

Toyon Lane houses built in 1930-31



12 Toyon in center, Helm house at 21 Toyon on right, ca. 1931 (from John Helm)

1912 - Karl and Fern Helm - Chula Vista's first automobile service garage was opened early in 1912 by Karl Helm, a machinist by training and experience, shortly after he moved here from Pittsburgh. He built the Helm Garage on the south side of F Street between Third Avenue and Del Mar, a site later to become a part of Chula Vista Lumber Company, and now occupied by the Congregational Towers. Later that year his brother Clarence joined the business, and the two remained in partnership for many years. Meanwhile the Thomas Connell family - Tom, Mary Jane May (Melvine), and daughter Fern - had come to Chula Vista in 1910, following the example of other Melville family members. Tom had retired from farming in Illinois. Fern, a teacher, joined the faculty at the old F Street School (now the site of Norman Center). She also acquired a lemon orchard north of E Street and bordering Hilltop Drive. Fern Connell and Karl Helm were married in 1916. Fern brought into the marriage her lemon Orchard and gradually Karl became involved in lemon growing along with this garage and General Motors car dealership. Their three children, John, Mary, and Richard, were born in Chula Vista/ National City and attended F Street School, Sweetwater High, and San Diego State College before diversifying into engineering, geology and teaching, and physics, respectively. In the twenties the Helm Garage moved across the street to the corner of F Street and Church Avenue, where a branch of Security Pacific Bank now stands. In 1953 "Helms Brothers" moved again, this time to E Street at Garrett, where Clarence continued as owner of Helm Buick until the early sixties. Karl and Fern built their Monterey-style house in 1931 at the east end of E Street (now Toyon Lane), overlooking their lemon orchard. They remained active lemon growers until their son and his wife, John and Dorothy,

returned to Chula Vista in 1947 to take over the farming business. Karl was an avid photographer and took many early-day pictures of the South Bay area and Sweetwater Valley. Concerned with the need to provide water for the area's orchards and its growing population, he served on the advisory group making plans to bring Colorado River water to the South Bay.

Patti Huffman (CVHS class of '48) lives in 2008 at 18 Toyon Lane built 1948 (E St dead ended at Toyon until extended to Bonita Road in 1959), used to live on parkway in first postwar housing tract bet f and G, 4th and 5th, near CV JHS, husband Wylie was engineer at General Dynamics, Patti as elem school teacher,

Elizabeth Roney Reed lived in house at 12 Toyon Lane 9. Jack Roney lived on south side Toyon lane, no houses on north side (Chula Vista Historical Society. Family, Friends, and Homes, 1991, p.132.)

1917 - John Helm was born at home in CV Nov. 18, 1917 at 461 "F" St. which is just down in the middle of the fire station. My mother was a school teacher and as an investment she bought a small lemon orchard and after my mother and father were married, they bought another orchard right next to hers which was on the end of what was then "E" St. on Toyon Lane. We moved from "F" Street up to a small place at the end of "E" St. on the lemon ranch. My father was Carl Helm, my brother was Richard "Dick" Helm. My mother was Ivy Fern Connell. Her mother and Ed Melville were brother and sister. My mother's orchard was 7-1/2 acres. I am pretty sure Ed Melville sold my mother her orchard. When she got married, they bought another 7-1/2 and then a little after that they bought across, what was then 6th Ave., now Hilltop, they bought the property on the east side of Hilltop that reached from Bonita Rd. to what would have been "C" Street about a mile. And it had orchards on it. So they ended up, I guess, about 30 or 40 acres at one time lemons. My maternal grandmother and Ed Melville were brother and sister. My grandmother Connell, pronounced kun-ell. Her house is where I was born. I think it was approximately 460 or 61 "F" Street. At that time the numbers in Chula Vista are in just the opposite of the streets. The house numbers went contrary to the street numbers. So if you look for a house numbered in the one hundreds, it would be at 6th Street. For instance, my folks lived at 21 "E" Street which was just this side of 6th Avenue. It all worked out on 3rd Avenue. My grandmother Connell lived with them on "E" St. She was member of the WCTU. My family never drank, until I came along. Dottie: I remember a family gathering when there was no alcohol, they wouldn't drink. (John Helm interview, 2010.)

1924 - Tom Connell m. Mary Jane Melville in Illinois. Tom had a farm in Illinois between Chicago and Milwaukee, sold it for a good profit, lived for a few years in Waukegan, then moved to CV after Ed Melville came. Mary Jane's daughter was Ivy Fern Connell, a school teacher in Waukegan, bought a lemon orchard of 7 and 1/2 acres from Ed Melville, married Karl Helm 1916 who had started his garage on land from Ed Melville in Dec. 1911, opened for business Jan. 1912. Karl and Ivy lived on F Street until 1924 when they bought another 7.5 acres and moved to 21 E St. where they lived in a small house that came with the 2nd orchard, adding on several rooms. The first orchard had a small redwood cottage in the middle of the orchard north of E Street where Clarence lived until 1947. In 1930 they built the large two-story house that is at the end of Toyon today. That Monterrey style house was built by Ray Sanford of San Diego, who also built the house next door for G. W. Anderson at 12 Toyon Lane who was an engineer in NC. Anderson's son was William, a good-looking Norwegian boy who went to Sweetwater HS with John Helm, broke his arm cranking one of Karl's trucks, changed his name to Leif Erikson and became a singer and movie star in Hollywood. The lawyer DeWitt "Dutch" Higgs (f. in 1939 the SD law firm Higgs Fletcher Mack) lived for some years in the Anderson house at 12 Toyon Lane. Sanford also built the Marston Burnham house and the John Wymer house (later bought by Dr. McCausland) on north Hilltop. The Burnham and Wymer houses were on land bought from Karl Helm who had purchased an additional 15 acres of lemons east of Hilltop and north of E Street. He bought this land from newspaperman Hamilton Clark who lived in the Reginald Vaughn house at 21 F Street until he died in 1917. This property included the grove of Eucalyptus trees that were later the site of the Eucalyptus Grove apartments. Merrill Nelson married

Elma Connell, had a house east on E Street, on property that may have been purchased from Karl Helm. Nelson had a sand plant east of Eucalyptus Grove, had a narrow gauge railroad that brought sand up from the Sweetwater river valley to the plant. (Helm interview June 28, 2010.)

1926 - The Hollywood actor known as Leif Erickson was born 27 October 1911 in Alameda CA and died 29 January 1986 in Pensacola FL. His father G. W. Anderson was listed in the 1920 census living in Alameda and was married (unknown name). G. W. Anderson was listed in the in the 1930 census living in CV with wife Marjorie. Leif would have been 15 when in HS with John Helm ca. 1926. Leif Erickson went to UCLA, was a band vocalist and trombone player, began his career as a singer with the Ted Fio Rita orchestra. He began acting in 1935. Erickson's last major role was as Big John Cannon in the NBC television series "High Chaparral," which ran from 1967 to 1971. ()

1930 - 1930 United States Federal Census California > San Diego > Chula Vista > District 31 > 9

Name: G W Anderson

Home in 1930: Chula Vista, San Diego, California
living at 12 E St.

Age: 46

Estimated birth year: abt 1884

Birthplace: New York

Relation to Head of House: Head

Spouse's name: Marjorie

Race: White

Occupation: Engineer, manufacturer

Neighbors:

55 E St - Albert Smith

56 E St - Charles Boltz

57 E St - Fred Coture

24 E St - Charles Field

21 E St - Karl Helm

12 E St - G. W. Anderson

6th (Hilltop):

28 - Merrill Nelson

56 - Paul Sloan

124 - Leo Christy

Bonita Road:

0 - Nat Rogan and wife Ethel, value \$50,000

Household Members:

G W Anderson 46, b. 1884 in NY, father and mother b. NY

Marjorie Anderson 38, b. 1892 in California, father b. in NY, mother b. in Illinois

1914-16, 1919-20

Field Chas M (Rowena I), rancher, h ns E 1 w of 6th av.

1930-38 city directory

Field Chas M (Rowena) rancher h24 E

1929 City Directory:

ANDERSON GABRIEL W (Marjorie), Mgr Magic Way Co. (National City), h 12 E cor 6th av

1920 United States Federal Census

Name: G W Anderson

Home in 1920: Alameda, Alameda, California

Age: 38

Estimated birth year: abt 1882

Birthplace: New York

Relation to Head of House: Boarder

Father's Birth Place: New York

Mother's Birth Place: New York

Marital Status: Married

Race: White

Sex: Male

Able to read: Yes

Able to Write: Yes

Household Members:

Martha Bird 70

Ada Bird 40

G W Anderson 38

1930 - Anderson house - The house at 12 Toyon Lane was built about 1930 for G. W. Anderson. The architect was Ray Sanford of San Diego who also designed the house next door for the Helm family. The style of the Anderson house is Pueblo Revival, rare for Chula Vista. Anderson was an engineer in National City who was director of the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park, president of the San Diego County Development Federation, past president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. His son became Leif Erickson, the Hollywood movie star. The house was owned by Walter Roney 1941-51. Walter was a developer who was asked by Fred Rohr to build homes for his workers. Roney Plaza subdivision at 5th and D Street was built in 1941. ()

1930 - Gove house - The house at 30 Toyon Lane was built in the 1930s by Dwight Gove, owned insurance company at 283 G Street from 1934, charter president of the Lions Club in 1941, Fiesta de la Luna Director, member of Masonic Lodge, South Bay Shrine Club president, chairman of the Rotary. ()

1931 - Helm house - This Monterey-style house at 21 Toyon Lane was designed by architect Ray Sanford of San Diego, and was built in 1931 at the east end of E Street (now Toyon Lane), overlooking the lemon orchards of Karl Helm and his wife Fern Connell. Karl owned the first auto garage in Chula Vista in 1911 on F Street, and with his brother Clarence Helm remained in business for many years. It had one of the first swimming pools in Chula Vista, that doubled as a source of irrigation for the lemon trees. ()

1934/08/03 - California Pacific International Expo official will be G. W. Anderson, who has been working on raising funds for the expo. He has been named chairman of the County Executive Committee. --

Aug. 10 - (photo) front page photo of Anderson (Star, Aug. 3, 1934.)

1935/05/24 - G. W. Anderson, 54, died, known as "Andy" was a director of the expo and pres of the SD County Development federation, was past pres of NC CofC, past directory of SD CofC, died unexpectedly exactly one week before expo will open. -- see also editorial May 31 - 1935 Expo opening (Chula Vista Star, May 24, 1935.)

1941/09/26 - Lions Club founded in CV, sponsored by the Hillcrest club. Dwight Gove will become president. (Chula Vista Star, Sept. 26, 1941.)

1950 - Elizabeth Roney Reed - Came to CV in 1941, from RI to SD in 1940, father building tract in 1941 at 5th and D St., lived at end of E Street, on Toyon Lane 1941 to 1951. Went to HS at Our Lady of Peace. Shorty Badders owned a riding stable in NC. Eliz has photo of her father standing in empty field at 5th and E, said Fred Rohr had asked him to build houses for his workers, wrote it on his picture. In 1951 moved to Edgerton?, north 2nd Ave. Mother had TB, was in hospital since Eliz was 15. My brother has written family history.(Reed, Elizabeth Roney, interview Sept. 24, 2010)

1964/07/23 - Toyon Lane to be name of cut-off street due to E Street extension (Star 1965/07/23)

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