his family moved into their new home in February 1888. Typical of the elaborate Victorian and Queen Anne homes of that era, false-shingles, iron cresting and wooden gingerbread trim adorned the two-story house. Two dormers graced the front. Although this house has been moved from its former location at 158 Third Avenue, the Barber home still exists today. Considerably remodeled, the house stands at 151 Landis Avenue and is believed to be the oldest building in Chula Vista.

Alfred Haines, a graduate of the Harvard Law School and former member of the first Constitutional Convention of South Dakota, moved to California in 1887. He was admitted to the California Bar, and soon after settling in Chula Vista became a law partner of another prominent resident, Martin Luther Ward. The two-story Haines home at 210 Davidson Street, featured a three-story square tower, a high-pitched hip and gable roof, horizontal shiplap siding and an ornate chimney. Hundreds of orange and lemon trees surrounded this orchard house. A later owner, Harrell Conroy, a chiropractor, used a barn on the property to manufacture hardware specialties. Today the Haines House is Chula Vista Historic Site No. 3 and is known as the Conroy House. The Martin Ward House which once stood nearby, no longer exists.

C. C. Jones, about whom little is known, and his wife, Nancy, bought 2.5 acres along "D" Street in 1889 and built an attractive Victorian house with a high, cross-gable roof and carved bargeboards. Like many houses constructed during the 1880s and 1890s, the exterior texture was varied by using fishscale and diamond-shaped shingles on the upper story and shiplap siding on the first level. Many different families have owned this house, but the best known was Dr. Marcos E. Carver, an Episcopal priest, who bought the house in 1913. He founded and was the rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in San Diego from 1913 to 1917.



Johnson residence in 1887



James Madison Johnson
inventor of the first
lemon washing
machine

Johnson house today



In 1888, James Madison Johnson built his charming Victorian home at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and "F" Street. He started a citrus nursery on his land, and in the basement workshop of his house, he invented and produced a lemon washing machine. Sales of the machine enabled him to repay the funds he had borrowed to construct the house. The Johnson House at 525 "P" Street is Chula Vista Historical Site No. 6.

The Johnson House has been completely restored and is greatly admired in Chula Vista. This house includes designs on the bargeboards and pendants at the eave corners. A wooden staircase leads to an open porch graced by turned post supports and a carved balustrade.



Historical Site No. 8 671 Fourth Ave. 1986



"The Boarding House" 1986

Lemons Become Big Crop

Another early Chula Vista resident was William Aaron Henry, professor of botany and agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. With the help of his nephew, Daniel K. Adams, also from the University of Wisconsin, Professor Henry planted 16 acres of Eureka lemons on his property in July 1889. Able to ripen more readily than oranges in the cooler coastal climate, Henry's lemon crop proved a success. Seeing the results of his experiment, other growers soon turned to lemons as their main product. Before long, lemons would become the major crop of the area, but by no means the only one. Residents also raised guavas, strawberries, figs, apricots, peaches and pears, as well as ornamental trees. Although Professor Henry returned to Wisconsin, where he served as Dean of the College of Agriculture for 40 years, he eventually came back to California and spent his last days in San Diego.

At the eastern edge of town, a "quaint Queen Anne villa" was constructed for Mrs. B. K. Maude in March 1888. The 10-acre "Elenjambre Ranch" (meaning "swarm of bees") on which this house stood produced lemons, peaches and strawberries. Mrs. Maude filled the house with bric-a-brac, antiques and a cabinet said to have been owned

by the first Napoleon. On Oct. 7, 1891, she sold the ranch, eight-room house and farm equipment to Henry Gulick. The Maude house, known locally as "The Boarding House," still exists at 155 "G" Street. Although the siding of this house has been changed, the original charm can be detected in the angled bay windows, turned posts on the porch and the balustrade on the balcony above the porch.

People came to Chula Vista from the Midwest, New England, Canada and even England. A Canadian, William Wilson, arrived in October 1888. He purchased land from the San Diego Land and Town Company and built a handsome, two-story Victorian house with a complex hip and gable roof, an open front porch with turned supports, horizontal shiplap siding and bands of fishscale shingles over the windows. A tall brick chimney rose through the roof. He surrounded his home with stables and other ranch buildings. By 1890, Wilson had planted 600 trees including 500 Eureka lemons and 100 navel, tangerine and Occo-shui oranges. He also put in guavas, strawberries and a row of blackberries on his 15 acres. In 1893, Seaman Haines purchased this house from the Wilson estate. The Seaman Haines House, Chula Vista Historical Site No. 8, stands at 671 Fourth Avenue.

In early 1888, George Roberts, a native of England, built his house near what would now be the southwest corner of "F" Street and Hilltop Drive. He had served as an officer in the British navy and had arrived in National

Charles Herman Hotel 1911

City in 1879 with his sister, Minnie. Although he held an important position with the California Southern Railroad Company, Roberts resigned in 1886 to engage in the real estate and insurance business. He named his Chula Vista home "Las Flores" but enjoyed the two-story Victorian house for only a few months. George Roberts passed away on Aug. 6, 1888, and left a \$50,000 estate to his sister, who in the meanwhile had married architect Charles Z. Herman, a recent arrival from Liverpool.



Big Band on the stairs of Herman Hotel 1911

Herman Hotel Opens

Minnie Herman, perhaps one of the best-known and most colorful women in Chula Vista, and her husband, Charles, moved into "Las Flores." She renounced her allegiance to England and in 1894 decided to add 13 rooms to the house and convert it into a hotel for eastern tourists. "Casa de las Flores" or the "Herman Hotel" as it was also known, provided a tennis court, bowling alley and Chula Vista's first golf course for the enjoyment of the guests. Weekly theater trains on the National City & Otay Railroad made special excursion trips to San Diego so visitors and residents alike could enjoy the latest theatrical offerings. An accomplished pianist, Minnie Herman entertained her guests with impromptu concerts. She also raised some of the food served in the hotel. The *National City Record* on Nov. 22, 1894, reported that Mrs. Herman had discovered a lynx feasting on her poultry and had dispatched the beast with a shot through the mouth.

Charles Herman passed away in 1905 at the age of 70. But his wife, who was at least 20 years younger than her husband, continued to operate the hotel until she retired in 1912 and sold the property to Mary Louise Webb. In 1913 or 1914, the Herman Hotel burned to the ground. An old carriage house, once part of the hotel complex,

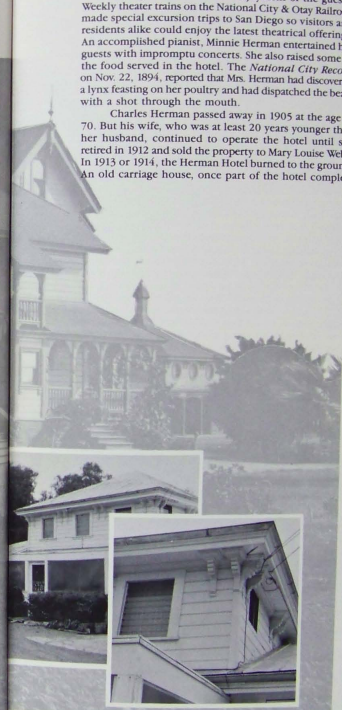
remains today at 50 1/2 "F" Street. Although this building has undergone alteration and more than one addition, a hint of the Victorian origin can be seen in the gabled brackets under the eaves.

The last proprietress of the Herman Hotel, Mary Webb, was the daughter of another pioneer, Capt. Francis Webb, who came to Chula Vista with his family in 1892. Webb purchased land just southwest of the Herman property and built a home on a hilltop with a view of the rival in California, the former sea captain had led a colorful life. He served as the U.S. consul in Zanzibar from 1867 to 1874 and helped Henry M. Stanley organize the expedition that eventually found Dr. David Livingstone in the interior of Africa. While in Chula Vista, Webb contemplated the establishment of a shipping line between San Diego and New Zealand, where he had served as U.S. consul during the 1880s. He lived in his new house only a short time and passed away on July 10, 1892, at the age of 59. His family kept the Chula Vista land, and his daughter, Mary, produced jellies and jams for eastern customers.

Although Chula Vista had an auspicious beginning, its growth was not without setbacks. Colonel Dickinson and the San Diego Land and Town Company experienced two major problems—a lawsuit and the collapse of the land boom. Although the company had managed to acquire by condemnation the land that would be covered by the waters of the Sweetwater Reservoir, the last 30-foot increase in height of the dam eventually flooded land still owned by George Neal. When the Land and Town Company tried to buy Neal's property, he refused to accept their offer and instituted a lawsuit against the condemnation proceedings. In August 1889, the California Supreme Court ruled against the Land and Town Company and ordered them to either pay Neal \$122,567.20 for his property or release within 30 days enough water from the reservoir to uncover his land. The company chose to lower the water level and opened the floodgates on Sweetwater Dam. But the reservoir level was still too high, so a tunnel had to be dug at the south end of the dam to let out even more water. Litigation continued until Feb. 19, 1891, when Neal finally accepted a payment of \$80,000. The gates on the tunnel were closed, and the water level in the reservoir rose 4.5 feet in 12 hours.

Land Values Fall

The second major problem arose during the spring of 1888. The boom ended quite suddenly, and land values fell overnight. Hundreds of property owners throughout Southern California who had purchased lots at inflated prices now tried to sell their land at any price. Many lost all they had invested. Faced with the deteriorating economic climate, the San Diego Land and Town Company was forced to change its sales tactics. To encourage settlement, they developed a new policy in 1888: the company offered 20 acres free to anyone who applied on condition that he plant the land with citrus trees. After five other 10 acres would be deeded to the planter, while the rest could be sold by the Land and Town Company. The company also built a number of large six to 10-room homes to rent or sell to prospective buyers. Each house, considered quite modern for those days, contained run-houses were located on five-acre orchard-covered sites. The directors of the Land and Town Company hoped that such ready-made homesteads would encourage eastern investors to purchase property and settle in Chula Vista. At least two of the Land and Town Company houses still exist today, and possibly a third.



remaining detail from carriage house 1896



Former residence of 1912



60 Hill West Avenue 1916



*MacDonald residence 1886
644 Second during restoration*

*Garrettson-Frank residence 1886
642 Second during restoration*

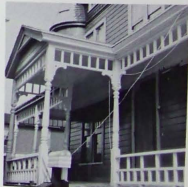
San Diego Land and Town Company House No. which was built in 1888 and originally stood facing Thi Avenue, was moved to its present location at 681 Del M. sometime between 1908 and 1912. Detroit Francisco and his wife, Mary, were the first owners at the new address. Somewhat altered, this large two-story house still exhibit many Victorian features. Wide shiplap siding covers the exterior, and a horizontal band, much like a very shallow pent roof, separates the first and second levels. An open porch with a shed roof and three round column supports extends across the front.

In 1908, Mrs. Jennie MacDonald bought House No. 13 at 644 Second Avenue from the San Diego Land Company, a successor to the San Diego Land and Town Company. The MacDonald House features a medium-hipped and gable roof with a boxed cornice, decorated frieze and carved brackets. A two-story boxed bay with a pediment on top graces the left side, while an open porch with a shed roof supported by three round columns adds charm to the front. (The Garrettson-Frank House, which stands just behind the MacDonald House at 642 Second Avenue, was built in 1889 and was moved to this location. This Queen Anne home is undergoing restoration.)

The third house, larger than the others, but apparently constructed by the Land and Town Company, stands today at 613 Second Avenue. Known locally as "the Blue Castle," this magnificent Queen Anne home was purchased by Byron and Emma Bronson in 1907. An architectural gem, this house was constructed around 1888. The two-and-a-half-story home has a high hip and steep gable roof with boxed cornices, decorated bargeboards and gable ornaments. Twin ornate chimneys rise through the roof. A round tower is capped by a conical roof with a finial on top. Typical of this style, fishscale shingles, square-end shingles, and shiplap siding have been used to vary the exterior texture of the house. The front porch features turned roof supports and a stickwork railing. The Bronson House and the carriage house behind it are Chula Vista Historic Sites No. 10 and 10a. All three of the former Land and Town Company houses qualify as "orchard homes."



Bronson Home, owned by Colonel Richard in 1888



*Chula Vista Historical Site No. 10
at 613 Second Ave. 1986*



*Chula Vista Historical Site No. 10a
at 611 Second Ave. 1986*

First Schoolhouse Built

In spite of the economic downturn, by 1885 Chula Vista had 50 families and enough children to warrant the erection of a schoolhouse. During the summer of that year a site was chosen and bids put out for the design and construction of the building. An argument then ensued between Colonel Dickinson and the National City School Board whose jurisdiction would include the new school. Dickinson wanted the schoolhouse to cost \$3,000 while the school trustees felt that \$1,400 was adequate. Arguing that no house in Chula Vista could cost less than \$2,000, Dickinson stated that the same should hold true for the school. Eventually, a compromise of \$2,500 was reached, and the building, designed by architect A. Pare, was completed in January 1889. The first schoolhouse stood at 270 "F" Street, the present site of Norman Park Center. But the problems were not over yet. When Chula Vista decided to form its own school district in 1892, the National City School District sued to recover the funds spent in Chula Vista and tried to have the new district dissolved. National City lost its case, but Chula Vista later voted for a bond issue to repay National City a portion of the funds.

The death of Colonel Dickinson in July 1891 brought great sorrow to the residents. Though he did not live to see the culmination of his work, Chula Vista, despite many problems, had developed in the ways he had envisioned. Where sagebrush had grown only three years earlier, more than 50 residences now stood. One thousand acres of citrus orchards had been planted, and 15 to 20 miles of streets fringed with shade trees had been graded. The first post office had opened on Aug. 14, 1890, in Farrow's general store on the northwest corner of Third and "F" with Mrs. Sarah B. Fleming as the first postmaster. In only a little more than three years, Chula Vista had become a village.

The fine two-story schoolhouse, promoted by Dickinson, served as the civic, social and cultural center for the village; several organizations used the second floor



"F" street school 1910



Crockett house 1986

Crockett family outside residence in 1897

as a meeting place. The Chula Vista Village Improvement Society, organized in November 1889, met monthly. The object of this group was to care for the streets and to beautify and maintain the public grounds. Social clubs, such as the Literary and Social Science Club, abounded. Fund-raising events were common occurrences.

The Philomatic Society, a group of young people, held an evening of entertainment during which members of the community donated either books or cash for the purpose of starting a library. Along with a donation of books from Sarah Dickinson in commemoration of her late husband, the Philomatic Society collected 225 volumes by the end of the evening. Through the generosity of the community, the Society was able to open a library and free reading room for the residents of Chula Vista.

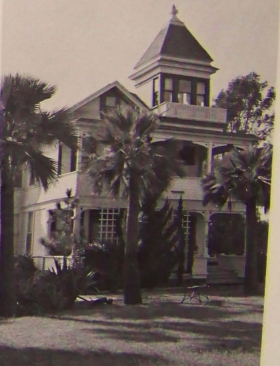
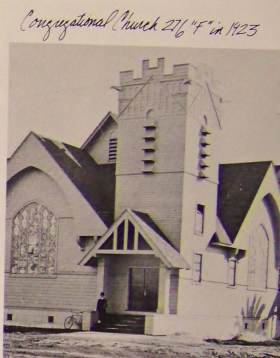
Congregational Church Dedicated

The spiritual needs of the community were also on the minds of some. Up to 1894, church services had been held on the second floor of the schoolhouse. The need for a church building was evident. The Ladies' Aid Society of the Congregational Church held numerous ice cream socials, box socials, watermelon socials and bazaars to raise funds for a sanctuary. The Land and Town Company donated a 123 by 290-foot plot of ground near the schoolhouse. On Sept. 9, 1894, the new Congregational Church was dedicated with Rev. T. R. Earle serving as the first minister. The new sanctuary at 276 "F" Street had been constructed by Allison C. Crockett, a carpenter and veteran of the Civil War, who lived nearby. Although the original structure was razed and a new sanctuary built in 1951, the First Congregational Church remains at the same location today. The place where the original church stood has been designated Chula Vista Historical Site No. 5.

Allison C. Crockett, who helped build the first Chula Vista church, had constructed his own house nearby in 1893 and planted orange and lemon trees on his five-acre lot. After his death in 1909 from the lingering effects of a gunshot wound he had sustained in Virginia, in 1864, during the Civil War Battle of the Wilderness, his widow, Mary, and children remained active in community affairs. The Crockett house, which originally faced "F" Street, was turned and moved to its present location at 220 Second Avenue. Although the original siding has been replaced by asbestos shingles, the house still retains much of its Victorian charm. The one-and-one-half-story home features a high, complex, cross-gable roof with boxed and bracketed cornices, horizontal bands above the windows and a wonderful front porch with turned posts, carved ornamentation, sickwork railing, and a pediment.

New families continued to acquire land in Chula Vista during the 1890s. The newcomers built large houses and planted citrus orchards. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gillette hired Henry Fletcher of Gray to construct a home on a promontory overlooking the Sweetwater Valley, just north of the Chula Vista boundary. This magnificent Queen Anne house, which originally cost \$3,000, features a high hip and steep gable roof, a tower with a prominent finial spire and a widow's walk. Clapboard siding and fishscale shingles provide textural variety to the exterior. A two-tier veranda dominates the front of this much-admired home.

Marcella Darling, who became a prominent Chula Vista resident, and her husband, Charles, acquired the house in 1910. Mrs. Darling lived in this house for many years. She was the first president of the Chula Vista Woman's Club and was deeply involved in the effort to construct the present clubhouse. Known as the Darling House today, this home at 44 N. Second Avenue remains a spectacular echo of Chula Vista's past.



Darling house today 44 N. Second Ave. 1986



Harold B. Stakley residence in 1923



Chula Vista Historic Site No. 9 217 F Street 1926

Around 1896, Reginald Vaughn built his Colonial-style home across the street from the Herman Hotel on "F" Street. By the time this house was constructed, architects and builders throughout the country had begun to rebel against the exuberant and ostentatious Victorian styles and had started to erect homes with rectangular shapes and some classical details. In 1893, the Chicago World's Fair had featured the Colonial Revival and Neoclassical styles as the architecture of the future. A hint of this new trend was incorporated in the design of the Vaughn house. Historical photographs of the home reveal that the large wing with a two-tier porch was added at some later date.

The Vaughns landscaped the area around their orchard house with many trees and shrubs. The second owner of the property, Hamilton B. Clark, was a journalist and former president of the United Press International. After his death in 1917, his wife, Sarah, lived there until 1925. Harold B. Stakley, prominent in San Diego financial and social circles, purchased the house in the 1930s. The Stakley House at 217 "F" Street is Chula Vista Historical Site No. 9.

Citrus Cooperative Formed

During the 1890s, the citrus orchards began to mature and produce carloads of fruit. Nearly 490 acres

of lemons and oranges had been planted by the end of 1890. Of these, 370 acres were privately owned, while the Land and Town Company had 120. In 1893, the Chula Vista residents formed a growers' cooperative to store, cure, buy, pack, sell and market the fruit. Alfred Haines served as the first president of the Chula Vista Fruit Association, incorporated in 1894. The cooperative soon organized a packing house operation for the benefit of its members.

The San Diego Land and Town Company continued to plant hundreds of acres of lemon trees and maintained a packing house to handle the ripened fruit. Operation of the company orchards required a force of workers to pick the fruit and to prune and irrigate the trees. Heman Copeland, another Chula Vista newcomer, became the orchard superintendent for the Land and Town Company. Heman and his wife, Caroline, had lemon orchards of their own, known as the Copeland Orchards. Mr. Copeland eventually became one of the leading authorities on citrus culture in the state.

By 1896, Chula Vista had 1,400 acres of lemon trees and two packing houses. But just as the growers were beginning to realize some profit, the San Diego Land and Town Company was forced to double the cost of water. Beginning in 1887, the company had charged each

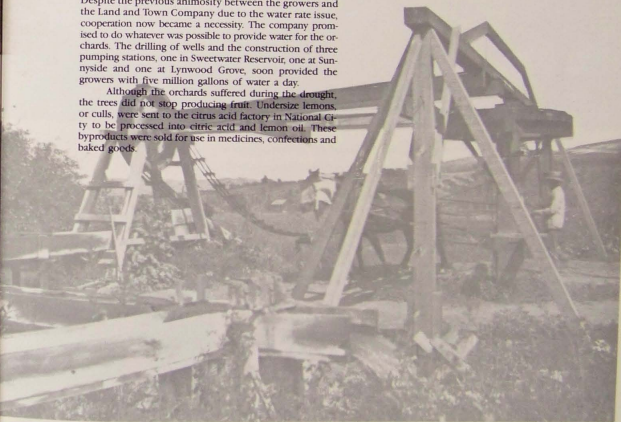
property owner a water rate of \$3.50 per acre per year. By 1895, this rate was insufficient to cover the regular operating and maintenance expenses. In addition, the piping system had suffered extensive damage during a severe winter storm and much of it had to be replaced. The company announced that it would charge \$7 per acre for irrigation purposes in 1896. This action prompted the residents of Chula Vista to consider incorporation. As citizens of an incorporated entity, the residents believed they would have more control over their own destinies and therefore more authority to determine the water rate. No serious attempt at incorporation was made at that time, however, since the growers preferred to wait until the water issue was resolved.

In the meantime, the growers refused to sign contracts with the Land and Town Company at the new water rate. The company responded by shutting off the water supply until legal action forced them to relent. Alfred Haines, the prominent Chula Vista attorney, argued the case, first in the U.S. Circuit Court, where the suit dragged on for several years, then before the U.S. Supreme Court in the case Lanning vs. Osborne. Finally, in 1900, the San Diego Land and Town Company prevailed, and water rates were raised to \$7 per acre. This was a serious and costly defeat for the growers of the area.

Drought Hits Area

While litigation concerning water rates was slowly proceeding through the courts, another disaster tested the endurance of Chula Vista residents. A drought starting in 1897 threatened the citrus crops, the financial mainstay of the community. By 1899, Sweetwater Reservoir was dry. Despite the previous animosity between the growers and the Land and Town Company due to the water rate issue, cooperation now became a necessity. The company promised to do whatever was possible to provide water for the orchards. The drilling of wells and the construction of three pumping stations, one in Sweetwater Reservoir, one at Sunnyside and one at Lynwood Grove, soon provided the growers with five million gallons of water a day.

Although the orchards suffered during the drought, the trees did not stop producing fruit. Undesired lemons, or culs, were sent to the citrus acid factory in National City to be processed into citric acid and lemon oil. These byproducts were sold for use in medicines, confections and baked goods.



Chinese water pump in the Sweetwater reservoir bed



*Looking south "F" Street east of Third Avenue - The first school
is to the left with the first church on the right in 1911*



Lemon orchard workers

Some people were unable to hold on through the financial hard times. A few headed for the gold fields of the Klondike. Others returned to their former homes, giving up on the once-beckoning promise of California. But regardless of the difficulties encountered, the decade of the 1890s had provided the town with a telephone-equipped general store and post office, a schoolhouse, a church, a wharf for launching pleasure boats, four packing houses and a resort hotel. Thousands of citrus trees had been planted, and before long, Chula Vista would become known as "the lemon capital of the world."

Packing plant in 1908



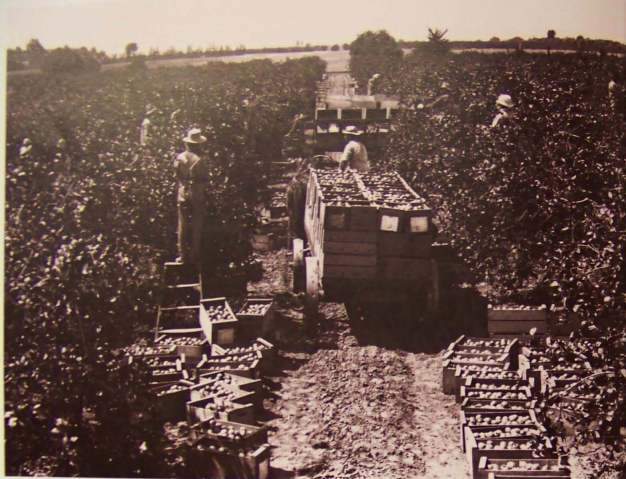
Sweetwater Fruit Property, Bonita Ranch in 1920

The Sweetwater Valley

Soon after Frank and Warren Kimball purchased Rancho de la Nacion in 1868, they hired workmen to clear brush, survey and lay out National City; Frank Kimball built the first house in the new town. The Kimballs, anxious to find profitable ways to use the rest of their vast acreage, conducted various agricultural experiments in the Sweetwater Valley and on the north rim. They successfully planted olive cuttings obtained from trees at the San Diego and San Luis Rey missions, and Frank Kimball set out one grove on a four-acre parcel where part of Rohr Park lies today. As a result of this experiment, olive culture became so popular in the area that towards the end of 1886, the Kimballs built an oil processing mill in National City. Frank Kimball also planted the first citrus trees near his house. His pioneer orchard was the first of the vast lemon and orange groves that would bolster the economy of the valley for many decades.

The Kimballs even tried sheep ranching for a time. In 1879, Warren purchased 1,300 sheep from a rancher at San Luis Rey and drove them south to the Sweetwater Valley. To provide water for the flock, Frank built a small lake he called "Laguna Bonita," and constructed a flume to carry water from the Sweetwater River to the lake. Although the sheep experiment failed, the name Bonita remains on the maps today.

During the 1870s, the Kimballs sold large sections of land for \$10 per acre. By 1888, four major landowners, Henry H. Higgins, W. W. Whitney, J. C. Frisbie and Henry Cooper, had purchased property in the Sweetwater Valley. In 1871, Higgins, a Chicago composer, music publisher and piano dealer who came to the area for his health, bought 76 acres from the Kimball brothers in the eastern end of the valley. He named his ranch "Bonnie Brae" and set out various kinds of fruit trees. His orchards were irrigated by a clever system of windmills, pumps and pipes made from hollowed-out redwood logs. Higgins created a nursery on his land by planting seeds from the best oranges and lemons he could obtain in Los Angeles. Using the seeds of thin-skinned lemons of the Messina variety, he developed a new variety he christened "Bonnie Brae." This lemon became popular because of its "strength and purity of the acid, absence of seeds, and thinness of rind." Other pioneer ranchers, including W. W. Whitney, who bought 92 acres in the valley in 1873, obtained citrus trees from the Bonnie Brae nursery.



Lemon picking 1901



Lemon store interior 1915



Lemon store exterior

In 1876, Judson Carter Frisbie of Chicago left the Midwest, moved to California and invested in a 246-acre tract at the eastern end of the valley. He named his ranch Sunnyside, and during the boom in 1887, his ranch was subdivided as the Sunnyside tract. Frisbie, a native of New York, became a resident of Chicago when he was 14 years old. He later joined the firm of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Company, Chicago wholesale hardware merchants. Frisbie raised lemons and grapes in the Sweetwater Valley and was active in the temperance movement. He helped organize the San Diego Anti-Saloon League. Frisbie Street in the Bonita Glen subdivision recalls the name of this pioneer rancher, who passed away on Nov. 30, 1907.

In 1884, Henry Cooper, a developer, bought acreage that included the site of Laguna Bonita. He kept the name Bonita for his ranch and created the Bonita townsite there in 1887. In 1890, the Sweetwater Fruit Company acquired Cooper's Bonita Ranch and planted orchards on the property. The Sweetwater Fruit Company had been organized by the Boston firm of Kidder and Peabody Company, one of the original owners of the San Diego Land and Town Company and a major stockholder in the Santa Fe Railroad. The Sweetwater Fruit Company was, however, an entirely separate organization that planted lemon, orange and grapefruit orchards and shipped citrus fruit. The company purchased additional acreage in the valley and hired Russell C. Allen as manager.

Company Builds Packinghouse

In 1894 or 1895, the Sweetwater Fruit Company built an adobe packinghouse to which a large wooden section was

added in 1900. The Allens lived in the old Cooper ranch house until it burned down in 1907. Until a second house could be constructed, the Allens moved into the packinghouse for a short time. Their new house, designed by the architectural firm Gill & Mead, featured thick, poured concrete walls that everyone thought would be fire and earthquake proof. R. C. Allen remained the manager of the Sweetwater Fruit Company until his death.

Although the Allen House, which still stands today on Old Orchard Lane, resembles the work of architect Irving Gill, at least one source indicates that it might have been designed by Frank Mead, Gill's partner at the time. Perhaps both men worked on the drawings. This house may be the only building designed by Gill or a Gill partnership in the South Bay area. (Richard Regua was the architect for the Robert Winsor House, built in 1911 at 3580 Evergreen Road in Bonita. Regua left Gill's office in December 1910 and started his own practice.)

The Sweetwater Fruit Company packinghouse, known for many years as the "Old Red Barn," became the social center for the community and sometimes housed Mexican laborers. The structure at one time or another also served as a blacksmith shop, stable, fire station and feed store. It provided space for local fairs and displays. Although damaged by the great flood of 1916, the packinghouse stood until 1960, when it was torn down to make way for a small shopping center along Bonita Road.

Perhaps the most famous person to live in the Sweetwater Valley in the 19th century was Ulysses S. Grant Jr., the son of the 18th president of the United States. In 1894, Grant purchased seven acres at the upper end of the valley



The R.C. Allen House 1906

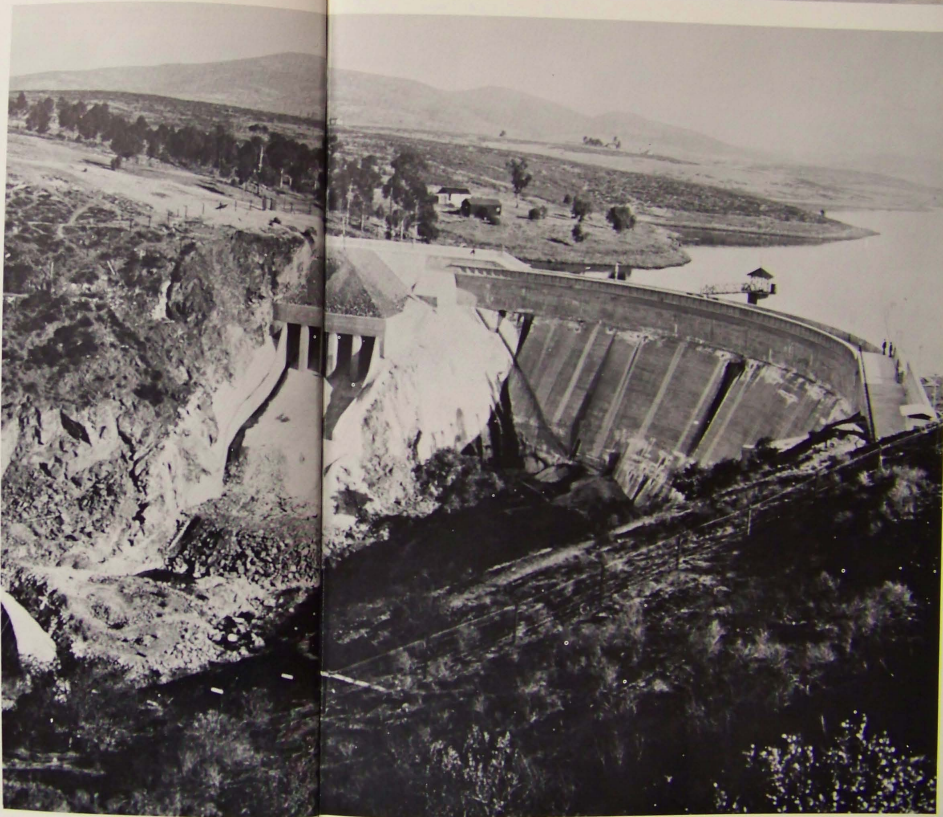
and built a Dutch Colonial cottage on a hill opposite the Sweetwater Dam. The Grant family used the cottage as a second home and usually stayed there during the summer months. The Grants also kept a large mansion in San Diego, the U. S. Grant Hotel, built by this family at a cost of \$1.25 million, opened in downtown San Diego on Oct. 15, 1910.

Although the Grant House in the Sweetwater Valley has been altered to some extent, the cottage still stands today along Sweetwater Road near the Quarry Road intersection. The house features a gambrel roof, typical of the Dutch Colonial style, but uncommon in San Diego County.



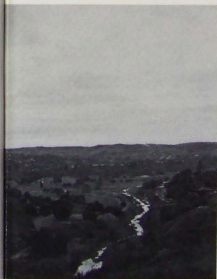
Wagon S. Grant Jr. cottage 1985

Sweetwater Dam 1930





View of the existing Sweetwater Valley



The Sweetwater Valley, with its citrus groves and dairy farms, remained rural in nature until after World War II. After a trunk line of the Metropolitan Sewerage System was installed in the valley in 1963, the area urbanized rapidly and parts were annexed to National City and Chula Vista.

Looking west from below Sweetwater Dam 1936

Upper Otay Valley Lodge. E.S. Babcock, near the lodges built for guests of Hotel del Coronado. Sarah Linsley and her sons, Sid, Alf, and Carme took care of the lodges. This auto was used to take guests from hotel to lodges.



32 CHULA VISTA HERITAGE 1911-1986

Janal, Otay & Milijo Ranchos

disputed Milijo Rancho located just north of Mexican border

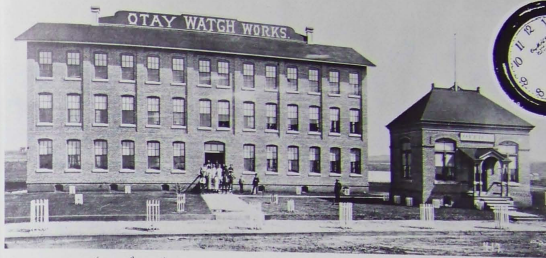


During the 19th century, three former Mexican land grants, Rancho Janal, Rancho Otay and Rancho Milijo, lay between Rancho de la Nación and the border. In 1829, Don Jose Antonio Estudillo had received the 4,436-acre Rancho Janal, his sister, Dona Magdalena Estudillo, were members of a prominent early California family. For many years, the two ranchos were used mainly for cattle ranching and were operated together, although two different brands appeared on the livestock. As far as is known, the Estudillo family did not build any ranch houses on these two grants. Both ranchos remained primarily ranch land until well into the 20th century, although the size of each changed over the years with Janal becoming smaller and Otay increasing in acreage.

During the 1880s, Rancho Janal belonged to Frank and Warren Kimball for a short time. By 1894, Elisha S. Babcock, who built the Hotel del Coronado, had acquired the property. In 1887, work had started on the Lower Otay Dam, which was originally planned as a masonry structure. But construction had stopped until 1894, when the project was taken over by the Southern California Mountain Water Company, a company organized by Babcock. The design of the dam was then changed to an earthen and rock fill structure with a steel diaphragm at the center and construction was restarted. As early as 1897, James D. Schuyler, the engineer who had designed Sweetwater Dam, warned that the 134 foot-high Lower Otay Dam might not survive a severe storm. The Upper Otay Dam, an arch-type concrete masonry structure, was built in 1898-1901 and was only 14 feet thick at the base. Water from the reservoirs behind the two dams eventually submerged many acres of Rancho Janal. Schuyler's prediction of disaster came true when Lower Otay Dam failed on Jan. 27, 1916. The dam was rebuilt by 1919, using better engineering principles the second time.



Otay Baptist Church



Otay Watch Company 1890



In 1887, real estate developers Gulon, Hamilton and Hartley laid out the boom town of Otay and divided the 120-acre townsite into 50 by 150-foot lots. The community soon could boast of a newspaper, numerous residences, a livery stable, some stores, a post office and a hotel.

The developers of Otay decided to bring some industry to the thriving town, and in February 1889, they broke ground for a three-story brick building to house a watch factory. The factory was designed and constructed by architect Andrew T. Large Jr. of San Diego. The Otay Watch Company brought in machinery for making watches and purchased and installed an electric light plant that furnished electricity for the factory and the town as well. The first watch was completed in May 1890, and the output slowly increased to 25 per day. Although the company operated for six months, the watches never became popular. As a result, the factory shut down in October 1890, when the operating capital had been exhausted.

Although the watch factory went out of business, Otay continued to develop and by 1891 had a population of 400. Large quantities of wine were being produced on nearby ranches. By 1900, the community had begun to fade, and the *Otay Press* moved to Chula Vista. When the Lower Otay Dam failed on Jan. 27, 1916, the floodwaters devastated what was left of the town of Otay. Only a few buildings survived the disaster including the watch factory, the Otay Baptist Church and the one-story brick post office.

Otay Baptist Church Established

The Otay Baptist Church had been constructed in 1890 by members of the Davis family. This small wooden church with its high gable roof and pointed window surrounds originally stood on the southwest corner of what is now Zenith and Third Avenue. During the 1916 flood, the copper church bell that had been brought around the Horn and hung in the bell tower rang continuously to warn the people. When the church building eventually became too small, the congregation purchased a former Methodist

Church building across the street on the northeast corner of Third and Zenith. The original Baptist Church was stripped of its bell tower and moved across the intersection where it was added to the east side of the old Methodist building. The two structures together became the Otay Baptist Church that stands there today. The historic bell that now hangs in the former Methodist belfry still rings on Sunday and every New Year's Eve.

Although the Otay Watch Company failed and the town of Otay almost disappeared, another enterprise, developed nearby in the 1870s, continued to flourish. In 1871, Shaffer & Stone had opened the Otay Salt Works on 60 acres of land near La Punta. In 1882, E. L. and J. E. Shaffer bought out Stone's interest, and by 1888, the evaporation of sea water in shallow ponds produced 500 tons of salt a year. The Western Salt Works, incorporated by Graham Babcock in 1902, took over the operations at the south end of the bay. By 1910, this company produced 1,000 tons a year. When Graham Babcock passed away in 1910, his father, Elisha S. Babcock, began to manage the company and soon increased production even more. The 1916 flood nearly destroyed the facility, but before long, the ponds and equipment were rebuilt. In 1922, Henry Fenton bought up the company's stock, and from then on, production increased steadily to more than 85,000 tons of salt annually. The crystallization ponds covered more than 1,350 acres, a size equal to Balboa Park. Western Salt employed many people from Chula Vista and remains in business today.

Over the years, parts of the former Rancho Milijo urbanized as streets were laid out, homes were built and businesses were established on what was once a vast cattle range. On Nov. 5, 1985, voters in a three-and-one-half square mile area just south of the Chula Vista boundary decided to annex to the City. On Dec. 31, 1985, this area known as the "Montgomery Reorganization," became part of the City of Chula Vista. This annexation, the largest ever recorded in the State of California, increased Chula Vista's population by more than 23,000.



Mission style architecture reflected in San Diego Country Club



*Poplar Craftsman style
residence*

After 1900, changing architectural ideas and the availability of new materials began to influence the design of Chula Vista houses. Until the early 1900s, the homes built in the community reflected those eastern styles that had dominated the architectural scene in California since 1848. But in the 1890s, several writers had popularized and promoted the romance of the missions. The California Landmarks Club, one of the oldest preservation organizations in the United States, sought to save the crumbling structures. California developers found profit in the mystique of the 18th century ruins, for as Charles Fletcher Lummis, the editor of the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, put it "... (the missions) are worth more money, are a greater asset to Southern California, than our oil, oranges, or even our climate." A few California architects began to incorporate Mission-style elements in their designs. The Mission Inn at Riverside, Calif., built in 1891-1901, is one of the largest Mission Revival buildings ever constructed in California and possibly anywhere else.

In the 1890s, an important San Diego architect, Will Sterling Hebbard, was one of the first to use the Mission Revival style in San Diego County. Stucco walls, red tile roofs and arches characterized the style, and curvilinear parapets adorned some buildings. Hebbard lived in Chula Vista from about 1908 to 1913, but whether he planned any homes in the City is not known.



Chula Vista 1900-1914

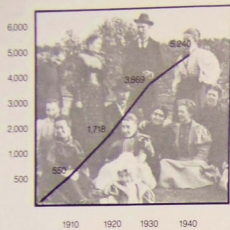
BIRTH OF A CITY

A second architect, Irving Gill, who arrived in San Diego in 1893 and associated with William Hebbard for a time, later adapted the Mission style, simplified it and created his own American version for which he later became famous. While his buildings originated in the design of the Spanish missions, his new style evolved towards cubistic sculpture.

The second architectural trend to emerge was the Craftsman style, which became the dominant style for homes built from about 1905 to 1920. Two California brothers, Charles and Henry Greene, who associated with each other in Pasadena from 1893 to 1914, brought the style to its highest form. The Craftsman concept of architecture, an outgrowth of the Arts and Crafts movement, featured natural materials and a handcrafted, rustic appearance. A one-story version, called the bungalow, became a sub-group of this style. Inexpensive and easily built, bungalows answered the housing needs of the growing middle class. Such features as a low-pitched gable roof, with a wide, unenclosed eave and exposed rafter and beam ends characterized this style. Many bungalows featured large front porches and an open and informal plan. Whole neighborhoods of bungalows were built in Chula Vista from about 1908 to 1925.

The third factor that influenced homes built in the early years of the 20th century was the increased availability and use of cement and concrete. Producers throughout the United States had geared up their facilities to make great quantities of cement for use in the construction of the Panama Canal. By 1908, such popular magazines as *House Beautiful* promoted the use of this new material for homes, chicken coops, bird baths and other structures. Concrete buildings were claimed to be sanitary, vermin proof and rot proof, and to have good insulation. *House Beautiful* said that the "Age of Concrete" had arrived. The R. C. Allen House, designed by Gill & Mead, featured poured concrete walls and was one of the first in the area constructed in this fashion.

Road racing in Chula Vista



Smelt Mason, A. Ward

Florida dog



"The Florida dog are eating lemon trees and citrus trees."

"I didn't know dogs would eat trees."



red spider



mealybug

Residents Construct Building Blocks

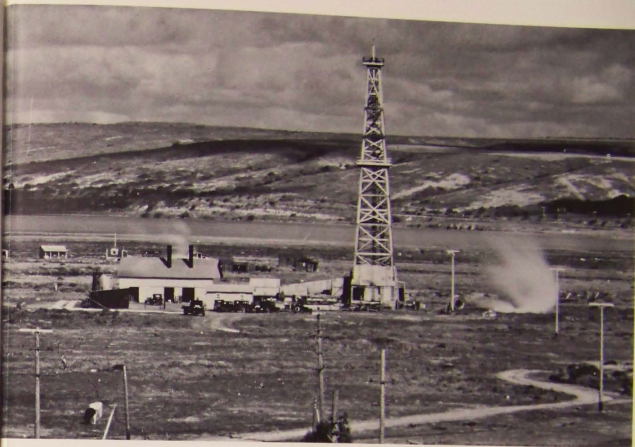
After 1900, an invention called the Wizard Block machine also spurred the use of concrete. A homeowner or handyman using this hand-operated contraption could turn out concrete blocks in his backyard. The machine, which could make blocks in various designs, was sold through the Sears catalog in 1908. One popular design of concrete block was called "rock face" and the Chula Vista house at 354 Del Mar Avenue, built in 1909, used "rock face" concrete blocks in the construction of the front porch piers.

While the architecture of Southern California was in a state of turmoil, an influx of people and the changing lifestyles of Chula Vistans would soon require simpler and less costly homes. In 1900, when the census takers visited every household, they found only 35,090 people in all of San Diego County. The county at that time reached as far as the Colorado River and included the large area that would become Imperial County in 1907. The City of San Diego had a population of 17,700, and nearly 500 people lived in Chula Vista. The census takers discovered that most Chula Vistans owned their homes and were fruit ranchers. A few families employed Chinese servants. Most of the inhabitants had come to the area from New England or the midwest. Only a handful were natives of Canada or European countries.

Besides the orchardists and their families, some ranchers, pruners and fruit packers also lived in the community. Tradesmen and professionals represented only a tiny minority. Charles and David Perry operated the Perry Bros. general merchandise store; Edward Moore was the druggist; George Yeawine, the village blacksmith; and Edward Hamilton, the plumber. A couple of teachers and clergymen also resided in the town, as well as Mary Barstow, a portrait painter, Louise Woodward, a teacher of physical culture, and Georgia Dow, a dressmaker. Attorneys Martin L. Ward and Alfred Haines commuted to their offices in San Diego. In 1902, Ward became a state senator.

At the turn of the century, everyday life in Chula Vista revolved around the 3,000 acres of citrus trees that had to be irrigated, pruned and picked. Sometimes the orchards had to be fumigated or sprayed to combat diseases such as red spider, mealy bug or Florida Dog. The men who picked 20 to 25 boxes of lemons per day received \$1.50 in wages, and the four packing houses required additional workers from time to time. The demand for Chula Vista lemons was increasing as the prejudice against domestic citrus fruit rapidly disappeared in the United States. The shape, size, pungency and excellent keeping qualities of California lemons now challenged the imported Italian and Spanish fruit.

In the early 1900s, the anticipated discovery of oil and the weekly yacht races sparked excitement among the residents. With the development of new uses for petroleum, oil had become a valuable commodity. The news of a possible strike spread rapidly through the town when indications of oil were found on property that was either leased or owned by Minnie Herman. Several residents, including Mrs. Herman, formed the Chula Vista Oil Company in March 1901. They secured the services of two mining engineers, and hydraulic drills were brought in to bore three wells. Although oil experts proclaimed the site to be extremely promising, borings to the depth of 1,500 feet produced only dry holes. The wells were on the east side of Hilltop Drive between "F" Street and "I" Street. An old map shows that at least one was bored today. By 1906, the Chula Vista Oil Company had abandoned its search for oil.

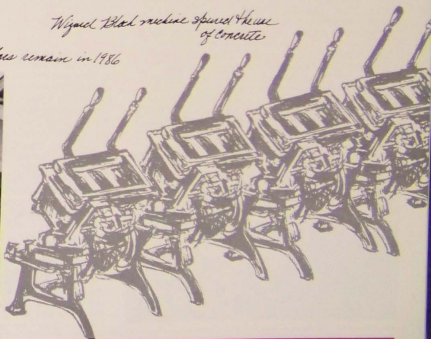


Early oil exploration

Wizard Block machine spurs the use of concrete



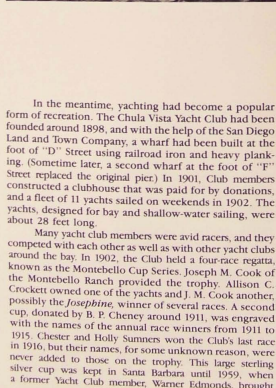
Wizard blocks used on porch pillars remain in 1986





A.

A. Chula Vista Yacht Club silver cup
B. Foot of "D" Street evacuation in 1916



B.

In the meantime, yachting had become a popular form of recreation. The Chula Vista Yacht Club had been founded around 1898, and with the help of the San Diego Land and Town Company, a wharf had been built at the foot of "D" Street using railroad iron and heavy plank-
ing. (Sometime later, a second wharf at the foot of "F" Street replaced the original pier.) In 1901, Club members constructed a clubhouse that was paid for by donations, and a fleet of 11 yachts sailed on weekends in 1902. The yachts, designed for bay and shallow-water sailing, were about 28 feet long.

Many yacht club members were avid racers, and they competed with each other as well as with other yacht clubs around the bay. In 1902, the Club held a four-race regatta, known as the Montebello Cup Series. Joseph M. Cook of the Montebello Ranch provided the trophy. Allison C. Crockett owned one of the yachts and J. M. Cook another, possibly the *Josephine*, winner of several races. A second cup, donated by B. P. Cheney around 1911, was engraved with the names of the annual race winners from 1911 to 1915. Chester and Holly Samners won the Club's last race in 1916, but their names, for some unknown reason, were never added to those on the trophy. This large sterling silver cup was kept in Santa Barbara until 1959, when a former Yacht Club member, Warner Edmonds, brought



Chris De Boyer garage Third and "F" Street

- A. 219 "F" Street
- B. 196 Cypress
- C. 272 Second Ave.



B.



A.



C.

it back and gave it to the Chula Vista Public Library. Today this treasured relic of Chula Vista's past remains in the library. The Chula Vista Yacht Club went into a decline soon after the 1916 flood filled the bay with debris and sailing became impossible. The 1920 city directory listed the Yacht Club for the last time. Greg Rogers was the commodore during the final year.

Drought Problems Continue

Although additional sources of water had become available to the orchardists, the drought continued to plague San Diego County up until 1904. The San Diego Land and Town Company had suffered financial losses as a result of the drought, and in 1902, the management decided to reorganize the company and divide it into three entities. The Sweetwater Water Company was created to manage the water interests, the San Diego Fruit Company was set up to develop and care for the orchards, and the San Diego Land Company was established to market the property holdings.

Transportation to and from Chula Vista improved in 1907, when large electric cars began to run on the National City and Otay line. Automobiles even passed through the town now and then. By 1910, four or five Chula Vista families owned "horseless carriages."

By 1908, eight packing houses in Chula Vista provided employment for a large number of people during the busy season. In the previous year, 400 carloads of lemons had been shipped from the community. Some people planted vegetables, crops they thought would soon rival the citrus.

In 1907 and 1908, the community had started growing again, and the demand for smaller lots had increased. Early subdivisions included Central Addition, north of "F" Street and west of Second Avenue, officially recorded on Oct. 17, 1907. Chula Vista Villa Tract, south of "F" and east of Third, was recorded on June 4, 1908. Five additional subdivisions were created in 1909 and five more in 1910. The five-acre lots of Dickenson's time, 25 years earlier, were yielding to the need for more homesites.

The Chula Vista Villa Tract was advertised as offering 165 by 291-foot "villa lots" for \$1,000. The ads promoted the tract as a high-grade suburban property featuring beautiful views, excellent soil, good, wide, graded streets, concrete sidewalks, and a congenial neighborhood. They suggested that the lots were suitable for ownership by merchants or professional men.

The changing lifestyles of Chula Vistans required new types of housing, and the construction of large mansions gave way to simpler and less costly homes. Beginning around 1908, small, compact houses were constructed along "F" Street in the Central Addition and on Cypress Street in the Gullick Tract. Parts of these early neighborhoods survive today.

The house at 219 "F" Street, built in 1908, and the one at 196 Cypress Street, constructed around 1912, are examples of the simple, hipped-roof "folk houses" of that era. The porches and swept dormers added visual interest to these inexpensive cottages. Reginald Walters, the farm manager for the Clarks at 21 "F" Street, lived at 219 "F" for many years.

Another charming home built around 1908 at 272 Second Avenue in Central Addition is an early version of the bungalow style that was then emerging in California. The house apparently was constructed by Edward Melville for his daughter, Cornelia, at the time of her marriage to Ernest J. Campbell. The home featured a hipped roof with exposed rafter ends, an angled bay window, and an open porch recessed in a front corner. Careful craftsmanship went into the construction of this nicely designed little house.

Mrs. Emma Saylor

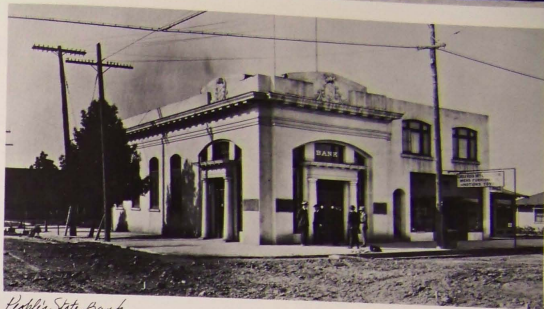


In 1908, Mrs. Emma Saylor chose Chula Vista as the place to build an old-age home. Interested in the problems of the elderly, she envisioned a community of senior citizens living together in a home-like environment. With the financial backing of wealthy Henry Timken, the inventor of a type of roller bearing, Mrs. Saylor purchased on the east side of Third Avenue, Mrs. Saylor purchased on the east side of Third Avenue, Mrs. Saylor purchased on the east side of Third Avenue, on a 10-acre parcel Charles Quayle, popular San Diego architect, to remodel served as the start of Fredericka Manor, which was named in memory of Mrs. Timken. The remodelled structure consisted of one of the small cottages on the grounds or residing dormitory style in the remodelled house. Recreational facilities were provided so that the elderly men and women who lived there could keep active and interested in life. Fredericka Manor, with its own farm, chicken coops and dairy, produced its own food for many years.

With the financial support of another benefactor, Henry McNabb, Mrs. Saylor was able to build a hospital

at Fredericka Manor. The McNabb Hospital, designed by the Quayle Brothers and Cressey, was dedicated on June 14, 1913. At that time, the facility was one of the most modern and best-equipped hospitals in Southern California. The building included an operating room, X-ray room, hydrotherapy, electric treatment room, maternity ward and nursery. The hospital was open to all physicians and even housed a school of nursing for the training of staff. During the first three years of operation, McNabb Hospital served the residents of Fredericka Manor and the rest of the community as well. But by 1916, rising costs forced the hospital to cease its service to the public. In 1986, Fredericka Manor, at 183 Third Avenue, continues to serve the elderly residents of Chula Vista. The original buildings have been replaced by modern structures.

In 1909, the first bank was established in Chula Vista. The People's State Bank originated in National City but was moved to Chula Vista by Bishop J. Edmonds when he bought controlling interest in the financial institution. First located at what is now 296 Third Avenue, the bank sold that building to the city trustees in 1912 for use as



People's State Bank

a city hall. The bank then moved into a new, fireproof structure at the northwest corner of Third and "E" San Diego architect Del Harris designed the new bank building. Bishop Edmonds' son, F. Warner Edmonds, who served as cashier of the People's State Bank, became one of Chula Vista's first city trustees in 1911. In 1907, he had married Martha Ward, the daughter of attorney Martin L. Ward, a Chula Vista pioneer.

In 1911, the residents of Chula Vista found their world being touched by events across the border in Mexico. A revolution threatened to overthrow the government of Porfirio Diaz. Rebel armies, composed of Mexican peasants as well as soldiers of fortune, students, teachers, idealists, political radicals, drifters and adventurers, staged

uprisings throughout Mexico. On May 9, 1911, rebels routed the Mexican government troops in Tijuana in an attempt to take over Baja California. Eager to witness the spectacle, local residents drove to the border to watch the spectacle. Although American troops tried to prevent Americans from crossing into Mexico, sightseers and souvenir hunters could not resist. Then panic ensued when one rebel rode through the streets of Tijuana warning the sightseers that a government attack was imminent. Although it turned out to be a false alarm, the Americans raced to the border, tearing their clothes as they scrambled through barbed wire fences to reach the American side. On June 22, Mexican government troops recaptured Tijuana, and the rebels, many of them American, fled

Troops prepare for battle in Tijuana in 1911





PAGE 2

CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1911

NO. 1.

WEEK'S NEWS FROM NEIGHBORING CITIES

WEEK'S NEWS FROM NEIGHBORING CITIES

Continued from Page 1. (Continued from Page 1.)

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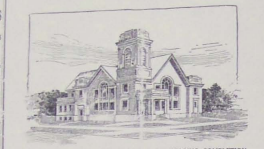
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NEW \$10,000 M. E. CHURCH CHULA VISTA, NEARING COMPLETION

CONDENSATION OF CURRENT EVENTS

CLEARED FROM NEGLECTED SECTIONS OF BOTH HIGHWAYS

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DYNAMITERS DON PRISON STRIPES

TOP TO DEFEATERS BEARS WITHOUT REMORSE

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WOMEN WILL NOT BE IN THE RACE

TO CONSIDER THE 15-20 YEAR OLD GIRLS

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LATEST; CONCRETE HOUSE FURNITURE

HEARD BIDDING PLANS CONCRETE HOUSE FURNITURE

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LEADING HOUSE OF PRINTING... CALIFORNIA...
The Chula Vista Review is published weekly...
Subscription rates: \$1.00 per year in advance...
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Advertising rates: \$1.00 per line per week...
Business notices: 50 cents per line per week...
Legal notices: 10 cents per line per week...
Obituaries: 10 cents per line per week...
Funeral notices: 10 cents per line per week...
Real estate notices: 10 cents per line per week...
Professional notices: 10 cents per line per week...
Public notices: 10 cents per line per week...
Miscellaneous notices: 10 cents per line per week...
The Chula Vista Review is published by Henry Grant Kising, Publisher.



Henry Grant Kising - Publisher



First rural mail carrier Clarence Austin



North into the United States. Once across the border, they surrendered to the American Army and were taken to the stockade on Point Loma. The Battle of Tijuana was over.

Weekly Newspaper Published

The year 1911 also brought a weekly newspaper, the Chula Vista Review, to the community. Henry Grant Kising published the paper in an office on Third Avenue, and a yearly subscription cost \$1.50. The first edition appeared on Dec. 15, 1911, and the last one in 1918. Except for the first issue of this newspaper, all copies of later editions have been lost and with them much of the early history of Chula Vista.

As the population of Chula Vista grew, the residents felt a greater need for self-government. To this end, the Chula Vista Improvement Club explored the avenues towards incorporation. In November 1909, the Club's committees on light and grading reported to the Club members that without incorporation, not much in the way of improving roads and securing electric lights and gas could be expected. Nearly all present at the meeting favored incorporation. But not until 1911 were the residents able to petition the Board of Supervisors requesting a vote to be held on the question of incorporation. The San Diego Land Company, the successor to the San Diego Land and Town Company, appealed to the Supervisors not to allow the vote. The company did not want to pay city taxes on land they owned within the proposed town and filed a suit. But the judge ruled against the San Diego Land Company stating that the increase in land valuation after incorporation would offset any rise in taxes.

On Oct. 17, 1911, Chula Vista residents voted on the issue of incorporation. Out of the 209 votes cast, 121 were for incorporation and 88 against it. With a population of approximately 550 residents, Chula Vista could now incorporate as a sixth-class city. City Trustees were also selected, these being Charles H. Austin, Lucius B. Barnes, Charles Boltz, Greg Rogers and Edwin T. Smith. Smith was elected to serve as the first president of the Board of Trustees, a position comparable to mayor.

Four standing committees to help run the new city government were chosen. These were Finance and Accounts, Streets and Public Property, Water Supply and Fire Department and Ordinances, Public Health and Morals. Officials included the city clerk, city treasurer, city marshal, city engineer, street superintendent and city attorney. The City of Chula Vista could now begin to provide the services its residents had desired for so many years. The installation of sidewalks and street lights and the grading and paving of streets were high priorities. In 1913, the city installed 26 streetlights and paved some streets.

In 1913, two separate telephone companies, Home and Sunset, provided service in the city since the companies had no interconnections, customers sometimes ordered two telephones, one for each system. Other forms of communication were improving, too. In 1911, the first rural mail route was started when Clarence Austin rode his horse from ranch to ranch to deliver letters.

Darwin Black, appointed on Nov. 28, 1911, became the city's first law enforcement officer. He received a salary of \$25 a month. After Black resigned on Feb. 23, 1912, he was replaced by John Schussler on May 7, 1912. In October 1912, City Marshall Schussler asked the City for \$500 of complaints about speeding motorists, a deputy marshal was hired in September 1914. The marshal had various duties including supervision of the volunteer firefighters, who earned \$2 for every fire attended. But in order to be paid, the volunteers also had to be present at a fire practice and drill once a month under the supervision of the city marshal.



A. Greg Rogers "Bay Breeze", Historical Site No. 1
 B. 52 "E" Street
 C. 616 Del Mar
 D. 617 Del Mar
 E. 659 Del Mar
 F. 640 Del Mar

One of the best known of the first city trustees was Gregoire Rogers for whom a present-day park and school were named. Born in Ohio, Rogers worked in Texas and later in Pennsylvania before moving to Chula Vista in 1909. By 1911, he was president of the People's State Bank, a city trustee, and commodore of the Chula Vista Yacht Club. He also served on the school board from 1916 to 1922. In 1910, Rogers constructed his large, two-story, Craftsman-style house, named "Bay Breeze" at 699 "E" Street. The house is a fine example of the style and features a high cross-gable roof with shed dormers, wide eaves, exposed and carved rafter ends and large carved brackets. The exterior of the first floor has wide clapboard siding while wooden shingles sheathe the second level. A one-story enclosed porch with an angled bay graces the facade.

In recent years, Chula Vista citizens began to recognize the historical importance of the Greg Rogers House, which was designated Chula Vista Historical Site #1 in 1977. When the house was threatened with demolition to make way for construction of a motel, the historic structure was moved to the City Corporation Yard, where it was stored temporarily. In 1985, the Rogers House was moved once more, this time to 616 Second Avenue where the structure will be restored to preserve it in memory of one of the city's leading citizens and as a legacy of Chula Vista's past.

Another trustee, Charles Boltz, built his Craftsman-style home on a knoll with a magnificent view of the city. This house at 52 "E" Street also features wide eaves, knee braces, and a shingled exterior. A full-length open porch extends across the front. The Boltz House exhibits one unique feature not seen on any other home in Chula Vista: a cutout pocket in the roof in front that serves as a secondary porch or balcony. Members of the Boltz family lived here many years. Charles Boltz served as a city trustee from 1911 to 1914.

A third trustee, Edwin T. Smith Sr., who was a retired attorney, erected his Craftsman home at 616 Del Mar Avenue. Smith and his wife, Clara, lived here until 1924. The house has historical significance as the home of Chula Vista's first mayor.

Bankers, lawyers, Chula Vista mayors, prominent businessmen and other historically important people eventually constructed or lived in houses in the 600 block of Del Mar Avenue. Henry and Frances Hayden Fisher, prominent Chula Vista attorneys, resided at 617 Del Mar. John T. Meyers, a retired professional major league baseball player, purchased that house around 1928. Warner Edmonds, the banker, and his wife, Martha, built their Craftsman house in 1915 at 640 Del Mar. The house at 659 Del Mar, built in 1914 for Dr. R. S. Penwarden, a dentist, is one of the best examples of a Craftsman bungalow in Chula Vista. Ray Taber, who purchased the house on Oct. 29, 1919, was the nephew of Caroline Copeland. After the death of his aunt, Taber assumed control of the Copeland citrus orchards in Chula Vista.

At 669 Del Mar Avenue, a house called "El Nido" (the nest) was erected in 1912 for Dr. George Worthington, man house of Chula Vista's first physicians. El Nido combines elements of the Craftsman, Prairie and Shingle styles and uses the natural materials, such as board and batten siding, wooden shingles and cobblestones, often found on rustic houses of the Craftsman style. A later owner of the house was another physician, Dr. Karl Kellogg, a member of the Battle Creek, Mich., cereal family. Dr. Kellogg was an important citizen of Chula Vista, and an elementary school was named after him. This house has been designated Chula Vista Historical Site No. 7.

"El Nido" Historical Site No. 7, 669 Del Mar



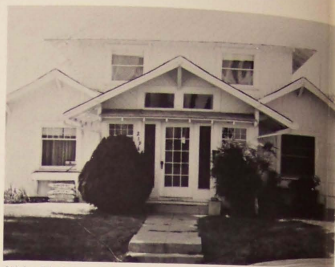


255 Sea Vale Street 1986

Another enclave of important families settled along Sea Vale Street during the 1910s. In 1914, Wallace and Jessie Capwell hired architect G. W. Becker to design a house for them. Their Craftsman home at 255 Sea Vale Street, constructed by contractors Damren and Kimball, was built at a cost of \$5,000. Wallace Capwell, a civil engineer, served as the Chula Vista city engineer from 1915 to 1931. The Capwell House, a fine example of the Craftsman style, featured three offset, front-facing gables, an open front porch and wood shingle siding. Another spectacular Craftsman house at 219 Sea Vale, built around 1914 for Lucy T. Edwards, had three street-facing gable roofs in front, and a two-story rear section with a medium, side-gabled roof and pent roofs in the gable ends.

Other interesting people in this neighborhood included Charles Inskip, a pharmacist, who founded the American Optical Company and was internationally famous for his inventions. He lived at 222 Sea Vale Street in a house constructed in 1911 for Horace and Minnie Dibble, who operated the Dibble Realty Company, exclusive agents for property in the Sea Vale tract. At 210 Sea Vale Street, Harriet Cushman and her brother Isaac had a house erected in 1914. Miss Cushman was a retired educator who became the first chairman of the local branch of the Red Cross, which was organized in 1917. Charles Moies, the city treasurer, lived at 209 Sea Vale.

In 1913, while the Del Mar, Sea Vale and other Chula Vista neighborhoods were developing, nature struck at the lemon orchards—twice. On Jan. 8, 1913, the temperature plummeted to new lows. It reached seven degrees in Bonita, 14 in El Cajon and eight above at the Sweetwater Company in Bonita. The severe frost, known ever since as the Big Freeze of 1913, spoiled the lemons on the trees and killed young saplings in the nurseries. Many of the older orchards were destroyed. Some ranchers replanted their entire acreage, others turned to vegetable farming, especially tomatoes and celery. Then a heat wave set in on Sept. 17, 1913, and the temperature reached 110 degrees in Chula Vista. The tender new growth on the trees that had survived the frost now wilted. The intense heat also killed many rabbits and chickens.



219 Sea Vale Street 1986



222 Sea Vale Street 1986



210 Sea Vale Street 1986



Hazel Goes Cook residence in 1912

Because of the extreme high and low temperatures and the havoc the unusual weather caused in the lemon industry, at least one new rancher had to delay planting her orchards until 1914, when seedlings finally became available again. This was Hazel Goes Cook, who came from Chicago with her husband in 1911 and purchased a five-acre parcel at the east end of "G" Street. Their house, built in 1912 on the highest part of the property, provided a magnificent view of the ocean to the west and the mountains to the east. The Hazel Goes Cook House, remodeled and with additions, stands today at 62 Cook Court. It is a rare example of eastern Cape Cod styling transplanted to the southern California countryside.

Over a period of time, Hazel Goes Cook purchased additional land, and her lemon orchards eventually covered many acres. She became a greatly admired Chula Vista and served on the board of directors of the Mutual Orange Distributors. Her greatest contributions to the community came, however, from her 50 years of service on the Chula Vista School Board. This service was recognized when a school was named in memory of this wonderful lady.

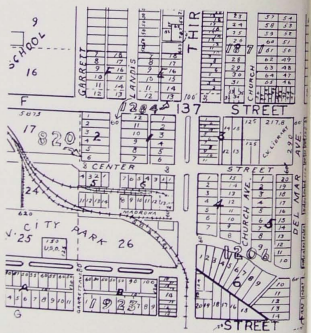
As the year 1914 came to an end, Chula Vistans looked forward to a great event, the Panama California Exposition that would open on Jan. 1, 1915, in Balboa Park in San Diego.



West side of Third looking toward "F" Street in 1926



Third looking south east in 1922



Map of downtown Chula Vista showing changes through 1920's

As Jan. 1, 1915, dawned, Chula Vistans eagerly anticipated the opening of the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. The National City & Otay trains heading toward San Diego were crowded with fair-goers.

Preparations for the Exposition, which would eventually have a dramatic effect on the architecture of Southern California and throughout the United States, had been underway for several years. In 1909, G. Aubrey Davidson, the president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, first conceived the idea of holding an international exposition in San Diego to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. The bold scheme caught the imagination of people throughout the county, and before long, plans were being laid to erect a Mission-style city in a corner of Balboa Park. But architect Bertram Goodhue, commissioned to design the Exposition buildings, decided that Mission-style structures would be too plain. So with great skill and foresight, he created instead the kind of structures the Spanish padres might have built, but never did, due to lack of funds and skilled artisans.

When the Panama-California Exposition opened on Jan. 1, 1915, visitors crossed the 405-foot long Cabrillo Bridge and entered a magnificent 17th century Spanish city. They walked past the California Building, one of the finest examples of Spanish Renaissance Revival architecture in North America, and admired the Prado lined with trees, flowers and exquisite buildings, planned by Goodhue and San Diego architect Carleton Winslow Sr. People from all over the world came to see the exposition and never forgot the charm and beauty of it all.

As a result of this Exposition, Spanish architecture became popular across the United States and by 1925 had become a craze. In Chula Vista, many of the homes built after 1925 featured stucco or plaster exterior walls and red tile roofs. Buildings designed in modern versions of this style are being constructed even today.



Chula Vista 1915-1940

BUILDING A CITY

The Spanish Colonial Revival style made popular by the Exposition was characterized by plastered exterior walls, low-pitched, red-tiled roofs, and flat roofs in this style had arches, while others did not. Carved or cast ornamentation often surrounded openings, and columns or pilasters sometimes flanked doorways. Balconies with wrought iron or wooden railings graced many homes. Various scaled-down adaptations of the style, especially in small homes, are often referred to today as "Spanish Eclectic." At least two prominent Spanish Colonial revivalists, San Diego architects Richard S. Requa and Edgar V. Ellrich, would design buildings in Chula Vista during the 1920s.

The first Spanish Colonial Revival house constructed in Chula Vista actually preceded the Exposition by two years. The Bulmer House at 3 North Second Avenue, once claimed to be the finest house of Spanish architecture in San Diego County, was designed in 1913 by architect Laurie Davidson Cox for James and Anna Bulmer. This magnificent two-story mansion stood on a knoll with a view of the Sweetwater Valley below and was constructed at a cost of \$10,000 by E. W. Davis, a National City contractor. The 14-room Bulmer House featured a red-tile roof, a plastered exterior and arched openings. It contained three open fireplaces, a solar heating system, and three bathrooms "equipped with the finest and most sanitary plumbing." In 1947, the house became Dr. Elmer Peterson's 16-bed sanitarium. Greatly remodeled and added onto, the place is known today as Southwood Psychiatric Hospital. The Bulmer House has been designated Chula Vista Historical Site No. 2.



Bulmer House, 3 North Second, Chula Vista, Historical Site No. 2

Reflections of Spanish Colonial Revival in Chula Vista architecture



435 First Ave in its original setting

Two Pueblo Revival buildings at the Exposition, the New Mexico Building and the Pueblo Indian Village, may have inspired the design of at least two structures in Chula Vista. The Indian Village, with its almost 100 rooms, and a five-acre Painted Desert were constructed by the Santa Fe Railroad as its contribution to the Exposition. After the Exposition was over, the structure became the headquarters for the San Diego Boy Scout Council.

Pueblo Revival, a massive-looking style without arches, originated in the Spanish Colonial buildings and native American pueblos of the American Southwest. The incorporated projecting roof beams or vigas and often featured round, protruding rainwater gutters called blanded and the walls given an irregular, stuccoed texture.

One of the best existing examples of the Pueblo Revival style in Chula Vista is a home constructed in 1916 for William and Alice Salmon at 435 First Avenue. This home features a flat roof with stepped parapets at the corners and large vigas. The main entrance porch incorporates iron corners. Contractor L. E. Smith erected this house at the time William H. Salmon, a prominent Chula Vista corporation and the Sweetwater Water Company, when he passed away in 1938, he left a \$1,000 endowment to the Chula Vista Public Library.

Another important Pueblo Revival building at 331 F Street was constructed in 1922 for Herbert W. Crooks, the publisher of the *Chula Vista Star* newspaper. This building, one of the few ever constructed of adobe, in structure was dedicated on Nov. 15, 1922, a time capsule was sealed in the cornerstone. The newspaper composition and press room occupied the front half of the building, while the rear contained a large living room with a fireplace. The newspaper remained at this address until the 1930s, when the Fuson family purchased the building and made it a part of Fuson's Garage, a business still in operation today.



435 First Avenue



331 F Street above adobe building on right side of Fuson's Garage

By the end of the first year of the Exposition, local people began to fear that another prolonged drought might be starting. In December 1915, the water level in local reservoirs was low, since little or no rain had fallen in November. After some debate, the San Diego City Council decided to hire Charles Hatfield, a rainmaker, who offered to fill Morena Reservoir to overflowing for the sum of \$10,000. Hatfield soon began his rainmaking activities at Morena. Rain began to fall on Jan. 14, 1916, and by the 16th had reached torrential proportions. By the 20th, Sweetwater Reservoir was also full. Between Jan. 14 and 28, eight inches of rain fell at the Sweetwater Dam with larger amounts in the foothills and the watershed areas.

Although the top of Sweetwater Dam had been raised in 1895 and again in 1910 to a final height of 110 feet, water now rose to the top and poured over the dam in a torrent 40 inches deep. Although the main dam held, the rushing water destroyed the south dyke and washed away a natural rock abutment on the north end. Below the dam, all bridges collapsed in the swirling waters, and 4,000 feet of distribution pipes were destroyed. The floodwaters in the Sweetwater Valley damaged the Sweetwater Fruit Company packinghouse and killed about 21 people, most of them Chinese truck farmers who lived near their fields in the flood plain. The Sweetwater Woman's Club's clubhouse that stood on what is now Bonita Road, just west of Central, floated away, taking with it the club's piano and all the furnishings. The National City & Ory Railroad tracks in the Sweetwater Valley were washed away in the flood and the line to the dam was never rebuilt. Tracks between National City and Chula Vista were rerouted farther west and service restored in October.



Sweetwater Dam dyke washed away and distributor sweeps through area



A



B



C

- A. Interior of library in 1926
 B. Carnegie Library, now the site of Chula Vista Public Library
 C. "F" Street School, now site of Chula Vista Public Library
 D. Hercules Powder Company 1919
 E. Sunkist packing plant, 3rd and "K" Street in 1926
 F. Former kindergarten building moved to 503 "G" Street

Otay Dam Bursts

But another disaster still loomed. The water level in Lower Otay Reservoir rose more than 27 feet in 10 days, and the level of the Upper Otay Lake rose to the top in three days. On Jan. 27, when water went over the top of the dirt embankment of the Lower Otay Dam, the structure "split open like an over-ripe watermelon" and a wall of water rushed towards the sea, sweeping away and well everything in its path. The flood carried away the vineyards and winery of the Danieri family and virtually destroyed the town of Otay.

Despite the damage from the storm, in 1916 the Chula Vista Citrus Association opened a packinghouse that operated at 3rd and "K" until 1959. Other packers in the city included E. B. Leach at Center and Lands, the Randolph Lemon Packing Plant on "K" between Third and Center Street and Fourth Avenue. Distributors at 4th and Fourth Avenue. Vegetables were also being grown in Chula Vista, and celery was well on the way to becoming a major crop.

In 1915, a new school was constructed in Chula Vista on "F" Street on the spot where the Chula Vista Public Library stands today. The original school was torn down, and in its place a library was built with a \$10,000 gift from

Andrew Carnegie. The new "F" Street School had seven classrooms in the main building, and a separate kindergarten classroom in a simple one-story building on the grounds. Around 1927, the kindergarten building was jacked up and moved to 503 "G" Street, where the former classroom was converted into a house.

With the advent of war in Europe, the Hercules Powder Company opened a factory on the bayshore at the foot of "D" Street. The plant converted kelp into potash for use in the manufacture of gunpowder. Many Chula Vistans worked at the plant, but residents grined their teeth when sea breezes carried the overpowering odor of the rotting kelp into their homes. After the war, the San Diego Rotting Kelp Company took over the plant. The company at one time operated in Chula Vista what might have been the largest cottonseed warehouse in the United States. The old Hercules Powder Company building has been torn down, and the spot where it stood is now known as Gunpowder Point.

As the decade of the 1910s came to a close, great progress had been made in Chula Vista. The population had tripled and risen from about 550 in 1910 to 1,718 in 1920. Third Avenue had become the main street of the town. The school enrollment in Chula Vista had reached



D



E



F

447. The town had 675 water meters, 421 gas meters, 495 electric meters and 142 telephone connections. The postal receipts in 1920 reached a grand total of \$4,125.20.

During the 1920s, a number of changes would take place. Lemons would reach peak production and by 1922, about 83 percent of the water furnished by Sweetwater dam would be used for agricultural irrigation, mostly for lemons. New trends in architecture would influence the design of homes.

Country Club Moves In

The prestigious San Diego Country Club moved to Chula Vista in 1920. This organization, with a membership that included many of the prominent people of San Diego, had been founded in 1897. The club built its first clubhouse and course at the north end of Balboa Park, but when the land was needed for the 1915 Exposition, the membership merged with Point Loma Golf Club, a club that had been organized by A. G. Spalding of sporting goods fame. But eventually when the land on Point Loma became part of a military installation, the San Diego Country Club members decided they needed to find a permanent location and bought a 160-acre tract at the south end of Chula Vista. William F. Bell laid out the golf course; noted San Diego architect Richard S. Requa designed

the clubhouse. Requa, who had apprenticed under Irving Gill, had opened his own office in 1910 and eventually developed what he called his "Southern California Style." His works included many buildings in Rancho Santa Fe and the Mt. Helix Nature Theatre near La Mesa. Requa was chosen as the architect for San Diego's second world's fair, the 1935 California-Pacific Exposition.

The San Diego Country Club clubhouse, designed by Requa, featured an arched entry and a plastered exterior with a flat roof, mission-style parapet in front, and a chimney that simulates a bell tower. Although the building has been altered somewhat, much of Requa's original design remains today.

About the same time the San Diego Country Club acquired acreage for the golf course south of Chula Vista, Minnie Herman sold 10-plus acres on the east of Hilltop Drive to Lois Brundred and Wilhelmina Tenney. A long, 20-foot-wide access road led to the parcel. Brundred and Tenney developed a lemon orchard on the land and built a Spanish-style house. The place was known as Rancho San Miguel. On June 1, 1929, Joan R. Michler acquired an interest in the property. By 1933, Rancho San Miguel contained a large lemon orchard, the ranch house, a swimming pool, a tennis court, a dog cemetery and a well-kept garden. (The dogs were buried in oak coffins.) Michler, the best-known of the owners of the ranch, was a horsewoman, golfer, ambulance driver and the founder and president of the German Shepherd Club of San Diego County. As a result of her efforts as an ambulance driver in France in World War I, she received the Croix de Guerre from the French government for outstanding and courageous service. During World War II, Joan Michler served with the Red Cross Motor Corps and as a sub-regional co-director for Dogs for Defense. The present address of Rancho San Miguel is 58 Lion Circle.



FORE!



62 CHULA VISTA HERITAGE 1995-1996

Because of the large number of new homes being built in Chula Vista, additional services and facilities were needed by the citizens. In 1921, Hugh Skinner, who operated Skinner's Hardware Store at 316 Third Avenue, felt that the citizens required better fire protection. Although volunteers had fought fires since incorporation in 1911, Chula Vista now needed a fire department, according to Skinner. On May 2, 1921, 17 young men gathered at Skinner's store to sign an oath and become volunteer members of the Chula Vista Fire Department. Charles E. Smith became fire chief on May 10, 1921, and held the position for 10 years.

Before 1921, fire protection for the city had consisted of a hand-drawn soda and acid cart, which was pulled to the fire by any men who were available. In 1921, the cart was stored at Helm's Garage on "F" Street between Second and Third. At the same location, a large iron ring from a locomotive wheel was rung as a fire alarm. In 1921, the city purchased a Model T fire truck which was also stored at the garage.

Fire Department Tested

Two large fires in 1923 tested the fire-fighting capabilities of the new Fire Department. On Feb. 1, 1923, the Randolph Lemon Packing House on "K" Street caught fire. Although the firefighters fought the blaze for more than 12 hours, the building burned with a loss of \$19,768. On Nov. 29, 1923, flames roared through four buildings used to store cottonseed at the San Diego Oil Products Company at the foot of "D" Street. Despite the assistance of a fire boat, an engine company from San Diego and another from National City, all four buildings were destroyed with a fire loss of \$331,155.

In 1923, the Fire Department moved to City Hall at 292 Third Avenue, and Howard Jordan, the first full-time, paid firefighter was hired. In 1924, the Model T fire engine was traded for a 1916 Seagrave pumper that had belonged to the San Diego Fire Department. When Fire Chief Wallace Armer assumed command in 1931, the firefighter and about 15 volunteers.

In 1923, Mrs. Anna Hamman, a 1905 graduate of the Training School for Nurses at the Denver County Hospital in Colorado, opened a hospital in Chula Vista, the first since the McNabb Hospital had been closed to the public. With borrowed money, she remodeled a house that stood at the northwest corner of Third Avenue and "I" Street.

Mrs. Viola Johnson became postmaster on Feb. 6, 1923, a position she would hold for 10 years. At the time, the post office had one clerk with a salary of \$1 a day and one rural carrier. By 1926, after intensive planning, city delivery service was started. Mrs. Johnson, a dynamic lady, may have had something to do with the street changes in Chula Vista. Before 1923, the east-west streets south of "H" were named First Street, Second Street, and First Avenue, the city decided to make some changes.

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Fire protection for the City in early '20s



Mrs. Viola Johnson, postmaster

New Cemetery Opened

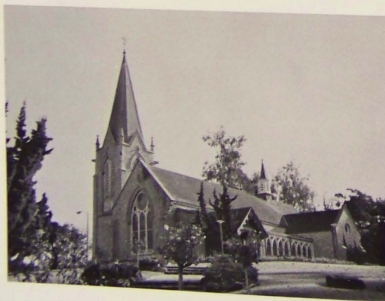
A new cemetery also became available in 1924. Previously, many of the early Chula Vista settlers had been buried at La Vista Cemetery in National City or at Mount Hope in San Diego. In 1924, Glen Abbey Memorial Park was established on a high mesa overlooking the Sweetwater Valley. The grounds were planted with trees, shrubs and flowers. The Little Chapel of the Roses at the cemetery was designed by San Diego architect Frank Stevenson. George Kimball, a local contractor, built the Gothic-style stone chapel which was an exact replica of the famous Tenynson Church in Somersby, England. The famous poet, Alfred Lord Tenynson, was born at the rectory of the original church in England on Aug. 5, 1809, where his father was the vicar. A beautiful window above the altar in the Little Chapel of the Roses symbolizes Tenynson's immortal poem "Crossing the Bar." The lovely chapel has been the scene of numerous weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Although most of the houses built in Chula Vista in the early 1920s were bungalows and those in the last half of the decade were of Spanish architecture, a few homes were also designed in other Period Revival styles, the so-called "romantics." Influenced by the English Tudor and French Norman styles, these homes hinted of a Northern European ancestry; large, prominent chimneys derived from the cool climates of England, Ireland and France. The exteriors were stucco or stone, and the Tudors usually featured half timbers on the gable ends. The steeply pitched roofs suitable for snowy climates added charm.

An adaptation of a French Norman house was constructed in 1926 for William S. Phillips at 355 First Avenue. This house, designed by Ralph E. Hurlburt and erected by his partner, Charles H. Tifal, featured a high, cross-gable roof with high, hipped dormers, a round stone tower at the entrance, a stucco exterior, and multiple pane, leaded-glass casement windows with shutters. The house was featured in a book, *Distinctive Homes*, published by the Hurlburt and Tifal partnership. William Phillips, an engraver, had his initial "P" placed in various locations in this home and even on the custom-made downsputs.



A. Glen Abbey Memorial Park
B. Little Chapel of the Roses 1986
C. 355 First



854 First Ave.



Chula Vista Woman's Club, Historical Site No. 12 1986

A few Tudor-style houses were also constructed in the late '20s. The two houses at 834 and 840 First Avenue featured the typical high gable roofs, stucco exterior with half timbers and large chimneys. Both homes were built by Harold Doan, but have been altered. Another house at 224 Fig Street, constructed in 1928 or 1929 for George Stees, is one of the few homes in the city that has chimney pots, a feature often seen on Tudor-style buildings.

In 1928, the members of the Chula Vista Woman's Club decided that they needed a bigger clubhouse. A group of 26 women had organized the Club on July 14, 1915, and by 1922, the ladies decided it was time to construct their first clubhouse. A redwood structure was erected on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Pray. Today this rustic, one-story building, now converted into a duplex, still stands at 382-384 Del Mar Avenue. But the membership of the club grew rapidly, and by 1927, the clubhouse was too small. Then Thomas Howe offered two lots at the corner

of "G" Street and Garrett Avenue with the stipulation that a new clubhouse had to be erected on the property within one year.

Spurred on by this generous gift, the club's building committee chose Edgar V. Ullrich as the architect and Arthur Done as the contractor for the new clubhouse. Done was well-known in the City and served as Chula Vista mayor in 1930. Edgar Ullrich, important San Diego architect, had come to San Diego from Colorado to design the Casa de Manana Hotel in La Jolla. Ullrich liked the San Diego area and stayed here to plan many important buildings. This architect created for the Chula Vista Woman's Club a charming, one-story Spanish Colonial clubhouse with stucco walls and a low, red tile, hip and gable roof. The "T"-shaped building faced inward towards a private patio and garden. The other two sides of the garden were enclosed by high walls punctuated by arched openings with wrought iron gates. The main structure, now designed as Historical Site



A.



B.



C.

- A. 29 "L" Street today
- B. 89 Country Club Drive
- C. 58 San Miguel
- D. 337 Third Ave. today
- E. San Diego Gas & Electric Company



D.

Melville Building in 1940s and today



E.

No. 12, held an auditorium that opened onto a wide, tile-covered open porch with a red tile shed roof and square wooden post supports.

In order to raise funds to pay for the clubhouse building, the Chula Vista Woman's Club started the Fiesta de la Luna in 1930. In the early days, the fiesta centered around a dinner dance and the presentation of a play. The Fiesta de la Luna later became a community-wide event and was expanded to include participation by other local clubs. Eventually the Fiesta de la Luna Association was formed to manage the celebration.

In the late 20s, as Spanish architecture became the dominant style, the Country Club Villas tract was developed by Claude E. Conklin. Several magnificent Spanish-style homes were constructed in the new subdivision. In 1928, architect Louis John Gill, the nephew of Irving Gill, designed an important Spanish Colonial Revival house at 89 Country Club Drive for an Episcopal bishop, Theodore Payton Thurston, and his wife, Daisy. The Rev. Thurston had once served as the Bishop of Oklahoma. The richly detailed Thurston House cost \$17,000 and was surrounded by a high wall with a wrought iron gate. Another house at 58 San Miguel Drive in the same subdivision was built about the same time for the Conklin family. This house featured a second-story porch and a walled courtyard, common features of large Spanish homes.

Another large Spanish home was constructed in the same general area at 29 "L" Street. This house was built in 1928 at a cost of \$10,500 for Col. William Riach and his wife, May. Riach was a retired British army medical officer; May Turner Riach was an internationally known physician and eye surgeon. The Riach House is notable for its Monterey-style balcony, a cantilevered affair with carved-spindle wooden railings and unusually large braces and support beams.

A bit north of the others, the Robert L. Mueller House was built the same year at a cost of \$25,000 by contractor C. W. Duffen. This secluded Spanish-style home was designed by San Diego architect Hammond W. Whitsitt. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Whitsitt planned a number of large buildings in that state before coming to San Diego County in 1927. Once in California, Whitsitt adopted the Mediterranean (Spanish) style then popular in the area. He specialized in the design of small homes and in 1930 won honorable mention in a competition sponsored by *House Beautiful* magazine.

By the end of the 1920s, some of the commercial buildings that still stand today in the downtown area of Third Avenue had been constructed. The Melville Building at 301 Third was built in 1926 for Edward Melville, and the Security Trust & Savings Bank stood on this prominent corner for many years. All of the buildings in the whole block on the west side of Third between Park Way and "C" Street were constructed for Thomas Howe. The Seville Theater was the centerpiece in this development. At 337 Third Avenue, a wonderfully designed one-story building was built for the San Diego Gas & Electric Company in 1928. The utility office remained at that location for many years.

Auto Influence Architecture

As the 1920s came to a close, the automobile began to affect architecture throughout the United States. In Chula Vista, buildings along National Avenue (now Broadway) started to show the first evidences of drive-in architecture. Tourist camps were constructed, and the street would become a major thoroughfare lined with motels, fast-food establishments, gas stations, used car lots and stores catering to the care and repair of automobiles.



A.



B.



C.



D.

- A. El Primo Hotel, 416 Third Ave. today
- B. 289 Third Ave.
- C. Roush and Sipple garage
- D. 516 Flower Street
- E. 511 "G" Street

Automobiles also influenced architecture in another way. In the period 1920 to 1941, Moderne (Art Deco), a new architectural style, became popular throughout the United States in two distinct phases: the Zigzag Moderne of the 1920s and the Streamline Moderne of the 1930s. The Streamline Moderne reflected the national interest in the curved aerodynamic form of the airplanes and the "streamline" design of automobiles.

Two buildings, both constructed on Third Avenue in 1930, represent the Zigzag Moderne style in Chula Vista. The Smith Building at 289 Third Avenue was designed by architect Hammond W. Whittitt for Chula Vista's first fire chief, Charles Smith, who wanted a fireproof structure. Victor Ilesitore of Chula Vista did the concrete work on this building, which features four reeded concrete pillars that curve inward at the upper end and has a horizontal band with a zigzag design.

The El Primo Hotel at 416 Third Avenue was completed in December 1930. This building also featured the dramatic vertical design elements found on many Zigzag Moderne structures. The 22-room hotel was built for John and Lilly Ratcliffe at a cost of \$30,000.

The Streamline Moderne style came to Chula Vista during the 1930s, and one good example is the court at 516 Flower Street built by cement contractor R. V. Dyson around 1938. The horizontal lines and curved corners of these small duplex units carry out the streamlining ideal.

But while the Moderne Style was evolving in the community, other events were also taking place. In 1931, the city acquired its first justice court, and Judge Lowell presided until he retired in 1961. Establishment of this court in Chula Vista was spurred on by Prohibition. Large numbers of merry-makers, who had crossed the border into Tijuana to imbibe alcoholic beverages, were apprehended when they came back into the United States. The Chula Vista Justice Court handled cases of drunkenness almost exclusively for a number of years.

Although the Great Depression hit Chula Vista hard, agriculture still provided considerable income for the residents. The lemon orchards produced abundantly. Chula Vista was known as the best lemon growing section in Southern California and was equalled by only one other spot in the world for growing celery. In 1931, the lemon crop brought in \$1 million and celery \$600,000. Flowers and bulbs were other important crops with a 1931 income of \$500,000.

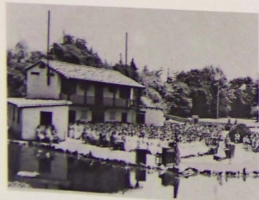
Because of the importance of agriculture in the Chula Vista area, San Diego County operated an insectary at 511 "G" Street. (The facility is still in use today.) In 1934, 500,000 ladybird beetles, beneficial insects used to combat mealybug infestations on citrus trees, were raised in this building.



E.



Chula Vista's community amphitheater

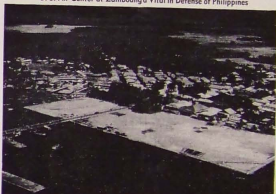


During the late 1930s, the Burpee Seed Company operated experimental fields in Chula Vista on 20 acres of land divided into five-acre tracts. The company developed an odorless marigold and a double nasturtium. One five-acre tract produced a spectacular flower, the red-leaf introduced to the gardening world at a dinner held at the Waldorf Hotel in New York City.

In 1939, Chula Vista's community amphitheater, the site of many civic programs, was constructed with W.P.A. and city labor. Workmen transformed a gully into an attractive natural setting and created a beautiful park. The La Luna celebration in September 1939. Another W.P.A. federal money into the community. The name of this school in honor of a local architect who was born in National City in 1888.

As the decade came to a close, war loomed once again in Europe. Although the Chula Vista City Council had started to plan for a new civic center as early as 1938, the center would be needed much sooner than they thought. In the next 10 years, the population of the city would more than triple.

JAPS BOMBING HONOLULU, MANILA; SHIPS BATTLE



U. S. Air Center at Zamboanga Vital in Defense of Philippines

150 Nipponese Bombers Blast Naval Bastion at Pearl Harbor

RAID ON OAHU WITHOUT WARNING, WHITE HOUSE DECLARES; U. S. ARMY, NAVY ORDERED TO EXECUTE DEFENSE ORDERS

HONOLULU, Dec. 7 (U.P.)—Parachute troops were sighted off Harbor Point today, Honolulu, Dec. 7 (A.P.)—A naval engagement in progress off Honolulu, with at least one black smoke aircraft carrier in action against Pearl Harbor defenses. Some aircraft still in progress in the skies over Honolulu. At 9:25 a. m. from Pearl Harbor the attack was still in progress. One report said there were 150 attacking planes. What damage was done by the aerial bombardment was not immediately apparent. But reports said the Japanese scored a hit at Hickam field, army airport and another hit at Ford Island.

150 Nipponese bombers blasted Pearl Harbor today, according to a report from Honolulu. The report said that the Japanese had bombed the harbor and that the U. S. Navy and Army were ordered to execute defense orders. The White House said Japan attacked America's vital outpost in the Pacific—Hawaii and Manila and that the war between the attacks were still in progress.

Announcing the president's action for the protection of American territory, Pearl Harbor, Secretary Stimson early declared that as far as it knows now the attack "was a surprise attack without warning—where both nations were at peace—and were delivered within an hour or so of the time that the Japanese ambassador had given the state department notice of the secretary of state Japan's reply to the secretary's memorandum of December 8.

Previously, navy officers said that long-range patrol bombers against Japanese surprise attacks had been ordered into operations and were "working actively." And within a few minutes the war department ordered all military personnel to the nearest safe quarters.

There was a disposition in some quarters here to wonder whether the attack had been ordered by the Japanese military authorities because they feared the president's different disposition with the emperor might lead to an about-face in Japanese policy and to the present day of the Japanese in Japan.

A little later, the White House reported that an enemy transport loaded with lumber had been sighted off the coast of Oahu. The report said that the ship was seen at 10:30 a. m. and that it was believed to be the Japanese ship "Akiyama."

All Naval Men Called to Duty

U. S. Army Personnel To Report on Once Again

U. S. Army Personnel To Report on Once Again

SHIPS SHELL PEARL HARBOR; CANNON FIRE ROCKS ISLAND

On Hawaiian Capital, Citizens Flee

On Hawaiian Capital, Citizens Flee

U. S. Transport Hit in Pacific

Japan Naval Craft East of Hawaii

Japan Naval Craft East of Hawaii

Bulletins

Bulletins

Planes Appear in Early Morning

in Several Areas

Planes Appear in Early Morning

Ships Sunk Off Island

U. S. Navy Reports

Ships Sunk Off Island

Germany Refuses Attack Comment

Germany Refuses Attack Comment

Planes Shot Down at Pearl Harbor

Second Extra

Planes Shot Down at Pearl Harbor

WATCH FOR Honolulu Bombs

Pearl Harbor Bombs

WATCH FOR Honolulu Bombs



Rohr Industries



On a warm summer day in August 1940, five men – Fred Rohr, J. E. Rheim, E. M. Lacey, F. H. Notbusch and F. H. Notbusch Jr. – gathered at an office in San Diego to adopt the Articles of Incorporation for a new company, the Rohr Aircraft Corporation. Rohr Aircraft, created to do subcontract work for large airframe manufacturers, would succeed far beyond any expectations.

In 1940, the company organizers hoped to find space in Chula Vista, a place favored by Fred Rohr, where they could build their first factory. But in the meantime, they were eager to start production and leased a three-story brick building at 8th and "J" Streets in San Diego where several contracts were filled. At this factory, cowlings for Lockheed's Hudson bomber were produced, and by January 1941, Rohr Aircraft employed 422 workers.

Chula Vista 1940-1986

CITY OF THE DREAM

Although the City of Chula Vista held an option on a 10-acre tract along the bay at the foot of "H" Street, the City Council decided in 1940 to let Rohr Aircraft purchase the land. The property had been designated as the site for a new airport, but the councilmen felt that an industrial plant would bring greater benefit to the community.

On Feb. 1, 1941, Rohr Aircraft Corporation moved into its first Chula Vista building, a 150 by 250-foot factory. By June 15, the company had completed a second factory building as well as a two-story office facility. On July 1, Rohr had 752 employees. From that time on, production increased and more and more workers were hired. The company became the major employer in Chula Vista, a position it still holds today.

By the end of 1941, Rohr Aircraft Corporation had developed the "power package" concept and had begun to manufacture ready-to-install power units for military and commercial aircraft. A power unit consisted of a bare engine, furnished by the customer or the government, around which Rohr assembled various parts such as motor mounts, air ducts, cowling and controls, plumbing, electrical harness and other engine accessories. The power units contained from 1,300 to 2,400 parts made by Rohr.

These power units were urgently needed during the war, and at the height of production, the corporation employed 9,000 workers at the Chula Vista plant. By 1945, Rohr had produced a total of 38,000 units and had become the world's largest manufacturer of aircraft power packages.

In order to provide recreational facilities for the aircraft workers during World War II, Rohr leased the San Diego Country Club and furnished funds and management to the Club, which was having some financial difficulties at the time. Although aircraft employees used and greatly enjoyed the clubhouse and grounds, the regular Club members continued to use the facility also.

Around 1955, Fred Rohr purchased a house and acreage in Bonita Valley for use by the Rohr Employees Recreational Club. The large two-story wood and brick building had been constructed in 1938 by Chula Vista contractor Howard Sebastian for his uncle, Ruben Harrison, and his wife, Charlotte, at a cost of \$50,000. During the same year, a two-room adobe was placed near the main house. The adobe house had originally stood somewhere in the Cuyamaca Mountains and was taken apart and brought to the Sweetwater Valley where it was rebuilt. Harrison, a well-known real estate developer, was interested in Indian artifacts and kept them in the adobe. (His wife wouldn't let him bring them into his home.) After her husband passed away in 1941, Charlotte Harrison sold her home and 45 acres to the Campbell family of Campbell Industries.

After Fred Rohr purchased the property, the house was remodeled for use as a recreation center. In 1966, he sold the mansion and 23 acres to the City of Chula Vista for \$60,000, when voters approved the City's plan to acquire an adjacent 138-acre golf course, privately owned by the Bonita Valley Country Club. The house, known today as Rohr Manor, still stands in part of Rohr Park.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Rohr continued to grow. Although the corporation developed additional facilities at Riverside, California and in Georgia, Washington and Alabama, the main plant and company headquarters remained in Chula Vista. By 1969, Rohr occupied 47 large buildings that stretched for a mile along the Chula Vista bayshore.

During the late '60s and early '70s, the corporation began to diversify and for a time produced such products as microwave relay antennas, gas turbine engines, precast concrete building materials, buses and rapid transit cars.



Rohr Manor



Today, Rohr supplies jet engine nacelles, thrust reversers and engine components to every major aircraft manufacturer in the free world. In 1985, the corporation operated six major facilities, including one in Toulouse, France. Sales totaled \$607 million, and Rohr employed 7,600 workers, including 4,800 at its main plant and headquarters in Chula Vista.

The growth of this major corporation greatly affected the City of Chula Vista and its residents. From the first days of World War II until the present, Rohr has attracted workers to the area, caused tremendous expansion of residential areas and boosted the economy of the city.

Chula Vista Goes to War

In the early days of World War II, while aircraft workers sought housing in the city, events of national importance began to touch the lives of Chula Vista citizens. On Friday, April 10, 1942, the headline "Japanese Here were Evacuated Tuesday" appeared in the Chula Vista Star. Under a government order, all persons of Japanese ancestry, citizen and alien alike, had been required to leave the coastal area. More than 1,000 internees, including many Chula Vista families, left San Diego County on two trains bound for Santa Anita. After a stay of six months at the Santa Anita race track, most of the internees were sent to a relocation camp in Arizona. Joseph K. Sano, a veteran of World War I and a member of the Chula Vista American Legion, was one of those interned. Sano, a celery grower, was a respected citizen and in 1938 served as the assistant secretary of the San Diego County Celery Growers Association.

As the war progressed, news of the increasing defense effort crowded the front pages of the Star. The April 24, 1942, issue asked citizens to register for sugar ration books and reported on the civil defense pamphlets available at the Chula Vista Library. About 40 different pamphlets with such titles as "Personal Protection Against Gas" and "Aircraft Spotter" could be obtained. In addition, the librarians suggested to the general public such books as *Living Under Tension* and *The Food Garden*. Newspaper articles urged residents to plant Victory Gardens and buy War Bonds.

By June 1942, the housing shortage for defense workers and service families had become acute throughout the county. Besides the Rohr Aircraft factory, Chula Vista also had two military bases in the vicinity: Ream Field and Brown Field. Many people lived in trailer parks and tents. Homeowners rented out extra rooms and converted back porches into bedrooms for the workers. It was the patriotic thing to do.

At the same time, defense worker housing projects were underway in Chula Vista. One project, built by the U.S. government, was under construction at the corner of T Street and Hilltop Drive. This project, known as Hilltop Village, would include 500 "dormantable" houses. Another 40 acres of land between H and T Streets and National and Fifth became the site for a second project with 150 demountable duplexes.

Chula Vista "dormantable" houses



By July 1942, scrap drives had started. Residents contributed every rubber item that could be spared, not just castaways. When one scrap drive asked for all sorts of scarce materials including rubber, various kinds of metal, burlap bags and other items needed for the war effort, Chula Vistans contributed 10 tons of scrap. Metals were in such critical demand that windshield stickers replaced metal automobile license plates in 1943.

The notice of gasoline rationing appeared in the newspaper in November, and 18-year-olds were asked to register for the draft in December.

With the influx of workers, the city grew rapidly. The population of Chula Vista doubled between 1940 and 1945, and business in the town boomed. The Vogue Theater, designed by architect Frank Hope Jr., was constructed in late 1944. By 1946, the business section extended for five blocks along Third Avenue and overflowed onto the side streets. The city had a total of 418 business firms and professional establishments; 18 companies manufactured products in Chula Vista. Besides Rohr, the major industry in the city, other factories made such items as airplane parts, acoustic and insulation materials, short-

hand machines, plastic buttons, electric motors and brassieres. One company ground pyrophyllite, a form of aluminum silicate, into a powder that was used as a carrier for DDT, an insecticide. The rock was hauled from a mine two miles east of Rancho Santa Fe to Chula Vista where it was crushed.

After the war, agriculture was still an important industry, and by 1946, the vegetable crops brought in \$3 million annually. Celery accounted for half of the total, and the fields covered 1,200 acres. The ranchers raised Utah celery, the green unbleached variety they had started to plant in 1935. In the beginning, the green celery had met with consumer resistance that had to be overcome, since housewives were accustomed to the bleached variety.

Fred W. Stafford was the manager of the Chula Vista Vegetable Exchange, a cooperative that handled a large part of the vegetable output. The exchange shipped 690 carloads of vegetables in 1946. Stafford, an engineer who had served overseas as an officer in the U.S. Army during World War I, came to Chula Vista in 1920 and bought a house at 640 Fifth Avenue. The house had been constructed around 1911 for Hagan Engebretsen, a rancher.

The Staffords added a second story to the home and planted citrus trees and fields of celery and bulbs around it. The Stafford House has been designated Chula Vista Historical Site No. 11.

Some wartime shortages, especially of building supplies, persisted for a time after the war. Despite the difficulty in obtaining materials, one Chula Vista family found a unique way to build a house. Lorne and Nel Dunseneth had lived in a trailer park during the late 1930s and the war years and were tired of paying rent. Through a friend, they learned about the *Luxtonia*, a runabout that was about to undergo a major overhaul during which it would be stripped down to the keel and rebuilt. The Dunseneths purchased the top of the boat for \$120 and hauled it to a lot they owned at 655 "D" Street. Dunseneth, who had worked as a shipbuilder for 11 years, dug a foundation and placed the upper part of the boat onto it. Then he removed the wheelhouse and built a second story in its place. The wheelhouse and hull became part of the new house. The Dunseneths stuccoed the house and painted it an appropriate color: sea spray green.

Housing Demand Increases

During the postwar boom, the demand for housing became greater than ever before. Hundreds of California ranch houses were constructed in the new subdivisions carved out of 500 acres of former citrus groves. These roofs had no eaves and no front porches. The exteriors were sheathed with stucco, board and batten, shingles, clapboard, or a combination of two or more of these. Under the G.I. Bill of Rights, returning war veterans could purchase a minimum two-bedroom "builder's special" for as little as \$8,000 with no money down.

The California ranch house, the favorite small house for several decades, represented an achievable American dream. Los Angeles designer Cliff May is generally regarded as a major author of this style which was popular from 1935 until about 1975. May, who graduated from San Diego State College, was inspired by the Spanish Colonial architecture in San Diego to develop what he called his "California Hacienda style." By the end of the 1930s, he had also created the ranch house style. Although May probably designed a number of homes in Chula Vista, only

3rd Ave. and "F" Street looking south in 1936



78 CHULA VISTA HERITAGE 1915-1986



Stafford House, Historical Site No. 11, 640 Fifth Ave.



one of his local buildings has been identified: the Sweetwater Woman's Club clubhouse, constructed in 1934.

By 1950, the population of Chula Vista had risen to 16,505, more than three times the 1940 figure, and Chula Vista was growing twice as fast as San Diego. The need for new public facilities became urgent, and the city began to develop a new Civic Center. Five years previously, in October 1945, the City Council had purchased a nine-acre site at "E" Street and Fourth Avenue for \$12,500. The fire station was built first at a cost of \$38,500 and was occupied on Feb. 1, 1948. Fire Station No. 1, as it is called today, featured a white stucco exterior, a tower and arched openings for the fire trucks. The design of the Spanish Colonial Revival building set the architectural theme for the other Civic Center structures built later.

The City Hall, dedicated on Feb. 12, 1951, was constructed at a cost of \$99,450. The building was designed by Percy Burnham, a Chula Vista citizen, in what Burnham called his "California Style." This structure also reflected the Spanish heritage of the area with its red tile roof, plastered exterior and arched entrance. The new City Hall housed the council chambers, engineering offices, police offices and other facilities.

When the need for a courthouse became apparent, the city donated part of the Civic Center land, and the new \$60,000 South Bay Courthouse, erected by the County, was formally dedicated on Jan. 21, 1953. Judge Lowell Howe and the South Bay Municipal Court moved into the new building.

A new library, designed by San Diego architect Louis Bodmer, opened on June 20, 1955. The building contained 12,800 sq. ft. and cost \$50,000. A new post office was constructed nearby during 1955.

Police and engineering wings were added to City Hall in 1956, and subsequently, an administration annex and a county health building became part of the Civic Center complex. In 1971, a \$1.2 million police facility with 50,000 square feet of floor space was constructed, and in 1979, the Public Services building, which contained the new council chambers, was dedicated. All of these structures incorporated white stucco walls and red tile roofs in their design. The newer buildings featured rectangular openings instead of arches. Covered walkways with square-pillar supports connected the various structures in the complex. (The large fountain and plaza in front of City Hall were also built in 1979.)

During the prosperous decades of the '50s and '60s, Chula Vista continued to grow. In 1950, about 16,500 people lived in the city, and by 1955, more than 31,350 made it their home. Census takers in 1960 found 42,350 residents and in 1970 counted 68,200. The city grew in size as well as population as areas to the south, east, and north were annexed.

The Chula Vista Shopping Center, developed in 1962 on a 35-acre site on Broadway between "H" and "I" Streets, featured a mall 40 ft. wide by 640 ft. long. The center, designed by Charles Luckman Associates, included a fountain that duplicated one at the Alhambra, a palace in Granada, Spain.





A.

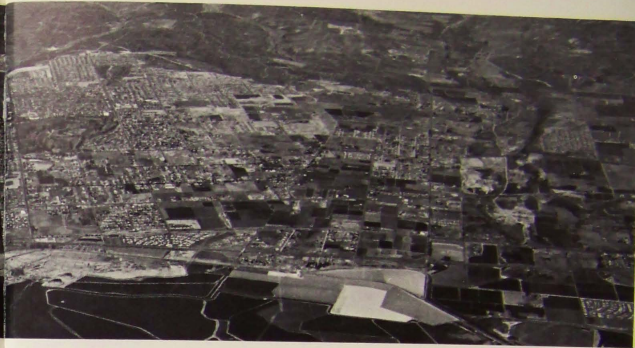
A. Chula Vista 1963

B. Chula Vista looking north in 1911

C. Congregational Church, Historical Site No. 5 and Community Tower 1986



B.



C.

The last vestiges of the railroad on Third Avenue disappeared in 1963 when the tracks were torn out or paved over. The citrus industry was finished in the city, and most of the orchards had vanished. The last citrus packers quit business in 1959; train service on Third Avenue ended the same year. In 1965, the old Mutual Orange Distributors warehouse at Fourth Avenue and Center Street was torn down. The massive 200 by 240-foot redwood packing shed was replaced by an apartment complex.

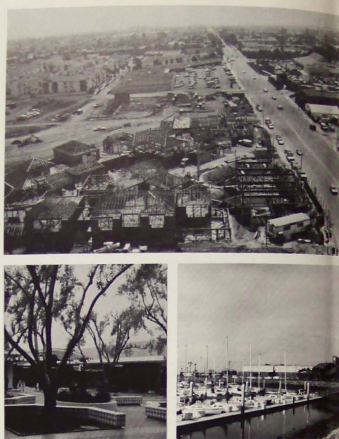
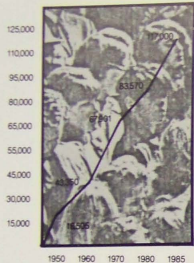
By 1963, Chula Vista had become a well-developed modern city. Nineteen elementary schools, three junior high schools, and two high schools provided education for the young people of the community. College classes were being held at a high school while the Southwestern College campus was being built on Gray Lakes Road. Three hospitals and 31 churches also served the people of Chula Vista.

First High-Rise Built

The first high-rise building, the 16-story Chula Vista Community Tower at 288 "F" Street, was erected in 1972 by the Community Congregational Development Corporation, a non-profit subsidiary of the Congregational Church. The tower, which contained 186 units planned for elderly residents, cost \$2.7 million and was designed by Luckner, Sadler & Bennett, architects and engineers.

When business in the central commercial district of Chula Vista declined by the early 1970s, the City Council adopted the Town Centre Redevelopment Project, which covered an area from "E" to "I" on both sides of Third Avenue and included 150 acres of level land. As the project materialized, trees were planted and benches and decorative paving installed along part of the avenue. A new shopping complex was built in one section, and the South County Regional Center was constructed in another. The South County Regional Center at 500 Third Avenue contained a new court complex and provided a number of other services to the residents. The redevelopment area became an attractive and functional commercial district once more.





City planners also examined the area along the shore of San Diego Bay and created the Bayfront Development Project for 850 acres of land west of Interstate 5 and north of "L" Street. Their plans envisioned residential and commercial uses and included a marina and other development by the Unified Port District, as well as a business park, green belt, public parks, wildlife sanctuary and a 400-room hotel on Gunpowder Point, the former site of the Hercules Powder Company. This redevelopment project is still undergoing review by various agencies.

The decade of the '70s brought with it a new awareness of the environment and the realization that natural resources were limited. Endangered plants and animals, archaeological sites and fossil beds all became subjects of concern. Citizens and planners looked for ways to preserve the natural environment while providing for continued growth.

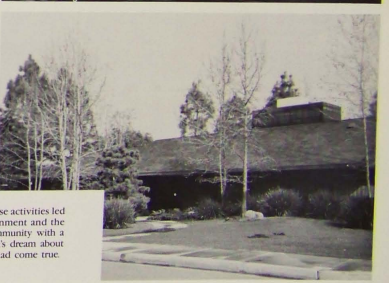
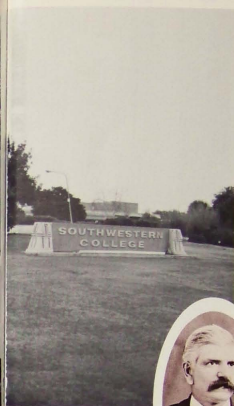
In 1976, a new \$2.5 million library was constructed as Chula Vista's Bicentennial project. The 55,000-sq. ft. structure, designed by architect Thomas T. Williamson of the architectural firm Richard George Wheeler and Associates, was dedicated on July 4, 1976. The building is featured on the cover of the December 1976 issue of *Interiors*. The Chula Vista Library became an important cultural center in the community and provided space for a room devoted to local history.

The U.S. Bicentennial celebrations in 1976 helped bring about a new interest in history for many years. Several Chula Vista citizens had promoted the idea of historic preservation in the city. Helen Gohres researched the history of the 19th century homes she christened

"orchard houses." Anita Amos, a talented painter, captured in oil the images of the Victorian homes of the area's pioneer settlers. Ruby Peters Machado, the daughter of a pioneer family, shared her knowledge of the city's heritage with school children, the planning department and historians throughout the county. In response to the increasing interest in local history, the Chula Vista City Council began to designate official historical sites, the Greg Rogers House became Site No. 1 in 1977. In 1981, Ruby Machado and John Rojas Jr. founded the Chula Vista Historical Society, an organization that has hundreds of members today.

In the 1980s, Chula Vista continued to grow, and the 1980 population of 83,927 increased to 90,283 by 1985. On Dec. 31, 1985, with the annexation of the Montgomery area, an estimated 114,000 people lived within the city limits.

During the 1980s, Chula Vistans looked to the future and cherished the past. Citizens served on City of Chula Vista committees and commissions to help protect the quality of life in San Diego County's second largest city and preserve its unique heritage. An Architectural Review Committee made sure that new buildings would be well designed and attractive; the Resource Conservation Commission monitored the environmental impacts of new projects and also nominated historical sites. The '5th Anniversary Committee prepared for a series of celebrations and activities that would take place in 1986, the anniversary year. In 1985, many individuals helped with a historic building survey that gathered information on over 200 significant structures ranging in age from the orchard



houses in 1920s and 1930s. As 1986 approached, these activities led to a greater awareness of the built environment and the recognition of Chula Vista as a unique community with a special heritage. Perhaps Colonel Dickinson's dream about Chula Vista as the greatest place on earth had come true.



Chula Vista Today...





On Nov. 5, 1983, the voters of the community elected to annex to the City of Chula Vista. On Dec. 31, 1983, the annexation became effective and the population of Chula Vista increased to about 124,000.



The historical information in this book was derived from many sources. Newspaper accounts in the *San Diego Union*, *Chula Vista Star*, *Otay Press* and the *National City Record* were most helpful. The seven excellent volumes on San Diego history written by Richard Pourade provided background material and helped place Chula Vista within the context of San Diego County history. Eugene Coleman's thesis, *The Urbanization of the Sweetwater Valley*, *San Diego County*, (1973), recently published by the Chula Vista Historical Society, and "The Development of the Sweetwater Area," a thesis by Spencer Lewis Menzel, added carefully researched information about the Sweetwater Valley as well as the Janal, Otay and Millijo ranches.

The local history room at the Chula Vista Public Library contained many items of substance including the original Chula Vista Tax Assessment Rolls, Annual Reports of the City of Chula Vista and histories of the police and fire department. The archives of the Chula Vista Historical Society provided memoirs of pioneer families.

Finally, many people whose homes were included in the Historic Building Survey contributed information about their houses and the history of the area. Arthur Day, who did title searches on a number of historic properties, helped document dates of construction and the names of the first owners.

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T = Top, B = Bottom, M = Middle, R = Right Hand, L = Hand

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